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## Introduction

Membership strength is fundamental to maintain the viability of surf clubs, by ensuring that patrol numbers, financial status, educational and training obligations are met. As such, an understanding and strategic support of members is vital. This can be achieved simply by making members feel valued and part of the club and organisation, through involvement in training, development, recognition and support services.

In some instances, the implementation of recruitment activities or programs is required to boost membership numbers. Varied recruitment methods may be implemented to attract members to the club and should be coupled with a framework of retention tools in order to keep the members we have. A key question clubs must ask prior to initiating a recruitment program is: how will our club support our new members?

For this reason, it is important to take a holistic approach to the recruitment of members by applying Human Resource Management (HRM) best practice. HRM is an appropriate way of understanding the process involved in recruiting, managing, and retaining members/ volunteers.

## About this guide

The Recruitment and Retention Guide is about helping Clubs boost membership numbers, through the recruitment of new members. By presenting ideas, procedure and best practice in one guide, clubs are given an easy reference point to develop new ideas ready for implementation.

This guide represents the theory behind recruitment and retention in your Club. A key aspect of the guide is that it looks at the greater picture of membership in your Club, detailing how to plan effectively for recruitment and how to keep this new membership group interested in the club and its activities.

Working in collaboration with this guide are the practical resources provided by your branch, state and national bodies. Resources available through your Surf Life Saving (SLS) State Body include posters, flyers and recruitment/awareness trailers that may be available upon request, while other materials may be available through your Branch. Such resources have been identified throughout this guide and have been highlighted in red for your attention. These are the resources that will add value to your recruitment program or activity, leaving a lasting impression on your target group.

Remember, your branch, state and national centres are happy to offer practical resources wherever possible. Please contact these centre's to find out what is available:

QUEENSLAND	PHONE	EMAIL
Surf Life Saving QLD	07 3846 8000	info@lifesaving.com.au
Point Danger Branch	07 5534 6077	pdbsurf@bigpond.com
South Coast Branch	07 5575 2855	office@scbslsq.org
Sunshine Coast Branch	07 5444 1919	ssbranch@lifesaving.com.au
Wide Bay Capricorn Branch	07 4152 9485	sllwbc@lifesaving.com.au
North Barrier Branch	07 4726 2888	nbbslsq@lifesaving.com.au
North Queensland Branch	07 4032 2300	northqueensland@lifesaving.com.au
NEW SOUTH WALES	PHONE	EMAIL
Surf Life Saving NSW	02 9471 8000	experts@surflifesaving.com.au
Far North Coast Branch	0427 808 707	fncreg@bigpond.net.au
North Coast Branch	02 6653 1700	presidentslnc@bigpond.com
Mid North Coast Branch	02 6584 3299	slsmnc@bigpond.com.au
Lower North Coast Branch	02 6554 2259	admin@slslnc.org.au
Hunter Branch	02 4961 4533	info@hsls.org.au
Central Coast Branch	02 4353 0299	admin@slscc.com.au
Sydney Northern Beaches Branch	02 9913 8066	info@surflifesaving.net.au
Sydney Branch	02 9019 0722	admin@surflifesavingsydney.com.au
Illawarra Branch	02 4228 3884	office@slsillawarra.com.au
South Coast Branch	0419 576 620	scsls@bigpond.net.au
Far South Coast Branch	0401 361 822	secretary@batemansbayslsc.org.au

# Volunteers

All members are encouraged to volunteer in some capacity. Finding what interests and motivates your members will help you make their experience more meaningful and satisfying and in turn keep them interested in helping your club. We recognise volunteers as people from the community, including parents, young people, school students and more, who freely give up their time to support club activities and the wider community.

People volunteer for a variety of reasons, including to:

- Learn new skills
- Help others and give something back to the community
- Make new friends
- Explore career opportunities
- Feel needed, appreciated and useful
- Gain a new direction in life
- Commit to the club or cause
- Use existing skills
- Keep active and healthy
- Support family and friends who are involved
- Further their interest or passion in sport
- Have fun!

One of the biggest challenges for Clubs can be attracting and retaining young members. Research conducted by Volunteering QLD has shown that the ideals of young people who volunteer are:

- Flexibility: the most important factor in terms of time and commitment
- Visible Outcome: young people want to achieve clearly defined goals
- Friendship: young people enjoy volunteering with their friends
- Experience and Engagement: young people want relevant, useful experience and the chance to learn new skills and utilise their current skill set

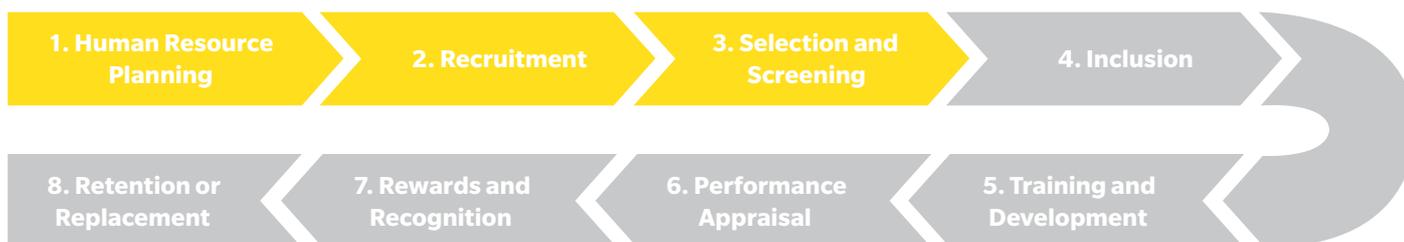
- Belonging: young people find personal satisfaction in belonging within social, educational, work and volunteering contexts
- Linking: young people will be more productive when their interests, reasons and motivations are linked to the task at hand
- Leadership: young people like to aspire towards greater responsibility
- Legitimacy: they need a favourable image of volunteering
- Ease of access: many young people simply don't know how to volunteer or who to contact
- Incentives: stress the tangible outcomes of volunteering- what's in it for them
- Variety: in terms of both the type of work and the level of commitment
- Organisation: volunteering needs to be efficient but informal
- Laughs: volunteering must be fun!

## Recruitment Planning

The process of Recruitment Planning is very similar to Human Resource Management (HRM) which involves planning and organising the recruitment, induction, training and development, performance appraisal, reward and recognition, and retention and replacement of members.

This is achieved through the provision of training and development opportunities, by offering support and by recognising and rewarding members' performances. Effective HRM should lead to motivated and contented members, which will encourage them to stay at your club. The cyclical nature of recruitment is best depicted in the traditional model below:

### ■ Acquiring Human Resources ■ Maintaining Human Resources



# Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of attracting new members to your club. It is also an opportunity to reinvigorate your club with new ideas, new roles and greater diversity. The fundamental goal of recruitment is to acquire the people required to function effectively and deliver necessary services. Recruitment is more effective when those responsible for bringing new members into the club understand what being a member is about, why people become members and the associated benefits of membership.

When recruiting members for the first time, it is important to know why they became members in the first place. A good question to ask is: 'Why do people want to become members of our club?'

Remember to emphasise the benefits for members, rather than the needs of the club. Members need to feel valued as an individual and not made to feel like they were recruited to complete a task.

Diversity in members can be important in allowing you to reflect the composition of your local community, in meeting your organisations mission and pursuing an equal opportunities policy. By embracing a diverse recruitment campaign you will encourage new groups of people into the club and benefit from their differences. Diverse volunteering programs can also be the most exciting and dynamic.



## THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process can be simplified into five main parts. These are:

1. Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator
2. Current Membership Planning
3. Developing and implementing the recruitment plan
4. Induction for new members
5. Evaluation

### 1. Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator or designated club contact plays a key role in the recruitment process. They are the point of contact between new members and the club, assisting in the induction process, evaluation of the recruitment program and they work in conjunction with the Executive Committee. The Volunteer Coordinator should be fully involved and aware of strategic plans and objectives of the club in order to complete their role successfully.

The Volunteer Coordinators specific duties include planning where members are needed (e.g. a shortage in membership categories or for task allocation), preparing or updating job descriptions for formal position holders, giving verbal induction and instruction for informal position holders, planning recruitment campaigns, updating the human resource or position inventory, coordination of member development and training opportunities.

It is important to remember all members need support, however what kind of support you offer will depend on the nature of their membership, the work they do and their identified needs. Generally, the kind of support required by formal position holders and new members includes:

- Supervision- regular time to talk and plan (relevant to formal position holders)
- Position descriptions- outline what is involved in the role the new member is adopting (relevant to formal position holders)
- Position appraisals- review the member's performance relevant to their position description
- Problem solving- perhaps involving discipline and grievance procedures
- Training- everyone must be given sufficient training to do their work well
- Recognition- meaningful ways to recognise members' contributions

## 2. Current Membership Planning

Current Membership planning analyses the existing need for members and then forecasts the future membership needs of the Club. The human resource needs for the Club should be analysed prior to the start of a recruitment campaign, so the recruitment campaign can be geared to appeal to the particular target audience. Identifying your clubs membership needs can be done a number of ways:

1. List your Club's minimum membership requirements
2. Set a numerical target for each category of membership
3. Profile the target group(s) based on sex, age, address, etc.
4. Become familiar with your Club's membership needs
5. Write down a one, three and five year membership plan
6. Review annual targets against actual results.

Further points that should be considered are:

- Can we fulfil patrol requirements?
- What tasks do we want volunteers to complete?
- Have we got job descriptions for these?
- How many members and volunteers do we really need?
- How long do we need them for?
- When do we need them?
- What training will they need to complete the tasks we have identified for them?
- What support will they require (ongoing from their arrival)?
- Will our current volunteers accept new volunteers?

**Important Note:** The Australian Sports Commission's Club Development Program (ASC) and SLSNSW's Quality Clubs Program are both valuable tools that can assist with overall club development and to identify membership trends and needs.

### The Target Audience

Prior to starting a recruitment campaign, it is important to understand the target audience. It is useful to think about the possible motivations that people might have for becoming members of a club, as this can help you to design opportunities and influence your recruitment message.

To attract as many members as possible to your Club, it is important to stress the wide range of membership as to appeal to a large cross-section of the community. In some cases, it may be necessary to change the recruitment plan to cater to the different groups.

Members come into clubs with various levels of commitment and need for involvement. Other variables that will affect new members are: the amount of time and energy they are willing to devote to the club; diversity of background; skill; interest; experience; and expectations. As such, the recruitment process needs to be varied to attract as many different types of volunteers.

### Conduct a job analysis and prepare job descriptions

The Volunteer Coordinator or designated club representative should have an inventory of positions required for club function. Using the position inventory as a reference, job descriptions should be created for formal roles within the club.

It should be noted that there are a number of roles in the club that are integral for clubs to function, however they do not necessarily require



a formal job description. The member who is in charge of the BBQ is a good example of an informal position holder who does not necessarily require a job description in order to complete the task. An informal verbal induction to their position will often suffice.

Job descriptions are required so that members know the size of the task ahead of them before deciding to commit their time and energy to a Club or a position. This will result in a number of outcomes. Firstly, the member will have an outline of what is required to complete their role effectively. Secondly, the position holder will have a reference point to appraise whether or not they are meeting the position requirements. Thirdly, the position holder will be unlikely to get any unexpected surprises whilst on the job, or be persuaded that other duties fall within the scope of their role. A well-prepared job description should include information such as the time commitment required to complete the role and the experience (if any) required to complete the task.

### TIPS!

- SurfGuard is a great tool that will assist membership analysis. For example, printing a summary report from SurfGuard is an easy way of identifying categories in your club that are in need of new recruits. You can logon to SurfGuard at [https://www.surfguard.slsa.asn.au/SLSA\\_Admin/modules/login/login.php](https://www.surfguard.slsa.asn.au/SLSA_Admin/modules/login/login.php)
- On registration day, or upon joining, request all members sign up for a position in the club – remember, no job is too small! This will encourage all members to take an active role in the club.

## 3. Developing and Implementing the Recruitment Program

The development and implementation of a high-quality recruitment plan should substantially boost your Club's success in attracting new members. Further, by breaking down the planning process into components, development and implementation of the recruitment program may be simplified allowing you to introduce and evaluate it in stages.

The recruitment planning process should be completed in consultation with all members of the Executive Committee to ensure it complements the plans for all aspects of the Club and, importantly, that it is understood and agreed by all.

In the development phase, a well-planned recruitment program will consist of: market research; establishing a budget; strategic planning; setting objectives and event planning.

### Development

#### Research:

Think about the reasons why people join Surf Life Saving. By incorporating this information into the recruitment plan, the Club will have a greater chance of reaching their target audience. An important aspect of your research is to evaluate previous programs, using resources such as the **Club Recruitment Program Evaluation Form**.

#### Budget:

When establishing a budget for your recruitment program, consideration needs to be given to the following points, as they will determine the budget needed:

- What will the cost of the recruitment program be?
- Will the recruitment program generate income?
- What type of program or event are you going to hold?
- How often will this event be held (weekly, monthly or annually)?
- Will additional resources be required? Will the Club buy or borrow these resources?
- Do you have sponsors who will share the costs of the event? – Remember to thank your sponsors after the event using the 'Thank You Letter' template.

#### Strategic planning:

The club should incorporate membership growth into the one, three and five year business strategy and recruitment plan to address the membership and recruitment needs of the club. The budget will need to accommodate potential costs involved with implementing these plans.

The need for a Public Relations or Marketing Officer within the Club should be considered when reviewing the organisational structure of the Club. This position has the potential to positively impact on the recruitment program as well as regular Club operations.

#### Objectives:

The club should clarify what the objectives of the recruitment program are. They should be realistic and appropriate to your Club, having the support of members involved in the consultation process. The Club should be motivated by the need for change and the actions required in meeting this goal.

When setting the objectives of your Club recruitment plan, it is important to ask the following questions:

- Why are we developing a program or event?
- Who will benefit?
- What is the desired outcome?
- What are the short and long-term benefits?

#### Possible objectives may include one or all of the following:

- Increase membership levels / categories
- Reverse declining membership levels / categories
- Maintain existing membership levels
- Improve the quality of membership

#### Event planning:

Each event you plan will convey a positive message about some aspect of your club. A good idea is to plan a range of events so you can attract a range of people. Some general points to remember when planning an event include:

- Set down a program of events and times
- Notify volunteers and invite guests and sponsors
- Consider carefully how suitable your clubhouse is and the ability to cater for parking, visitors, toilets, PA system, etc.
- Create an **Event Checklist**
- Set a budget. Is it possible to seek sponsorship for the day or part of it?
- Prepare a timeline. A good way of doing this is by working backwards from the date of the event and then fill in all the jobs you need to complete
- Have an alternate plan in case the original is not possible, e.g. planning for wet weather conditions
- Plan security, as some areas may need to be off limits
- Offer 'taster sessions' of activities provided at your surf club
- Ensure that one or more people are available to deal with enquiries
- Complete Special Events Form (Refer to the SLSA Guidelines for Safer Surf Clubs – Volume 4).

#### Other points for consideration when planning an event are:

- Directing signage
- Parking arrangements
- Location and setting up of displays
- Safety precautions and first aid equipment
- Availability of information and brochures
- Play areas for younger children
- Refreshments
- Toilets
- Rubbish bins and cleaning arrangements.

## Implementation

Effective planning for the implementation of the program will clarify what is expected from those involved and provide clear role responsibilities. The plan should address all implementation phases of the program from start to finish.

In the implementation phase, a well-planned recruitment program will involve: public relations; promotion; communication; and media. Points to consider are:

- Who will organise the program?
- Who will organise the people who will run the program?
- How will we generate interest?

### Public Relations:

The term public relations refer to how your Club is seen in public - that is your image. Public relations should:

- Explain what surf lifesavers do and what the movement is about
- Share the good things the club does with others
- Communicate with the public
- Recognise club and individual members' performances

It is recommended that the Executive Committee decide on a public relations program that is simple and realistic. A successful public relations program will directly affect the outcome of programs undertaken by the club, membership numbers and financials.

Incorporating market research, the objectives of your public relations program should be identified and form the public relations plan. Possible objectives may include: to promote Surf Life Saving as an essential community service within a healthy, social and sporting environment; to promote the range of activities offered to members; to increase community awareness of Surf Life Saving and its activities; to increase surf awareness and surf safety within the community.

### Promotion:

Recruiting members can be seen as a similar process to advertising - you are trying to 'sell' the benefits of membership with your club. As with any advertising, it is critical that you have a clear message. The message should be about ensuring that recruits are informed, motivated and know how to get involved!

The nature of the recruitment message will depend on the needs of your Club. When recruiting members, the message will generally address:

- What the organisation does
- What the club does
- Different membership categories
- How members make a difference
- How to find out more

### Communication:

The message you communicate in your recruitment program is integral to its success. Some points to remember when developing your recruitment message:

- The information being communicated must have meaning and relevance to the recipient
- Keep the message simple and uncomplicated, without jargon
- Stress important points by repeating them
- Ensure the message is consistent
- The person/people/club communicating the message must have credibility for the recipient to have confidence in the message

- Communicate the message through channels that the target audience would use and respect themselves
- Ensure that an easy contact point is advertised for more information and feedback.
- Remember, a message that is difficult to understand or uses too much jargon may confuse people or leave them uninformed.

### Avenues to promote the recruitment program can be simplified into three groups:

1. Communication/networking among existing members, their friends, family and associates
2. Personal presentations to schools, parents and carers, youth groups, sporting groups, community service clubs, employers and industry groups
3. Media releases.

### Media Releases:

Involving media in the promotion of any program is cost effective and has a powerful impact.

Basic tips when writing a **media release** are listed below:

- Use a positive headline
- Ensure the story is typed and limited to one page
- Write in context with realistic quotes, ready for immediate inclusion in the media article
- Use simple language and be concise
- Design the first paragraph to entice the reader to keep reading
- Supply two contact names and phone numbers
- Outline the timing of the release
- Include a digital photo where possible

Your Club should have materials ready to support media releases and any public enquiry. Support materials should include the following:

- Cover letter/program
- Facts sheet
- Club newsletter or e-newsletter (that is professional enough for non-members to understand)
- Club Annual Reports (used as a marketing document this can be an interesting read)
- Club operations profile and rules (card or brochure)
- History of the Club
- Club Handbook
- Sample Q&A's when talking with the media

Additional advice on liaising with media can be found by contacting the Media Department at your SLS State body.

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- Specialist media which you might like to consider advertising or seeking coverage from include company newsletters or professional trade journals (useful if you are searching for someone with particular skills).
- If you are considering placing an advertisement, you should: ensure your advertisement reflects the diversity of the local community; check the newspaper's circulation areas and numbers; ask if there is a special rate for volunteer vacancies.
- Alternatively to placing an advertisement, you may include a promotional story about the club, such as record membership numbers or lives saved, and link your recruitment activity or program into this story.

## 4. Induction for New Members

Member induction is one of the final phases of the recruitment process. Induction is the process whereby members are welcomed to the Club and given details about their position (where applicable), the daily operation of the Club and an introduction to key people within the Club.

An effective induction process increases the chance of member retention by reducing the stress placed upon new members. Member induction may be implemented in a formal or informal fashion, with successful results from both. It is important for members to feel valued and included in order to assimilate within the club and perform their roles to the best of their ability. Member induction may also exist as an introduction to further training and development programs.

**Member inductions should be implemented when new members join a club and involve the following:**

- Assistance in completing the membership application, insurance and child protection forms
- An introduction to club officers and key members
- An explanation of the benefits of their involvement with the club
- A written introduction to the Club (such as an induction booklet, or Member handbook), noting its history and other points of interest
- Follow-up events, such as an invitation to their family to attend social functions

**An effective induction will give new members:**

- An understanding of general Club operation
- Basic information about the Club
- The correct person to contact if they have an enquiry
- An understanding of the opportunities available and identify where they can access resources

### TIPS!

- An induction information night is a good way to induct a group of new members at one time, providing the occasion for new members to ask questions, learn about new opportunities in the club and meet fellow members.
- The Volunteer Coordinator should use the Induction Checklist, to ensure new members are given sufficient support upon membership with the club.

## 5. Evaluation

**Evaluation of a recruitment program** is vital to determine whether objectives of the program were met, whether any of the processes may be improved and to ensure the budget is ratified. During this stage, improvements to the program may be suggested and incorporated into future programs- especially if it is to become an annual event.

**Your evaluation process should involve:**

- Debrief of your activities and analysis of everyone's performances. Look at what worked well and what could be improved in future years
- Compare your goals and objectives with the measured results. From these results you can suggest where changes may need to be made
- Establish a method/s to measure the response and interest of a campaign, such as attendance at an event, new membership numbers, expression of interest register
- Establish how often progress should be checked, for example halfway through a program or at the end of a program?

**Resources!** Have a look at the '**Club Expression of Interest Register**' and '**Club Recruitment Program Evaluation Form**' which should be used in the evaluation process.



## Recruitment Campaign quick reference guide

Promotional materials such as posters and brochures are a visual prompt that prospective members can take with them. These kinds of promotional materials are versatile in their usability, as they can decorate surf clubs and form the backdrop for displays and demonstrations.

Resources available to surf clubs through your SLS State Body at various times include:

- **Recruitment posters**
- **Recruitment flyers**
- **Recruitment/Community Awareness/Surf Education trailers**

Clubs should check the availability of such resources by contacting their respective SLS State Body. Clubs are also advised to contact their Branch for extra resources and promotional materials.

**Network and share the load** – Sharing the program aims and process with other members of the surf club is an easy method of sharing the load. In this way, members can transfer a consistent recruitment message through their networks, whether or not they are actively involved in the recruitment campaign.

**Use the local media** – Develop a relationship with the local media by regularly updating them on important calendar events, interesting stories and rescues. Remember to include photos to catch the reader's attention.

**Know your target** – Complete a review of membership statistics within your Club and plan a recruitment program to grab the attention of the desired group for a membership boost. Make sure you set a goal prior to initiating the recruitment program, so everyone knows what they are working toward.

**Awards and training** – Involve your club Chief Instructor or Training Officer in the recruitment program. They will need to be aware of any additional training requirements needed if there is an influx of members requiring training.

**Follow-up** – A structured induction program that is ready to implement will ensure that new recruits are oriented into club life. An effective induction program will include:

- A letter of response from their expression of interest
- Assistance in completing the membership application, insurance and child protection forms
- An introduction to club officers and key members (can form part of the club **induction**)
- A **Member handbook** or similar

**Evaluation** – To assess the success of your program you need to debrief your activities and analyse your performances. Look at what worked well and what could be improved in future years.



## Recruitment Activities & Ideas

### Advertising in the community

It is worth considering the strategic placement of **posters** around community facilities such as schools, community centres, shopping malls, within sponsors' businesses, recreation and swimming centres etc.

### Career Pathways

Surf Life Saving has a number of career pathways available to members, including lifeguarding and paid administration tasks. These opportunities should be well known, as they may be appealing to different groups. Members may also use training and skills to progress into careers with Emergency Services, Ambulance, and or Fire Safety Services.

### Clubhouse tour

A great way of introducing new members to the surf Club is by conducting a **Clubhouse tour**. The tour provides an opportunity to present the history of the Club, its personality and its functions in an interesting manner.

### Community Groups

There are a number of agencies such as service groups (Rotary, Lions) and employment agencies who have people interested in getting involved in volunteering. There are great social benefits of being a surf club member and this may appeal to people within these groups.

### Events

An event such as **National Volunteer Week** is a great chance to recruit new volunteers. You might have an exhibition stand in a shopping centre or stage a photo opportunity to attract publicity.

There are many venues and events at which stalls can be set up, including: the local high school; local library; at fetes and carnivals; career and recruitment fairs; train stations; and university open days.

### **Expression of interest**

Never walk away from a meeting where you have given a talk about your Club without getting the name and contact information of everyone who was interested. Get back to these people within one week if possible. 'Expression of Interest Flyers and Forms' are available from your SLS State Body, as well as a 'Response to Expression of Interest' letter template.

### **Family approach**

Surf Life Saving is an organisation that appeals to a variety of age categories due to the opportunities available to all ages and skill levels. By promoting the 'family' activities in the Club, the Club will appeal to a wide audience and encourage participation from the family unit. Family units participating in Surf Life Saving have a greater likelihood of remaining members.

### **Leaders in the community**

When trying to involve minority groups in your club, find leaders in that community and recruit them in order for them to recruit their peers to your club.

### **Local companies & corporate volunteering**

Approach local companies, explaining the volunteer opportunities and ask if they would encourage retirees and current employees to the Club. You might be able to recruit individual employees or groups to form a patrol or working group. There are a number of companies today that offer assistance through corporate volunteering groups, where they will assign staff to do a day of volunteering at local community organisations. Once the employees are volunteering, the company might also be willing to offer other kinds of support (for example sponsorship).

### **Local media support**

Coverage in the local media might range from feature articles to brief news stories. Try to build a good relationship with local newspapers, television and radio stations, stressing the 'human interest' of local people getting involved to help the community.

A regular stream of coverage about your Club, its work and its volunteers can help to raise your profile and thereby aid recruitment. Local papers, community radio and television can be avenues for recruiting people who may not have an existing link to the Club, but are looking to get involved in these opportunities. They may attract people who are new to the area, or are looking for a fresh start with a new Club.

Media coverage can also be used as a form of public recognition for volunteers work. The Media team at your SLS State Body is always available if you would like any help or guidance.

### **Local stores**

Ask grocers to include **flyers** about your program into grocery bags.

### **Newsletters and bulletin reports**

Newsletters and bulletins can be distributed at a variety of events as promotional and recruitment resources.

### **Online registration**

Promote Surf Life Saving Australia's 'Lifesaving Online' Portal - an online self-service membership portal whereby members can renew their membership and potential members can apply to join - [https://www.lifesavingonline.com.au/SLSA\\_Online/modules/home/index.php](https://www.lifesavingonline.com.au/SLSA_Online/modules/home/index.php)

### **Organisations**

Get lists of other organisations in your area to see if they can help your recruitment effort by advertising your program, offering you time on their meeting agendas, distributing written information to their membership, or posting notices on bulletin boards.

### **Personal contact**

Seek out potential people from within the Club who are not currently engaged in roles, e.g. Parents of Junior Activities Members.

### **Presentations**

It is important to structure the presentation to suit the audience, taking into consideration their age, prior knowledge and potential interest in surf lifesaving. Presentations may be made to the following groups: schools; parents and citizens groups; youth groups; sports groups; community service clubs; employers; industry groups.

### **Posters**

May be used to advertise details such as an event, the time, and date that it will take place. Posters may be used to promote safety information concerning particular risks and awareness messages.

## **TIPS:**

- Upgrade newsletters to be attractive to non-members; highlight lifesaving and other member achievements to the reader; circulate newsletters to sponsors and potential sponsors, acknowledging their contribution and the valuable services attained because of their sponsorship; invite sponsors, their employees and business associates to Club functions; circulate the newsletter to schools, sporting clubs, parents' and citizens' groups, youth groups, community service clubs, employers and industry groups.
- Distribute posters, pamphlets and other promotional material; display rescue equipment; align your club with a school or community group so that the club may ensure ongoing annual recruitment, in addition to providing activities for the surf club the whole year round; ask members who are good presenters to make the presentation; prepare an outline of the talk to ensure participants receive the maximum benefit.
- Use any posters and promotional material distributed by your State or National body; if creating your own posters for display, make them appealing to the eye by including photographs; and keep information to a minimum so that the message is clear and concise. Remember to replace old or damaged posters.
- Arrange early arrival so that the display is easily set up without disruption to shoppers' activities, vehicles or equipment; position the display to gain maximum impact; make sure you highlight important information; have supporting material, such as pamphlets for people who show interest and require further information; use capable members who can assist with demonstrations and public displays.

## School and Community Group Presentations

To take the work of your Club to a wider audience, you may like to give presentations to schools, parents and carers groups, youth groups, community service Clubs and employers. Not only are they a recruitment tool, but they also provide valuable opportunities to educate the audience on surf safety messages. Templates including **introductory letter to schools**, **schools booking form**, and a **school/community group presentation** are available to assist you here.

### Shopping centre displays

Clarify with shopping centre management what will be displayed and where, to ensure it complies with their guidelines.

### Speak the language

Speak the language of the person you are trying to recruit. Ask yourself, 'what do we do that would be of interest to them?' and highlight this in your presentation or discussion.

### Special beach or club events

Special events may be conducted to attract interest in the Surf Club and thereby create a platform for recruitment. Examples of special events include: fun runs; triathlon; surf fun/sports day; great Aussie picnic; cowpat bingo; beach party; fancy dress events.

### Sports clubs

Promote your sport to participants of sports that operate in opposing seasons, e.g. winter sports such as rugby or netball, to coincide with the summer season of surf lifesaving, or consider like sports such as flat water kayaking, rowing, and athletics clubs.

### Support

When you make a presentation to a large group, take several members with you, both to talk about their experience, assist with demonstrations and to help you deal with interested applicants.

### Talks

Once you have identified a possible source of new recruits, you need to take your message to them. Try to be as well-briefed as possible about the people you will be talking to and convey what is likely to appeal to them about volunteering. Remember the principles of your recruitment message.

### Make it personal

Always explain why you are personally committed to your work when enlisting others, since it personalises the reason to volunteer. If you aren't personally committed, find someone else to perform the presentation.

### Toastmasters

Get the Toastmasters Club to serve as your Speakers Bureau.

### Training programs and seminars

Intense training programs and seminars are effective in the recruitment and induction of new members. The concept involves an intense week of training towards a Bronze Medallion, Surf Life Saving Certificate or similar. Training in this way gives new recruits the opportunity to sample many of the aspects of Club life within one week of training, providing a good degree of confidence and trust between the new recruit and the Club.

## Vocational placement

Many school, TAFE, and university students studying in the field of sport recreation and fitness have a requirement to gain experience and training in a sporting organisation. This is a great opportunity to meet individual educational needs, as well as their Clubs' needs by placing students in the Club.

### Website

Advertise for new members on the home page of the club website.

### Word of mouth

If the club looks after and supports its current members, these people then become the best advertisement for the club. Ask members to speak to others in the club and community and encourage them to talk about the positive aspects of their role whenever they get a chance. Your current members are your best advertisement. Every person they come into contact with is a potential member of your club.

## TIPS:

- Remember, a special event form (Refer to the SLSA Guidelines for Safer Surf Clubs – Volume 4: Event Sanctioning & Management) must be completed when providing water safety to any event not contained in the competition manual; run events to attract the identified membership target group; incorporate social events with sporting events, for example a BBQ following a surf or sports carnival.
- Take support members who are the same age as the group who you are presenting to ensure that their story appeals to the potential recruits.
- Visual messages such as photographs or videos can aid a presentation, as do actual volunteers; bring printed information to support your talk (eg. handbooks, posters, brochures) as this will allow people the chance to go away and think before committing themselves; be clear about how people can get involved.
- Aim courses at your target membership areas; determine the best time and place to hold courses; use only accredited instructors and examiners; relate activities to the Club to encourage interest and further involvement; coordinate a social BBQ or other social function as a finale to each course.

# Retention Ideas

## Getting Youth Active

Youth membership comprises a significant amount of membership in Surf Clubs. By involving youths as much as possible, the Club will encourage retention of this valuable membership group. It is recommended that Clubs use the Youth Involvement Program (YIPs) as a method of ensuring that youth are active across all areas of the Club, which creates a win-win scenario for the participants and the club.

## Member acknowledgement awards

A majority of people participate in surf lifesaving without expectation of reward or recognition. Irrespective of members' motivation to volunteer, recognising their effort, time and skills contributed are an important way of thanking them and encouraging further participation.

## Member sleepovers

A relatively easy social event popular with both younger and older members alike, is the Clubhouse sleepover. The format of member sleepovers may include: instruction weekends for awards; sleepover theme nights (video, disco); or surfing trips away. Day trips, such as Surf Club annual picnics, family outings to theme parks, bus trips to sporting events, markets or races, are a variation and can be just as beneficial as sleepovers.

## Membership Surveys

Circulating a Club survey will allow members the opportunity to share their thoughts about Club functions (including lifesaving and surf sports operations), member services, Club communications, and Club facilities. It is a stepping stone for Clubs to make improvements to the Club in accordance with members' desires.

## Members and youth recreation room

By providing a space where members can gather 'off-duty' encourages relationship building in a relaxed environment. This is particularly important for young people who value a venue where they can 'hang out'. Placing comfortable chairs, TV, DVD and snack machines in the recreation room will add to the ambience.

To ensure your recreation room functions well, clearly stated 'room rules' should be displayed.

## Older lifesaver/members activities

Providing opportunities for older members in the Club to contribute and stay involved will encourage retention of the older age category, which possess valuable information and skills. Some methods of involving this age group include: old boys/old girls' nights; life members'/25 year member luncheons/social functions; special projects; value assistance; social committee; administration assistants/committees (e.g. mail-outs; luncheons, etc).

## Smaller groups

Break large volunteer jobs into smaller components that require a lesser time commitment.



## Surf club BBQ

The traditional surf club BBQ is a great environment for members to socialise in a relaxed setting and provides an opportunity to build club spirit. Clubs may like to structure the BBQ as a permanent fixture on the calendar (such as the last Sunday of every month); after events such as point scores, proficiency tests and general meetings; or to recognise achievements, new members, fundraisers, etc.

## Theme nights

Different themed events or nights out are a great way to reinvigorate social functions. Possible themes may include: Halloween nights; food theme nights; fancy dress; movie themes, etc.

## TIPS:

- Involve youth in: assisting coaching activities; behind the scenes 'Running the club or junior activities'; media; understanding the rules; establishing a youth committee; managing facilities; organising a competition, special event or festival.
- There are a number of internal recognition awards that you can nominate your members for, beginning at Club level and moving through to Branch, State, and National Awards. Don't forget external recognition of members as well, which is available through a number of means. Contact your Branch or State office for a list of internal and external awards available to members.

## Valuing volunteers

### Performance appraisals

Valuing your members through performance appraisals and feedback is a great way of rewarding a volunteer's work and is a useful tool to identify areas for improvement. The performance appraisal may be formal (such as the re-evaluation of a position) or informal (such as a conversation or feedback in passing).

The benefits of performance appraisals are that they provide an opportunity to give and receive feedback; identify volunteers' needs; and discuss whether changes need to be made to the role.

### Recognition

Recognition stems from genuinely valuing the contributions of volunteers and members. Recognition adds to the feeling of being appreciated, identifies achievement and assists retention. Everyone deserves some form of recognition, even if it is a simple 'thank you' for helping out.

Volunteers who feel recognised and rewarded for their efforts are more likely to be retained by their club.

### Guidelines for volunteer recognition:

- Be immediate (recognise effort as soon as it is given)
- Be specific (give personal recognition)
- Be consistent (recognise everyone's characteristics)
- Be sincere (mean what you are saying)
- Be enthusiastic (having a positive attitude will encourage it in others)

### Ways to recognise volunteers may be:

- Encourage volunteer participation in team planning
- Encourage volunteer participation in planning that affects their work
- Provide training
- Give additional responsibility (when desired)
- Enable volunteers to develop skills and grow on the job
- Include volunteers in special events
- Recommend volunteers to prospective employers and provide letters of reference
- Take the time to listen to volunteers' ideas and concerns
- Recognise personal needs
- Celebrate achievements and efforts
- Keep volunteers informed via newsletter and email
- Allocate notice board space to applaud volunteer achievement and accomplishment
- Organise medals with certificates or plaques
- Nominate suitable candidates for club, branch, state and national awards
- Celebrate National Volunteer Week.

## Exit interviews

When a volunteer/member leaves your club, it is a good opportunity to gather information as to their reason for leaving and their experiences at the club. The information gathered from an **exit survey or interview** may be used to improve the club and recognise the efforts of the volunteer.

