

How to run your club

Module four -Recruitment and retention

One of the biggest challenges for clubs is to ensure that their board is both representative of its members and appropriately skilled and experienced to govern the organisation. Many clubs are guilty of using the “*tap on the shoulder*” method for recruiting board or committee members. Planning for the recruitment of new members and setting guidelines to manage the process will place your organisation in a much stronger position for a higher level of performance.

Even though a sport or recreation club is probably not a company or may not operate with very formal procedures it is important to use a systematic and deliberate process when addressing board and committee member recruitment. The main steps are outlined below.

Phase One: Needs assessment

- Confirm the number of positions to be filled.
- Confirm the roles, the activities and the skills required.
- Align the roles to the club's goals and objectives.
- Identify current members who may have the skills required.
- Look for external candidates who may have the skills required.



Phase Two: Recruitment

- Approach suitable candidates and seek nominations.
- Formalise nominations and the selection process.
- Consider the direct appointment of members with specific skills (if your constitution allows this).
- Appointment and induction



Phase Three: Succession planning

- Review the board's performance and composition.
- Maintain a needs matrix and a current member profile by activities and skills.
- Maintain a list of prospective new board members from within the club membership.
- Identify suitable external candidates
- Constantly update the 'potential member' list.

A formal induction process that provides an introduction to the club and its operations allows new members to be properly informed, supported and welcomed to the board from the time of their appointment. A board induction process could strongly influence a new member's experience with a contribution to board activities coming sooner following a comprehensive induction process. The induction process should aim to provide new board members with the necessary information and training to:

- Better understand the club, the operating procedures and the club's objectives
- Better understand the history and current position of the club
- Contribute effectively to board discussion and decision making
- Make informed decisions
- Understand their roles and responsibilities as a board member
- Get to know fellow board members
- Create a more enjoyable and rewarding experience

The club president or chairperson should be responsible for the delivery of the induction process and the board may also wish to nominate a mentor to assist the newly appointed member. If newly appointed members are assigned a mentor who is already on the board, they are more likely to feel welcomed into their position, included into group dynamics, have greater self-confidence and feel better informed to contribute to discussion.

The retention of board or committee members for an extended period is a challenge for most clubs. Volunteers usually 'do their stint' and then are happy to move on and pass the responsibility to someone else.

A club with a formal process for identifying and appointing board members and a similar process for informing and inducting board members will be better managed.

It is likely that a club that develops and uses more formal processes will retain members in positions for longer periods.

Regardless of the support provided to board and committee members there is always a need to renew and refresh membership and as such a formal succession planning process should also be a feature of a well-managed club.



Activity

Think about the processes you currently use at your club to recruit and retain board and committee members.

Do you use formal processes and procedures?

Do you have a succession plan in place?

What do you need to do to improve the way your club attracts board and committee members?