

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession Planning is about knowing what skills or expertise are needed to fill key roles within the club, now and in the future, and making sure that others within the club possess these skills and knowledge so there is someone to fill the void if that key member has to retire.

A succession plan will ensure a smooth transition from outgoing volunteers to incoming volunteers with little or no disruption to the organisation. It is about identifying, recruiting, retaining, valuing, developing and preparing volunteers so that the club has a depth of knowledge and a pool of skilled and able volunteers. In doing this, the club ensures that it can continue to meet its strategic objectives into the future.

Why is it important for your club?

Succession planning is vital to the continuity of your club. It ensures your club can continue to be successful and provide members with what they need.

It is important for your club to develop a succession plan because it:

- ◆ Enables your association to share the load among volunteers and avoid volunteer burnout
- ◆ Prevents the club becoming stagnant with long term positions
- ◆ Allows a smoother handover of key positions
- ◆ Encourages a targeted recruitment of volunteers
- ◆ Allows volunteers to see a clear path for progression
- ◆ Creates a more appealing environment for volunteers
- ◆ Allows your club to deliver better services, improving the club's culture

Keys to a good succession plan

A major challenge that clubs face is the loss of important information and knowledge when key members or volunteers leave. The main cause of this problem is not necessarily the departure of a volunteer but that no one else in the club has access to the information they learned in the role.

The solution is for volunteers in critical positions to record key information, any progress made throughout the role and to regularly share that information with other club volunteers. This process of record keeping and information sharing should be an integral element of your club's activities.

If your club is planning for the future it is important that you begin recruiting for the next generation of volunteers to run your club. Identify young members that could be future leaders of the club, nurture and develop their skills to be potential successors. Young people can bring new ideas, enthusiasm and are often accustomed to change.

How do we develop a succession plan?

- 1. Examine your club's position**
 - ◆ Identify your clubs current and future needs (refer to your strategic plan)
 - ◆ Identify critical roles within your club to meet these needs
 - ◆ What vacancies are expected in these positions?
- 2. Identify skills required to fill critical roles in your club**
 - ◆ Refer to the position descriptions for each role
 - ◆ Ask the current person appointed to that role
 - ◆ If the role is new, ensure the committee discusses the skills required for the position
- 3. Assess the skills gap in your club and identify potential successors**
 - ◆ Do your current volunteers possess the skills identified? (look at other volunteers not necessarily in that position)
 - ◆ Try to match the skills of your volunteers to the position descriptions for each role

SUCCESSION PLANNING

- ◇ Identify areas positions where skills are lacking
- ◇ Look at training opportunities or alternatively recruiting volunteers that have the required skills
- ◇ Identify who could be a potential successor for those critical roles

4. Develop and prepare potential successors

- ◇ Outline how you will recruit any new successors
- ◇ Identify training and development opportunities for potential successors
- ◇ Develop an action plan for the development of potential successors

5. Evaluate your succession plan

- ◇ Outline how you will review and evaluate your plan
- ◇ How will you measure the success of your plan?
- ◇ Ensure the volunteer movements are regularly monitored

References

Australian Sports Commission - Supporting Sport

New South Wales Department of Sport and Recreation "Succession planning for sports clubs"