

Chapter 4.3

Creating a learning organisation

Benefits of this chapter

To make your national aquatics federation more effective, you need high-level skills both in your administration and in your management. These will help you to plan, organise, recruit, motivate and develop your federation as a whole.

This section considers the skills that are needed to effectively manage the resources of your federation. It focuses on key skills and tools that can be useful to your federation. By understanding how your federation works currently and how you want to work in the future you can use internal resources to build your federation and make your current practices a learning experience for your staff.

Making your aquatics federation a learning organisation can help increase the motivation within your federation. Increased knowledge will help your National Federation not only become successful in the future but remain successful for years to come.

Introduction

As the National aquatics Federation in your country you have a wealth of knowledge. Knowing what your major assets are is essential in order for you to continue building towards your goals as a successful aquatics federation.

As the only aquatics federation in your country you have the unique ability of having specific skills and knowledge about swimming, diving, synchronised swimming, water-polo and open water competitions. Not to mention the unique relationships you have already with your existing partners.

Creating a learning organisation is dependant on maintaining and growing your own personal balance sheet and that of your employees. A personal balance sheet, just like the financial balance sheet of your federation, is made up of assets, profit and loss. As it is the case for all assets, they will be worth less at the end of the year if they have not been increased during the year.

Building the personal balance sheets of your staff and yourself can show the true value of your National Federation and can help you identify places to work on in order to ensure that at the end of the year you are building a winning federation.

Building the assets

Skills

- Skills are hard to win but they keep their value for a longer time. Developing your staff's abilities to complete a task effectively and efficiently can build their skill set and ultimately build the success of your federation. For example, if your staff can run a swimming competition smoothly and efficiently this builds a good image of your federation and increases at the same time your staff's organisational skills.
- Important skills to have are in the technical, planning, administrative sector
- The key is to focus on skills that will create a winning platform. Think about what skills can help build the success of your aquatics federation!

Relationships

- Create more depth in relationships with existing members, sponsors, etc. These are the relationships which can bring your aquatics federation current success.
- Focus on building more breadth in relationships with potential members, sponsors and partners. These in combination with your existing partnerships are the relationships, which can bring your aquatics federation success in the future.
- Develop closer relationships with people who can help your federation: media, experts, suppliers, governments, etc. Think about who you know better now than one year ago? And who do you want to know better in one year from now?

Knowledge

- Knowledge is relatively easy to accumulate quickly, but it also depreciates quickly
- Knowledge is important but it does not work without relations and skills
- The key is to focus on specific areas work on what you know about aquatics and what you can do in aquatics, think about what you can do now that you couldn't do one year ago. And what do you want to be able to do one year from now?

Planning

Speeding up the assets building process within your aquatics federation is all about planning. No matter what activity your federation is working on, be it organising a swimming championship or finalising your financial planning for the year, it is important to plan.

Planning steps

- What does your aquatics federation want to improve or enhance during this activity?
- How can it be successful?
- Who can help? Which team members can you use?
- What might be potential obstacles and how can your aquatics federation deal with them?
- How will you as the leader in your aquatics federation measure the process?

Chapter 4.3
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organisation

Working within your federation

- Briefing before and debriefing during and after every assignment is important, be it on a daily basis during an event, competition, project, or at the end. Getting constant feedback from your team is important for their growth and development as well as that of your federation on a whole.
- Reflection and feedback is important to do by yourself, with your project team and with the project manager

Debriefing

Without a good debriefing, the point of the project can be missed. Debriefing connects the dots for your team and staff, and allows them to see the whole picture. Debriefing takes your team members out of the realm of the activity and makes them view the entire project from an objective point of view. Debriefing is important because it lets your staff learn from the experience and let you as a leader within your aquatics federation teach (you can also learn while you teach!).

Debrief by yourself

- 1/ Take the time to evaluate your own work
- 2/ Take notes and keep a journal during the process with reflections, these notes can help later when you are debriefing with everyone
- 3/ Ask yourself these questions:
 - What went well, and why?
 - What did not go so well, and why not?
 - What can you change? How can things be improved?

Debriefing with your project team and staff

- 1/ Ask your team these questions:
 - What went well, and why?
 - What did not go so well, and why not?
 - What can you change? How can things be improved?
- 2/ Be sure to give and get honest feed-back
- 3/ Have a common goal of improving and helping each other to build a strong asset together

Useful hints

Building a learning organisation will help increase the value of your aquatics federation

Developing your federation's assets through reflection and feedback can help decipher what is experienced, done, learned and interpreted during each activity

Debriefing is an opportunity to learn