

Step 1 – Be positive

Believe that investing in people will strengthen your club. Work as a team to recruit and develop people. Just like Lord Coe did with Games makers, highlight the importance of your volunteers.

Step 2 – Find out about your people

Take every opportunity to informally welcome visitors and members. Introduce yourself and others. Get to know people's names. Tell them about your sports club. Encourage social interaction. Find out their interests and talents. Cultivate a "how might we work together" mind-set.

Step 3 – Help people feel comfortable

Share information about your club. What do you hope for? What makes your club special? How are you organised? What support or training do you offer your volunteers? Keep things simple.

Step 4 – Fit roles around people

Each role should be uncomplicated and fun. Understand what the person wants from their volunteering and they are able to give (time, skills, etc.). Start small. Have mentors.

Step 5 – Communicate & Review

Check that people are enjoying what they are doing. Be vigilant for signs of burnout. Share the work and rotate roles so people don't get bored. Take time to feedback about how people are doing. Especially praise them for the things you want them to keep doing.

Step 6 – Nurture talent from within

Offer people opportunities to see the bigger picture without throwing them in the deep end. Encourage shadowing. Gradually grow roles.

Step 7 – Show your appreciation

Say thank you at every opportunity. Write thank you letters. Send cards for birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions. Present awards. Tailor the type of recognition you give to the motivation of the individual.

Avoid these eight classic mistakes...

1. Try to do everything yourself.

The amount one person can do is limited. Believe that by empowering others, you are creating the basis of sustainability and success.

2. Force round pegs into square holes.

Having a vacancy is better than having the wrong person. At best, the person won't do the role and will quit. At worst, they will do the role badly leaving a mess to clean up.

3. Use jargon and acronyms.

Nothing puts people off quicker than being made to feel excluded or stupid. Make sure your interactions are fully inclusive.

4. Expect more time from a person than they have to give.

Be realistic about what people can fit into busy lives. Be flexible about how they can contribute. Think creatively about making it work.

5. Leave inappropriate behaviours unchallenged.

If you don't immediately address difficult situations, you will appear to sanction that behaviour risking your reputation, affecting the morale of all your volunteers, and potentially causing serious problems.

6. Allow one person to have too many roles.

If they succeed, others are intimidated thinking that "I can't possibly do all that". More likely they will only be able to skim the surface of all the roles rather than do one role well.

7. Stereotype people.

If you assume women want to do the cooking or an accountant wants to do your finances you risk losing that talent. Never prejudge what a person wants to contribute. Ask them.

8. Expect the volunteers you need will show up.

For most sports clubs volunteers are their most important asset. Even if you had the best facility in the world it wouldn't run itself! Make volunteer management a priority. Plan how you will recruit, retain and reward your people.

