

Most companies will tell you that it is very expensive to recruit new staff and that it is important to retain people for this reason alone: this theory applies to volunteers too. Of course, there are many other reasons why we don't want to lose people from our clubs and these top tips will help you to look at how to retain your volunteers.

Why Retain Volunteers?

- Recruiting new volunteers is costly and time-consuming
- The experience of your current volunteers is invaluable
- The club may have invested time, skills and training in the development of volunteers
- Retaining ensures that the continuity of the club ethos is maintained
- The loyalty of the volunteers is vital to the club, especially during difficult or busy periods.

There are many reasons why people start or continue to volunteer. They often want to be welcomed as part of a team, meet new people and have the opportunity to learn new skills. Many people volunteer for the chance to feel useful and valued. As well as giving something back to the community, they usually feel that they are getting something out of the experience. Here are some examples of things you can do that will make volunteering a better experience and, therefore, help retain your volunteers.

What to do	More detail
Have a welcome pack and induction	This should include information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• club structure and policies• contact details• the volunteer's role outline• welcome and introduction(s)• how to claim expenses• buddy/mentoring arrangements• advice on equipment/specialist clothing, etc
Communicate with your volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clear, regular communication is vital• hold regular volunteer briefing meetings• use text or email for quick communication• have a volunteer page or section in the club newsletter• hold one-to-one meetings, where appropriate

What to do	More detail
Make sure they are enjoying the challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• variety and challenge is important• give recognition and reward (say thank you!)• make the volunteer feel wanted and valued• give your volunteers increased confidence• keep people motivated• use teamwork where appropriate
Give your volunteers skills and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify, with the volunteer, what if any training is needed• sell training as a positive reward• understand that training will give confidence• internal – training given by your own team or volunteer mentor. This can include practical support.• external – many organisations provide skills and training courses.

Finally, it is important to retain your volunteers for the right reasons. Sometimes it is the right time for someone to move on or to take more of a back seat. Your club should plan for succession in volunteer roles – it is healthy to have some turnover and you should plan for this as part of your retention policy.

If you would like more information about volunteers and volunteering check out a whole range of resources on Volunteering England's website – www.volunteering.org.uk

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