



Succession Planning

Succession planning is a process that includes recognising and preparing suitable individuals to take on key roles in the club in the event of an existing position holder stepping down or leaving the club. Through succession planning, members can be prepared by mentoring, training and position rotation. This will enable a smoother handover process within the Club as members choose to step down from their position or their term expires.

Succession planning is about looking at where the club has come, where it is now, where it needs to go and what your club can do to get it there. By outlining this, the club will be able to ensure that the club has the right volunteers with the right skill sets in the right positions at the right time.

Most of the time role changes occur at the Club's yearly Annual General Meeting (AGM). By having a succession plan in place and by identifying potential leaders early to replace members as they step down, there is more time to develop these members and will provide a smoother transition. Furthermore, by having a succession plan implemented, it will ensure that the club will continue to operate when members stand down from their roles.

A good succession plan includes:

- The Strategic Plan (**See Resources**)
- Role Descriptions (**See Resources**)
- [Club, Regional and National Policies and Procedures](#)
- Mentoring of Younger Members

Why is Succession Planning important?

- It enables your club to share the load among volunteers and avoid volunteer burnout
- Allows a smoother handover of key positions
- Creates a more appealing environment for volunteers
- Allows your club to deliver better services, improving the club culture.

Barriers to succession planning:

Think about ways your club might tackle certain obstacles, including:

- Someone who holds all the information or knowledge in a certain area, is the information kept in a way that only they understand?
- No formal reporting or minute taking processes
- Members that have a fear of change
- Committee members that stay in their roles too long
- Members believing that they are irreplaceable
- Poor volunteer management
- Lack of development in younger members for committee positions or roles of responsibility

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It is important for outgoing committee members to pass on as much knowledge as possible to the person replacing them. Through this process, successors will have a better understanding of past successes, downfalls, problems and projects. New committee members can use previous minutes to become informed about past decisions of the committee.

The best case succession plan would allow the existing committee to step down and walk away from the club and new members stepping into the roles have a smooth transition.

Tips for succession planning:

- Examine the club's positions – current and future needs, critical roles and expected vacancies
- Identify skills required to fill critical roles in the club
- Assess the skills gap in your club and identify possible successors
- Develop and prepare potential successors
- Evaluate your succession plan

Mentoring of younger members:

Mentoring helps to develop and prepare less experienced members to take on future leadership roles within the organisation. The role of a mentor is to:

- Advocate – provides the mentee with exposure and visibility within the club.
- Advises - Shares wisdom, critiques performance and makes suggestions.
- Act as a role model - As a mentor, your actions are being evaluated, so you must set the bar for yourself just as high as you'd expect from your mentee
- Coach - Helps a mentee learn new skills and practice new behaviours
- Listen - One of your jobs as a mentor is to provide advice and encouragement, but in order to do so, you need to make the time to listen and understand the situation

Tips for mentors:

- Agree on goals for mentoring relationship from the outset, put them in writing and keep a time limit on these
- Set realistic expectations. You may be a senior but that does not mean you fix problems for the mentee, you coach as you can but the mentee does the heavy lifting
- Strike an open and warm tone so your mentee will feel they can ask you difficult questions and take risks. Listen as much as you speak so their questions and aspirations are always the central focus
- Recognise that the mentee's goals are their own and they might have a development pathway that differs from your own. Your role is to guide, it is up to the mentee to decide what to implement in their pathway
- Keep an open mind. People have different backgrounds, beliefs, ideas and experiences, always be aware and respect these, you may learn something in the process

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- Strive to protect the mentee from major errors or missteps, but leave room for them to learn from their own experiences and mistakes. A successful mentoring relationship is one where the mentee eventually advances and no longer needs support. Make sure the mentee is not overly dependent on your advice.

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” - William Arthur Ward

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