



People and Positions

The ability to get the most out of members and volunteers ultimately is a measure of how successful the club will be. Often clubs are short on resources and are therefore unable to spend adequate time managing and training people. Clubs that have established systems and processes to ensure their members and volunteers know what to do and how to do it are likely to be more successful.

Members and volunteer contributions

The success of lifesaving clubs is dependent on the people (members and volunteers) that contribute to it. In defining how members and volunteers contribute to the objectives of the club, it is important to identify and understand exactly what those objectives are.

Key objectives for most lifesaving clubs should be as follows:

- **Recruitment** – improve the recruiting processes of the club to ensure new members join the club
- **Retention** – ensure the existing members are happy and are getting value out of their membership with the club
- **Increase awareness** – to raise awareness for the club through various means (marketing, advertising, publicity, word-of-mouth). Increased exposure could result in new members joining the club, sponsorship opportunities, and a potential increase in funding
- **Development** – to assist the members to develop their lifesaving skills through instruction, training, practice and competition
- **Financially viable** – to ensure the club continues to make revenue so that it can remain operating

The primary responsibilities of members and volunteers:

The primary responsibilities of members and volunteers are wide and diverse. However, it is important that clubs identify the key areas that contribute to the success of the club.

Within a lifesaving club the key areas may include:

- **Marketing** – recruiting, promoting and raising awareness for the club.
- **Administration** – handling the administrative tasks associated with running a club. This could be chasing up membership payments, writing club newsletters, and entering patrol paperwork.
- **Instruction/Training** – developing the lifesaving and competition skills of the participants. This includes organisation and conducting of training sessions and providing advice and guidance to participants on competition days. Instructors may include the club surf lifeguard or IRB instructor.
- **Club Chairperson and Committee** – provides advice and guidance on the future direction of the club. These positions involve a commitment to providing strategic advice and then

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implementation of that advice to ensure the growth, sustainability and ongoing success of the club.

Tips for getting the most out of your members and volunteers:

The following tips highlight how lifesaving clubs can organise themselves to assist their members and volunteers to operate most effectively.

Create Systems – clubs that rely too heavily on individual members and volunteers may find difficulty in having ongoing success due to lack of succession planning. By having documented systems in place, clubs will be able to make a better transition in the case that a key club member leaves.

Develop Clear Expectations (Job Descriptions) – when a new member or volunteer joins a club, a position or job description should be in place to clearly outline the expectations of the club for that particular position. Job descriptions help to provide clarity for the individual to ensure they understand their role within the club.

Monitor the Success of the Member/Volunteer based on known expectations – communicate prior to the person taking the job clearly what is expected of them and how and why they will be monitored.

- **Provide instruction/training** – in some cases the inability of the member or volunteer to perform a role successfully will be due to lack of knowledge, skill and/or expertise. In these cases it is vital that the individual receives appropriate training and/or instruction as to how to perform the role effectively
- **Assign roles and responsibilities** – members/volunteers must know clearly what their role is in the club and what specific responsibilities are entailed in this role. Without clearly established and defined roles, members/volunteers may become unclear about who is supposed to complete certain tasks and they are often left incomplete
- **Dedicate a Support System** – clubs need to have a system in place to ensure their members and volunteers are given adequate support to assist them in performing their role effectively. A support system could be implemented in a variety of ways, including:
 - Establishing a mentoring system, whereby less experienced members and/or volunteers are mentored by a more experienced club member
 - Regular monitoring of performance and satisfaction levels of members in their positions. This could be done by written questionnaire, face-to-face and/or telephone interview.

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