



VOLUNTEER RETENTION AND RE-ENGAGEMENT

So, what is the problem?

COVID-19 has rattled the sporting world, leaving some of our current volunteers feeling run-down and burnt out. Volunteering Victoria estimates that 64 per cent of the volunteer workforce across the state ceased volunteering since COVID-19 began. Although a lot of our volunteers have returned, some of them had a break from sport... and they enjoyed it! Whether they gave up volunteering, moved to different sports or found new hobbies, sport's volunteers have been significantly impacted.

So, what do we do?

Sport can hope to re-engage and retain volunteers by recognising, re-evaluating, and reimagining.

RECOGNISE

It is important that clubs recognise their current volunteer workforce. By recognising all the effort that is being put into the club, volunteers will feel more appreciated and more likely to stick around.

These are just some of the ways that clubs can recognise their volunteers:

- Canteen vouchers
- "Volunteer of the Month" awards
- Free entry at the gate
- Reimburse costs (i.e., fuel vouchers if the volunteer uses their car for club purposes)
- Financial incentives may be required for larger, more time-consuming roles

RE-EVALUATE

Think about how you ask people to volunteer

Advertising a volunteer role to a large audience might not lead to anyone putting their hand up, especially if people are new to the club. Tap people on the shoulder and ask them to do a role. It is easier for them to ask questions and harder for them to say no.

Break up larger roles into smaller jobs

Your club may find it is easier to find several volunteers to complete small jobs, rather than one volunteer to complete many jobs. If you have a volunteer role that involves several jobs and you are struggling to fill that role, you might want to consider breaking it up.

Rotate Roles

Rotate the roles that no one likes to do. Does everyone in your committee hate taking minutes? Take it in turns! It is easier to sell the job of minute-taking if you only have to do it every few weeks, rather than every single time.

Put timeframes around roles

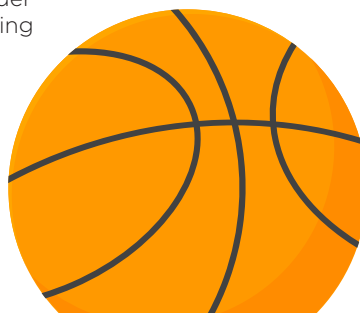
Volunteers are less likely to put their hand up for roles when they don't know what the time commitment is. Put end times to your meetings (and stick to them!), highlight how many times they are required to volunteer in a season, and how long it will take each time. This allows people the opportunity to make an informed decision about whether they have the time to spare.

Develop position descriptions

By having set position descriptions, new volunteers can be sure in what they are "signing up for." Lay out roles, timeframes, skills required, etc.

Create a spreadsheet of current volunteers to find gaps

It is hard to recruit new volunteers if you are not sure of what gaps there are. Consider creating a spreadsheet of volunteer roles, including current volunteers to find gaps that need to be filled.



REIMAGINE

Reimagine how your club does things when it comes to recruiting new volunteers. Consider implementing some of the following:

Online volunteer booking system

Consider a booking system with the availability of volunteer roles. This makes it easy for club members, parents, players, etc. to jump online and book in for roles without being pressured. An easier way might be to display available volunteer roles on a board, and get people to place a sticky note with their name on it against the roles they are interested in.

Consider a "Buddy-System"

Do you have several new volunteers at your club? Where appropriate, consider pairing them with more experienced volunteers. Promoting this opportunity may also lead to more tentative volunteers feeling comfortable to put their hand up for roles, if they know they will be supported.

Think creatively

Consider looking for volunteers more broadly. Has your club considered offering volunteer opportunities to people with a disability, or people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities?

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

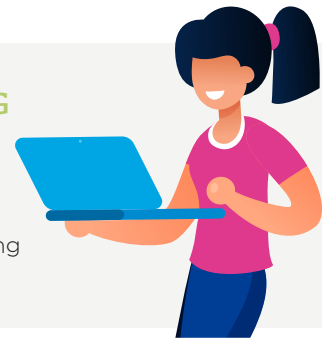
There can be many barriers to volunteering and these vary from person to person. It is important that clubs recognise these and work to eliminate or reduce the barriers where possible.



Perceived Barrier	Possible Solution
Lack of personal time	Split roles into smaller jobs to make it easier and less time-consuming.
Not being asked – not willing to put their hand up	Tap people on the shoulder – it is harder to say no!
Awareness of available roles	Promote roles that are needed to be filled via social media, club newsletters, during training/games/club events.
Perception that roles will be too difficult	Make people aware of what is involved in the role – think about brief position descriptions.

ENABLERS TO VOLUNTEERING

Although there are key barriers to volunteering, there are also always enablers, and it is important that club's work with these to make the volunteering process more enticing.



Possible Enablers	Possible Actions
Knowing how long roles will take	Set finish times and number of hours/days/weeks required for the role.
Not being stuck with a complex title	"Canteen Operations Manager" could sound more intimidating than necessary. Consider just highlighting key roles rather than labelling positions.
Not having to do the same thing each week	Rotate roles between volunteers each week, particularly within the committee, such as chairing the meeting and taking minutes.
Matching volunteers with talents/interests	Does any of the people around your club have any interests or skills? If a player works as a Financial Advisor, and your club is looking for a new Treasurer – you may have found a good match!

Where to go for new volunteers

- Current players
- New junior player's parents
- Past players
- Community members
- University/TAFE students who require volunteer hours
- Sponsors
- People who are connected to Disability Support Services
- Community Groups such as Men's Sheds, Neighbourhood Centres, etc.