



## **Volunteer Management Program**

### **Volunteer Management: A Guide to Good Practice**

## **Acknowledgments**

This module has been written by Christopher Auld and Graham Cuskelly, both from the School of Leisure Studies, Griffith University, Brisbane. Particular thanks go to them for the considerable work involved in producing this publication. In addition, thanks are due to the reviewers, Dianne Cowan from the Australian Sports Commission; all the state departments of sport & recreation VIP coordinators; and all those people who generously devoted time and effort to provide feedback and comments on draft modules.

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## Introduction

The key to good practice in volunteer management in sport and recreation organisations is effective leadership. Good leadership facilitates the development of a motivating environment that should result in both high standards of performance and satisfied volunteers. Without successful leadership, people tend to be uninspired, unsure of their role and may lack commitment. Sport and recreation organisations rely on volunteers and therefore need those volunteers to take an active interest in the future of the organisation and their specific roles within it.

In a volunteer context it seems that effective leadership clarifies the paths by which volunteers can achieve their tasks, helps them to move along these paths and removes any barriers to them reaching their goals. Furthermore, successful leadership requires positive attitudes about people. If the volunteers in the organisation are viewed and managed as creative, motivated people who seek responsibility, then they are likely to exhibit high levels of performance. On the other hand, if the volunteers are treated as if they dislike their work, are lazy and must be coerced to perform, then it should not be surprising that their behaviour may reflect the way they are supervised. The quality of leadership is a key to the success of sport and recreation organisations and underpins good practice in volunteer management.

This module provides a number of examples of the ‘how to’ of the content covered in the other Volunteer Management Program modules.

The purpose of this module is to:

- highlight the role of effective leadership in good volunteer management practice
- emphasise the importance of a motivating environment for volunteers

- clarify the relationship between leadership, motivation, performance and satisfaction
- discuss the need to resolve conflict and stress as a part of good practice in volunteer management
- highlight examples of good practice in volunteer management

### **What is good practice?**

Because volunteers are such an integral part of sport and recreation organisations it is important that they are managed in ways which make them feel valued and part of organisations – this is the essence of good practice in volunteer management. Volunteers who feel that they have made a worthwhile contribution to their organisation, have been appropriately rewarded and recognised, and feel respected are more likely to contribute to that organisation again. Many sport and recreation organisations argue that it is difficult to recruit and retain volunteers and often seem to assume that the problem is somehow the volunteer's. However, such organisations need to examine their volunteer management practices in order to determine the extent to which they do make volunteers feel valued and a worthwhile part of the organisation.

There is no agreed upon set of volunteer management activities that will guarantee positive outcomes for volunteers. Approaches may vary to suit each organisation's particular circumstances. However, the 'bottom line' is the same – motivated and committed volunteers. This is the yardstick for what constitutes good practice.

For a quick snapshot of what constitutes good practice, Table 1 presents summary comments about volunteer management from the national and state winners of the National Australia

Bank Community Link Awards 1999 for 'Sport and Recreation'. It is evident that there are some key issues for good practice in their suggestions.

**Table 1 Good practice advice**

<b>WINNER</b>	<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
National winner: Bicycle SA (South Australia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide written job descriptions for volunteers</li> <li>• ensure training sessions are relevant</li> <li>• acknowledge their achievements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neglect the recruitment of new volunteers</li> <li>• ignore their interests</li> <li>• treat them differently from paid staff</li> </ul>
State winner Queensland: Q-Rapid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify clear paths for volunteers</li> <li>• value each person's qualities, skills and efforts</li> <li>• provide real responsibilities for volunteers through training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take people for granted</li> <li>• provide ineffective information</li> <li>• ignore volunteer services</li> </ul>
State winner NSW:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use time efficiently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neglect to guide new</li> </ul>

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<p>Coonamble Rodeo Association</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delegate according to skills</li> <li>• openly discuss all issues</li> </ul>	<p>volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forget to acknowledge contributors</li> </ul>
<p>State winner Victoria: Kilmany Family Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect the role of volunteers</li> <li>• ensure they have access to debriefing</li> <li>• ensure that fun is part of the work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put barriers up to communication</li> <li>• assume volunteers have all the required knowledge</li> <li>• take anyone for granted</li> </ul>
<p>State winner Tasmania: Tasmanian Trail Association</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accept volunteers for what they can do</li> <li>• listen to all viewpoints including those of paid officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lose patience</li> <li>• be inflexible</li> <li>• take anyone for granted</li> </ul>
<p>State winner Western Australia: Recreation and Respite</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include volunteers as part of the staff team</li> <li>• listen to their ideas</li> <li>• show appreciation of their efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overload volunteers with work</li> <li>• isolate volunteers from staff</li> <li>• put volunteers in difficult and dangerous situations</li> </ul>
<p>State winner ACT: Australian Football International Youth Trophy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• choose people according to their talents and desires</li> <li>• involve those who can raise the group's profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give too few people too much work</li> <li>• spring jobs on volunteers at the last minute</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make tasks enjoyable</li><li>• give positive feedback</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assign jobs that are too difficult</li></ul>
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### **Leadership - the basis of good practice**

The leadership process can be defined as creating vision, inspiring commitment and directing human resource efforts toward organisational objectives.<sup>1</sup> <<Schermerhorn, J (1996) *Management*, 5th edn. New York: John Wiley, p 320.>> Almost every aspect of volunteer work can be related to leadership. The influence of leadership extends to such things as communication (eg clarity of objectives), motivation (eg related to the leader's attitude and behaviour), task achievement and to some extent, volunteer satisfaction.

Leadership can occur at many levels in sport and recreation organisations and may be formal and/or informal. Formal leadership occurs when a person leads by using the authority of their position (eg because they are the President of the club). Informal leadership occurs when a person without formal authority proves influential in directing the behaviour of other persons. Informal leaders often emerge in group situations (eg chosen by the group) and tend to have good social and communication skills. Both formal and informal leaders use power to achieve outcomes. Different types of power can be used in different types of situations. Sometimes leaders may use their formal or position power (eg they can reward or punish others) and in other circumstances they use power which comes from their informal or personal qualities (eg because they have knowledge and expertise on a particular topic or due to their popularity

among the group). Leaders should be careful about the way they use power and try to avoid the threat of punishment as a regular means to achieve objectives. There are limits to power and people are more likely to respond to leaders when they respect the person and feel that the leader also respects them.

There also should be a balance in leadership between the need to get the task completed and how that may impact on the volunteers carrying out the task. This issue often seems to get forgotten in sport and recreation organisations, especially when working to tight deadlines and dealing with volunteers. Leaders therefore, need to get the right balance between the outcome and the process. This means not only focusing on the plan, defining the work to be done, assigning tasks and helping with task completion, but also emphasising warmth and social rapport with volunteers, respect for others and communicating the need for mutual trust.

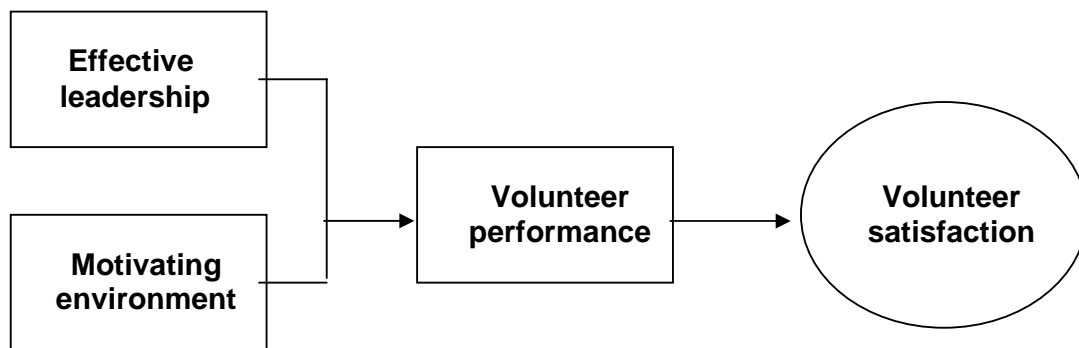
It should also be noted that using the same approach does not work in all situations.

Sometimes leaders may have to focus more on getting the job done (eg with a short time frame) or in other circumstances on the supportive role of leaders (eg with a group of new and inexperienced volunteers). Because people sometimes have difficulty adjusting their leadership style, organisations should try to assess in what type of circumstances the different attributes and characteristics of different volunteer leaders may be best used. In this way they can then try to match leadership style to appropriate situations. For example, certain people may work best with experienced volunteers but not so well with new volunteer recruits, or other individuals are good at developing new ideas but not so good at making sure those ideas are actually implemented.

Leadership and motivation are strongly interrelated. In essence, leadership is the process of

facilitating a climate in the organisation that encourages volunteers to feel motivated to pursue desired goals and objectives. This should result in higher levels of volunteer performance and ultimately, higher levels of volunteer satisfaction (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 The relationship between leadership, motivation, performance and satisfaction**



### **Motivation**

Motivation refers to the willingness of someone to exert an effort to achieve a goal. It is especially important in sport and recreation organisations that people are willing to exert that effort over an extended period (eg a sport season) rather than just occasionally. Although motivation is usually directed toward organisational goals, it is important that volunteers feel that they are achieving their personal goals at the same time. Leaders who can facilitate this outcome are developing an environment in which it is more likely that volunteers will be motivated. The first question that the volunteer leader should ask is, ‘what do volunteers

want from their jobs?' and then try to make that happen. However, leaders can't directly motivate volunteers because, ultimately, motivation comes from within the individual.

Most people tend to associate motivation with gaining some type of reward. A reward is an outcome of positive value to the individual. There are two types of rewards that influence motivation:

- Extrinsic rewards that come from external sources (eg verbal praise, a certificate or plaque).
- Intrinsic rewards that come from within the person (eg feelings of competency and personal development). Intrinsic rewards are generally considered to be the stronger of the two types and are particularly relevant to volunteers in sport and recreation organisations (see the *Recruiting Volunteers* and *Retaining Volunteers* modules).

If used well, rewards can help the volunteer leader to develop high levels of motivation and performance. To achieve maximum motivational impact, it is necessary to:

- understand what people want from their volunteer experience
- know how to distribute rewards so that their needs are met at the same time that the organisation's interests are served
- link rewards to actual performance.

It is important to consider a number of issues when trying to create a more motivating environment.

- People have needs that can be fulfilled through their volunteer work. Focusing on issues like achievement, interpersonal relationships, recognition and providing opportunities for autonomy and responsibility, can enhance motivation because it allows a number of

needs to be met (eg volunteers should be encouraged to make decisions about their area of responsibility).

- People are very aware of how rewards are allocated and lose motivation when rewards are distributed unequally. We all observe what we get in comparison to others and in most circumstances, expect that things will be about equal. This is especially the case where people feel that they have put in about the same amount of effort. If motivation is to be encouraged, then it is important that perceived differences in the way volunteers are treated should be minimised (eg the criteria used for reward allocation should always be made clear).
- Although it is important to set challenging tasks for volunteers, they should feel that the task is achievable and within their capability. Therefore, volunteer leaders must ensure that volunteers have the ability to perform the tasks (eg training may be required).  
Furthermore, volunteers must value the rewards being offered by the organisation and believe that the rewards will be gained if they fulfil the task requirements. (eg the type of rewards important to volunteers should be determined and linked to actual performance).
- The way that goals are communicated to volunteers is also important for motivation. Clear and well communicated goals provide direction, encourage long-term work efforts, clarify performance expectations and serve as a basis for appraisal feedback. The more specific the goals, generally the higher the performance level. This is also the case for goals that are difficult and challenging, but realistic. Participation in goal setting can also enhance performance as it allows for increased understanding of goals, facilitates goal acceptance and increases commitment (eg involve all volunteers with one-on-one task planning sessions with their supervisors).

The overall purpose of focusing on volunteer leadership and motivation is to enhance

volunteer performance. It is critical to get volunteers to be productive because higher levels of performance lead to higher levels of satisfaction. When volunteers feel they have accomplished something worthwhile and are suitably rewarded, they are more likely to feel satisfied and committed to the organisation. This cycle of need fulfilment, positive reinforcement and satisfaction reflects good volunteer management practice.

### **Volunteers in teams**

There has been a gradual movement in many organisations to work-based teams. Teams are also critical for volunteer performance and satisfaction in sport and recreation organisations. Such organisations, because of the nature of their activities, are very amenable to a teamwork approach. While most of the above discussion has focused on volunteers as individuals, many of the principles can also apply to teams of volunteers. Working in teams can facilitate motivation as a result of a number of factors. Teams can make people more productive, facilitate social interaction and support and, if the team is self-managed, encourage feelings of responsibility and autonomy (eg use task groups to plan and conduct special events and allow them to be reasonably autonomous).

### **Conflict management**

Conflict is inevitable in any organisation. Due to the emotive and personal nature of the activities of most sport and recreation organisations, there is great potential for conflict in these organisations in particular. While some people feel uncomfortable with conflict, it is recognised that a certain level is required for organisations to function effectively and that it can have positive benefits. Positive outcomes may include airing previously hidden problems, developing new ideas, and increasing motivation and performance. Negative outcomes may include stress, poor communication, diverting attention away from goals and a

shift to authoritarian leadership styles.<sup>2</sup><< Robbins, SR, Bergman, R, Stagg, I and Coulter, M (2000) *Management*, 2nd edn. Sydney: Prentice Hall.>>

The key is to get the right balance. Too little conflict, and organisations tend to stagnate. Too much and they tend to self-destruct. Where the level of conflict reaches a stage where it begins to damage the organisation (eg low committee meeting attendance), then it must be resolved. In organisations in which conflict is openly confronted and resolved, rather than being ignored, volunteers are more likely to be committed to the organisation and turnover rates tend to be lower. In situations where conflict needs to be addressed, then understanding the background to the conflict can help with its management (eg has it occurred previously, who is involved and the source of the conflict). It is also important to understand the conflict management options available. These include:<sup>3</sup> << Robbins, SR, Bergman, R, Stagg, I and Coulter, M (2000) *Management*, 2nd edn. Sydney: Prentice Hall pp660-661.>>

- avoidance - suppression of conflict
- accommodation - resolving conflicts by placing another's needs and concerns above one's own
- forcing - satisfying one's own needs at the expense of another's needs
- compromise - a solution to conflict in which each party gives up something of value
- collaboration - resolving conflict by seeking a solution advantageous to all parties.

Generally, compromise and collaboration are the preferred outcomes.

### **Stress management**

Stress is a situation in which a person is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand in which the outcome is perceived to be uncertain and important. Stress can adversely affect

both the individual (eg illness) and the organisation (eg low motivation, absenteeism and high turnover). Therefore, for sport and recreation organisations, stress management is vital to good practice. Although almost all people may indicate that they feel stress from both work and home, individual factors determine if the stress is perceived as threatening and becomes problematic.

Sources of stress include:<sup>4</sup><< Glowinski, SP and Cooper, CL (1989) Organizational issues in stress research. In M Patrickson (ed.) *Readings in Organisational Behaviour*. Sydney: Harper and Row.>>

- factors intrinsic to the job — eg too many repetitive tasks, tight deadlines, and both qualitative (ie boring and unstimulating) and quantitative (ie too much) work overload
- role based stress — eg role conflict and ambiguity which results in volunteers being unclear about what they are supposed to do and how to do it
- relationships — eg unfriendly interactions with supervisors, colleagues and subordinates
- organisational structure and climate — eg internal politics, arguments about resources, sense that no one is trusted (communication, participation and trust are critical ingredients in producing good organisational climate).

Volunteers may be quite prone to feelings of stress due to the nature of their work. They often work to short deadlines (due to poor organisational planning), feel undervalued (due to the unpaid nature of their work) and subsequently, poorly rewarded and recognised. Sport and recreation organisations have a responsibility to monitor these issues in relation to volunteer workers. Indications that stress may be a problem include high rates of absenteeism and turnover, and a lack of commitment. Where stress may be a problem then it should be tackled on two fronts. The first is to identify and eliminate possible causes (eg through

improved volunteer management practices) and secondly, help those who seem to be affected by stress (eg reducing workload, developing teams to spread the workload and offering support).

### **Dealing with difficult volunteers**

Dealing with volunteers who are under-performing or exhibit inappropriate behaviour can be an awkward issue for many organisations. This is especially because of the nature of voluntary work and the need to retain as many volunteers as possible. However, there may be occasions where the work performance or other aspects of a volunteer's behaviour is clearly unacceptable and must be confronted and resolved (see 'Harassment' in the *Legal Issues and Risk Management* module). This may include the need to discipline the volunteer. Discipline refers to actions taken to enforce the organisation's standards and regulations. The most common types of discipline problems include attendance, on-the-job behaviours and dishonesty.

Where a disciplinary procedure is required, the following guidelines could be adopted:<sup>5</sup><<  
Robbins, SR, Bergman, R, Stagg, I and Coulter, M (2000) *Management*, 2nd edn. Sydney: Prentice Hall, pp 653-655.>

- Discipline should take place as soon as possible following the incident.
- Advance warning should be given to a volunteer before initiating the disciplinary action.
- Consistency is important in using disciplinary action.
- Discipline should be connected with the behaviour not with the person.
- Discuss the issue in a calm, objective and serious manner.
- State the problem specifically.
- Keep the discussion impersonal.

- Allow the volunteer to explain his or her position.
- Maintain control of the discussion.
- Obtain agreement on how mistakes can be prevented in the future.
- Select disciplinary action progressively and consider mitigating circumstances.

### **Examples of good practice from the field**

While the above material has discussed the broad issues of good practice in volunteer management, there can be no better guidance on such a critical issue than material that comes from sport and recreation organisations themselves. This section reinforces some of the important issues in volunteer management and illustrates them with examples of good practice drawn from the field.

### ***Recruitment***

Recruitment is the process of attracting new volunteers to sport and recreation organisations. Personal contact with potential volunteers, whether through friends, family or individuals already involved in an organisation are among the most frequently cited ways that volunteers first became involved in voluntary work. Clearly, people need to be asked to volunteer if an organisation is going to be successful in recruiting volunteers. Once asked, the recruitment process should provide potential volunteers with a realistic preview of what a job entails. Volunteers need to be informed about the size and nature of the task ahead of them before deciding to commit their time and energy to a position. When recruiting volunteers, it is important to emphasise the benefits for volunteers rather than the needs of the organisation. Many volunteers give up their leisure time to help sporting organisations and may not be attracted by work-like recruitment campaigns. Volunteers need to feel valued by sporting

organisations and not feel as though they are being recruited to fill a position that no one else wanted.

**Good practice example**

Tennis South Australia sets the scene for its recruitment strategy via the development and implementation of comprehensive volunteer policies. It takes a strategic approach to the management of volunteers via the following policies.

- *Tennis SA recognises the valuable contribution volunteers make to tennis in South Australia.*
- *Volunteers giving their time, unique talents, skills and knowledge significantly enhance the opportunities for South Australians to participate in tennis at all levels.*
- *Tennis SA acknowledges volunteers and values their contribution to tennis in South Australia by supporting, encouraging and challenging their continued involvement in tennis.*

Furthermore, Tennis SA has developed an extremely comprehensive list of detailed position descriptions (PDs) for a wide range of different positions within its tennis club structure. The PDs range from those for the President to Newsletter Editor. Tennis SA has also developed Committee Actions and role descriptions for all relevant club committees (eg Women in Tennis Committee) including PDs for different roles on each committee (eg Chairperson and committee member). Every club can therefore provide an immediate and accurate guide to the tasks that volunteers will be expected to perform.

**Source: Tennis SA**

**Good practice example**

Technology also offers new opportunities for recruitment ideas. The Hallett Cove Uniting Netball Club has developed (using a volunteer) a web site, which received over 2000 hits in 1999. The web site is a powerful medium for promoting the club and also providing information to volunteers and public acknowledgement of their efforts. The web site provides information on a variety of subjects including:

- Recognition of volunteers, including a list of 5-year badge winners and names of committee members, coaches and managers.
- Club diary and current news items.
- Weekly score updates and premierships ladders.
- History of the club and its achievements and those of its volunteers.
- Club policies.
- Links to other netball, sporting, fitness and volunteer sites.

The web site has resulted in a number of membership enquiries.

**Source: The Hallett Cove Uniting Netball Club, South Australia (Visit the web site at:  
[http://www.ozemail.com.au/~sthaust/hallett\\_cove/netball/](http://www.ozemail.com.au/~sthaust/hallett_cove/netball/))**

**Good practice example**

The following recruitment idea is from a traditional sport. However, the club involved is shaping itself to deliver the sport in an innovative, flexible manner that has resulted in increased participation rates and hence a larger pool of potential volunteers.

The Hampton Bowls Club developed a unique program due to some very common problems:

1. *Diminishing numbers.* The club realised that although it had problems in fielding pennant teams, this situation was only going to get dramatically worse as the average age of the membership increased.

2. *Missed opportunities for recruitment.* While it was acknowledged that the club had tried hard to rekindle interest in social bowls on a Sunday, the club no longer ran informal events. In the past, these events had provided the necessary bridge for non-experienced bowlers to develop their skills (eg from the introductory first time roll up to being able to play the game). Scanning through the membership list, the club realised there were 12 members whose spouses/partners had, at some time, tried the game. However, the club had not recognised this as an opportunity and followed through. Because there was no process for bringing new players into the game, the club was missing chances to recruit. In an attempt to deal with these issues a program called 'Loose Connections' was established at the club.

**Initiative:** 'Loose Connections' (or) 'Two's Company and Three's a Crowd'

This is an event which specifically targets 'loose connections' (The spouses /partners of existing members and those who have attended Come 'n' Try days). The program should enable a significant number to come to the club as a group which is not quite as daunting as coming along as an individual. It also provides the opportunity to experience bowls in a social atmosphere.

**Time:** Thursday evening under lights

**Dress:** Casual

**Format:** An aggregate triples novelty event

Where the 'loose connection' was a female, the club added a female member to complete the Triple. Where the 'loose connection' was a male, a male member was added to complete the Triple. The 'loose connections' come as a group and with their partner. They are introduced to the club via a complementary group with whom they interact over a period of four weeks.

**Source - *Active Participant*** Feb/March 2000 <[www.ymcavic.asn.au/state/Activeoz-3.htm](http://www.ymcavic.asn.au/state/Activeoz-3.htm)>

### ***Orientation***

Orientation is part of the recruitment process. New members are welcomed to the organisation and given details about their position, the day-to-day operation of the organisation, and introduced to key people within the organisation. Taking up a new position is a critical period for new volunteers and the organisation. A well designed orientation process reduces stress on new volunteers, makes them feel welcome and may reduce the likelihood of turnover.<sup>6</sup><< Cuskelly, G (1995) The influence of committee functioning on the organisational commitment of volunteer administrators in sport. *Journal of Sport Behavior* 18(4): 254-269.>> While some organisations run formal orientation programs, for many sport and recreation organisations, the orientation process is less formal but no less important.

### **Good practice example**

The Healthpact Sixth Australian Masters Games conducted in Canberra in 1997 provides an excellent example of volunteer orientation. The National Australia Bank sponsored the volunteer program for the games. Each volunteer was supplied with an Orientation Kit. The kit contained detailed information on a variety of topics, including such things as:

- volunteering and the games volunteer philosophy
  - mission statement
  - what it is to be a volunteer
  - volunteer rights and responsibilities
  - the formal relationship/code of practice
- about the games
  - organisation chart
  - brief history
  - games sports
  - sport and operations
- the games volunteer program
  - where you fit in
  - guidelines for providing information in response to enquiries
  - volunteer entitlements
  - volunteer training
  - rewards and recognition
  - uniforms and identification
  - useful contact details.

An extensive training program supplemented the kit. Volunteers were also supplied with a small booklet (*Volunteers Ready Reckoner*) that summarised a wide range of key pieces of information required by volunteers. The advantage of the small booklet was that it could be carried by volunteers at all times and enable them not only to use it for their own information needs but also to respond to questions from participants and spectators.

**Source: Healthpact Sixth Australian Masters Games and National Australia Bank**

### ***Retention***

The goal of volunteer retention is to develop a sense of organisational commitment among volunteers. Although volunteer turnover is to be expected in sport and recreation organisations and creates opportunities for organisational change, high rates of turnover can hinder the capacity of organisations to deliver the quality or range of services and programs clients and members have come to expect. Sport and recreation organisations with high rates of volunteer turnover may have to divert large proportions of limited resources to recruiting, orientating and training new volunteers.

**Good practice example**

Nulsen Enduro Club based at Nulsen Primary School in WA is an integral part of the whole school community team. The club keeps a database of all volunteers and at the beginning of Term 1 each school year, a letter is sent to all those who volunteered the previous season. This letter:

- thanks members for their previous involvement
- asks them to consider offering their valuable service again
- invites them to enlist other volunteers if they so wish
- explains the club policy on volunteers
- outlines a brief summary of the areas for which volunteers are required
- outlines the season's program
- lists the club's objectives and the desired outcomes for that season, and
- gives a contact person if they have any questions.

In recent years the club numbers have increased substantially and there is a high degree of involvement from local Indigenous Australians.

**Source: Nulsen Enduro Club, Western Australia**

### **Good practice example**

Hallet Cove Uniting Netball Club has recognised the importance of ‘secondary’ factors in volunteer retention. These secondary factors complement the direct methods employed but nonetheless are critical to retention success.

The club recognises that the effectiveness of management contributes significantly to promoting and encouraging participation by volunteers. Some of the techniques adopted include:

- Efficient financial management in order to keep membership costs to a minimum.
- Reimbursement of volunteer costs – no volunteers are financially disadvantaged with all out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed on presentation of receipts. There is also a small honorarium for coaches to help with general costs (eg petrol).
- Having a well organised, committed and professional approach to management.
- Infrastructure – the club shares the load with volunteers by assigning responsibility for various tasks to a number of individuals.
- Insurance – the club maintains broad insurance cover for volunteers.
- Stability — the club’s approach has led to a very stable environment with numerous long-serving individuals in a wide variety of duties. This is carefully balanced with a willingness and encouragement of new ideas and participation.

**Source: Hallet Cove Uniting Netball Club, South Australia**

### ***Recognition and rewards***

Recognition stems from genuinely valuing volunteers and their efforts within sport and recreation organisations. Everyone who volunteers for an organisation deserves some form of

recognition, even if it is a simple thank-you for helping out. Rewarding volunteers takes recognition a step further, by providing something tangible and extrinsic to the act of volunteering itself as a way of commending higher levels of performance among volunteers. Recognition and reward programs tend to work best when they are individualised, varied and open to new and interesting ideas. These programs do not have to be complex to establish and administer, but they are an essential component of effectively retaining the services of volunteers in sport and recreation organisations.

<b>Good practice example</b>		
<p>The Tennis SA ‘Tennis Club Volunteer Guide’ has a range of different ways to recognise and reward volunteers. They have been categorised in the following ways:</p>		
<b>Daily</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ everyday hello’s and smiles</li> <li>➤ listen to volunteer’s ideas and concerns</li> <li>➤ provide a positive work environment</li> <li>➤ personal praise on the job</li> <li>➤ identification pins/badges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ reimbursement for out of pocket expenses</li> <li>➤ invitation to play a more significant role in club matters</li> <li>➤ constant praise to others in the club</li> <li>➤ include volunteers in the organisational chart</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ keep volunteers informed via memos/newsletters</li> <li>➤ volunteer of the month awards</li> <li>➤ recognition of outstanding efforts in local newspaper, radio, club noticeboard and club newsletters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ involve experienced volunteers in training new volunteers</li> <li>➤ offer opportunities to contribute to the club newsletter</li> <li>➤ charts/posters demonstrating how well the volunteers are doing</li> </ul>
<b>One-offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ welcome letter when volunteers sign-up</li> <li>➤ farewell to volunteers when they leave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ invitations and complementary tickets to special events and functions</li> <li>➤ funding for training courses,</li> </ul>

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Volunteer Management: A Guide to good Practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ celebrating outstanding projects</li> <li>➤ letters of reference</li> <li>➤ letters of thanks</li> <li>➤ birthday, Christmas and get well cards from the club</li> <li>➤ naming an event after a volunteer</li> <li>➤ providing clothing and meal and petrol vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conferences, seminars</li> <li>➤ free use of facilities and/or club membership and volunteer parking spaces at the club</li> <li>➤ arranging discounts at recreation and sport stores or restaurants</li> <li>➤ annual ‘volunteer team’ photograph</li> </ul>
<b>Special events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ awarding life membership</li> <li>➤ trophies and plaques</li> <li>➤ special volunteer awards/honours at club functions</li> <li>➤ beginning and end of season events for volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ annual volunteer day with free lunch/dinner provided</li> <li>➤ provide a budget for volunteer parties/get-togethers</li> <li>➤ Volunteer Involvement Program recognition awards and stickers</li> <li>➤ local government/community awards</li> </ul>

**Source: Tennis South Australia**

***Performance appraisal***

Successful sport and recreation organisations seek ways of maximising the performance and satisfaction levels of their volunteers. Performance appraisal is a process of evaluating the

effectiveness of volunteers and providing them with feedback. Performance appraisals should be used to recognise and reward volunteers who have done a good job and to identify where improvements in volunteers' job performance can be made. Performance appraisal can be a formal process, particularly for operational level volunteers, or an informal process, particularly where the Volunteer Coordinator, the person responsible for performance appraisals, has worked closely with a volunteer.

**Good practice example**

Gateway Social Support Options is a small community based, non-profit organisation that caters to the recreational needs of the community and relies heavily on the services provided by volunteers. It provides social, sporting and recreational services to frail older people, people with disabilities, and residents of supported residential services and public housing to enable them to participate and access recreational activities and services within their community.

Appraisal can be formal or informal and take a variety of forms. Gateway Social Support Options has taken an innovative approach to appraisal through a formalised volunteer mentoring program. Through mentoring, senior, more experienced and skilled volunteers are able to share their knowledge with recently recruited and less-experienced peers. It also enables those experienced volunteers to help improve performance through informal appraisals that occur as a result of the formal mentoring process. The formal introduction of mentoring has empowered long-term volunteers to provide guidance and direction to their peers in a supportive and developmental environment.

**Source: Gateway Social Support Options, Victoria**

### ***Training and development***

The level of competency of volunteers can have a significant impact on the success of sport and recreation organisations. Training is about teaching specific job skills whereas development prepares volunteers for future roles or responsibilities and satisfies individual needs for personal growth. Training and development should not only be offered to new recruits. Individuals who have been with an organisation for some time, but who are taking on a new position, or planning to do so, will also need access to appropriate training and development opportunities. Training and development processes vary widely from one organisation to another and need to be adapted to suit the needs and educational background of individual volunteers as well as an organisation's needs and level of resources.

**Good practice example**

Gateway Social Support Options also takes a comprehensive approach to volunteer training and development. The organisation realises that there are multiple benefits from emphasising training and development. Training sessions provide volunteers with the opportunity to expand their horizons through increased knowledge and provide an avenue to get together with others to debrief and seek advice about any issues which have arisen via their volunteer work.

The training and development process includes:

- The Social Support Manager, with recommendations from the Volunteer Committee and Volunteer Liaison Officer, devises a training schedule for volunteers. This schedule comprises workshops which provide formal information in relation to the volunteer's duties, as well as those that promote their personal growth.
- Volunteer team/training sessions are organised regularly for the interchange of ideas, grievances and support for one another. This forum acts as a training mechanism that focuses on the need for volunteer interaction and client supports.
- Participation in professional development, training and further education opportunities are encouraged at all times, but remains optional.
- Paid and unpaid members of staff are provided with many training opportunities that have either been budgeted or paid for by fundraising or award money.

**Source: Gateway Social Support Options, Victoria**

**Good practice example**

Nulsen Enduro Club based at Nulsen Primary School in WA uses the following process to identify its volunteer training requirements.

The club has a database of past, existing and potential volunteers and their specialist areas, individual and unique qualities.

At the beginning of each season, a chart is compiled of all volunteers and includes:

- name, contact details and address
- committees they have been members of, and positions held
- coaching, official, sports trainers and specialised qualifications
- other relevant qualifications
- police clearance, bus driver license
- courses attended that relate to club activities.

The club is then able to evaluate its strengths and the areas that need to be targeted and strengthened. Based on this analysis, the club is then able to organise workshops, guest speakers and courses to develop and enhance its VIP initiatives even further.

**Source: Nulsen Enduro Club, Western Australia**

### **Good practice example**

The Glenelg Football Club takes a very strategic and systematic approach to volunteer training and development. The club's business plan indicates that it is totally committed to actively developing the skills and expertise of all personnel through a team environment which optimises job satisfaction. This has been achieved by the following:

- Appointed a coordinator for the Tiger Volunteer Program
- A review of all volunteer training requirements was conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator. This review identified a need for key volunteer personnel to receive immediate training in administration, first aid and sports medicine, and volunteer management issues.
- The review also identified a need to have enough people with skills and qualifications to carry out all the necessary tasks.
- All new volunteers are required to attend an orientation workshop.
- All existing and new volunteers are required to complete an application form and are presented with a copy of the Glenelg Football Club Volunteer Policy.
- Key personnel have attended VIP administration training seminars and workshops.
- Glenelg Football Club paid staff have attended Office for Recreation and Sport Volunteer Management Forums.
- All training staff have upgraded first aid and sports trainers qualifications.
- Team managers have attended South Australian Football League Tribunal Procedures training workshop.
- All new volunteers are placed under a mentor scheme.

**Source: Glenelg Football Club, South Australia**

### *Succession planning*

Most volunteer turnover occurs at the end of the season or at the time of the annual general meeting (AGM). A succession plan is necessary to provide opportunities for potential leaders within organisations to be identified and developed in readiness to move up into leadership positions. Organisations that plan for smooth transitions of leadership positions are less likely to experience disruptions to their operations and can better position themselves to replace volunteers who vacate their current positions.

**Good practice example**

The Horsham Motor Sports Club has initiated a workload reduction scheme that resulted in a succession planning spin-off. The club developed supporting positions for each of the main office bearing positions to allow for volunteers to have enough time to devote to the position. For example, the Secretary's position has had three support positions added. The Secretary oversees the position, does the minutes and organises race meetings, but has three assistants as follows:

- Assistant Secretary takes nominations for race meetings, mails out entry forms, photocopies flyers and distributes them for letterbox drops, copies and collates all race programs, phones for nominations and does many other support jobs.
- Licensing Secretary deals with all licensing, memberships, season passes and vehicle registrations.
- Another Assistant Secretary types the program and all basic letters of thanks, requests and arrangements.

This break-up of positions has many advantages. From a succession point of view, more people in the organisation know the job and there is less chance of there being a major upheaval if one of the group leaves. Furthermore it is easier to cover the position when a person is absent. As all of the volunteers are also employed full time, this initiative helps them to be better able to assist the club. As a consequence, these volunteers have stayed on in the positions and remained reasonably fresh while doing so.

**Source: The Horsham Motor Sports Club Inc, Victoria**

## Summary

The main indicator of good practice in volunteer management is volunteers that feel valued and part of the organisation. If this is the case, those volunteers will be more likely to want to contribute to that organisation again. The aim of good volunteer management practices is to enhance the performance of volunteers because volunteers who feel they are achieving their goals are more likely to feel satisfied about their involvement with the organisation. The cycle of need fulfilment, positive reinforcement and satisfaction is what good volunteer management practice is all about. This module has highlighted the role of effective leadership and motivation in good volunteer management practice, clarified the relationship between good practice, performance and satisfaction, and provided a number of examples of good practice in volunteer management.

## Further information

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[http://www.casenet.org/nuts/volunteer\\_management/manage.htm](http://www.casenet.org/nuts/volunteer_management/manage.htm), accessed 2/2/2000.

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## Glossary

**Conflict.** Is where two parties perceive resistance to them achieving their goals. A certain level of conflict is required for organisations to function effectively.

**Discipline.** Refers to actions taken to enforce the organisation's standards and regulations. The most common types of discipline problems include attendance, on-the-job behaviours and dishonesty.

**Extrinsic rewards.** Come from external sources (eg verbal praise, certificates and plaques).

**Formal or position power.** Power that comes from an individual's formal position in the organisation (eg the President).

**Informal or personal power.** Power that comes from an individual's personal qualities which is unrelated to the position they hold in the organisation (eg based on popularity or knowledge).

**Intrinsic rewards.** Come from within the person (eg feelings of competency and personal development).

**Job satisfaction.** Is the general attitude of an individual toward their job.

**Leadership.** Can be defined as creating vision, inspiring commitment and directing human resource efforts toward organisational objectives.

**Motivation.** Refers to the willingness of someone to exert effort toward achieving a goal.

**Performance.** The qualitative and quantitative outputs from an individual's efforts.

**Qualitative work overload.** Where the conceptual demands of the job are too great.

**Quantitative work overload.** Where the amount of work required in the job is too great.

**Stress.** Is a situation in which a person is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand in which the outcome is perceived to be uncertain and important.

**Self-managed work teams.** Groups that determine themselves how their goals will be accomplished and tasks within the group will be allocated.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Schermerhorn, J. (1996). *Management* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). New York: John Wiley & Sons
- <sup>2</sup> Robbins, S. R., Bergman, R., Stagg, I. & Coulter, M. (2000). *Management* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Sydney: Prentice Hall
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>4</sup> Glowinski, S. P. & Cooper, C. L. (1986) Organisational Issues in Stress Research, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, in, Patrickson, M. (Ed) (1989) *Readings in Organisational Behaviour*, Harper and Row: Sydney
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>5</sup> Robbins et al (2000), *op cit*
- <sup>6</sup> Cuskelly, G. (1995). The influence of committee functioning on the organisational commitment of volunteer administrators in sport. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 18(4):254-269.