

5 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

The Australian Stock Horse Society Branches and events rely on volunteers and therefore we need those volunteers to take an active interest in the future of the organisation and their specific roles within it.

A Volunteer is:

“A representative from the community who freely chooses to give their time, skills and experience to support Branch activities.”



Star Tip: Effective planning and management of people is at the core of any successful event. Ensure an event is adequately staffed with the right people, who are appropriately trained and motivated.

The Task/Job Description

A job description gives a Volunteer a clear understanding of what their responsibilities will be and acts as an official agreement between the Branch and the Volunteer.

A Job description may include:

- *Job Title*
- *Organisation and immediate supervisor (name and title)*
- *Place and time requirements (hours, frequency, dates, etc)*
- *Duties and responsibilities*
- *Basic qualifications needed (if applicable)*
- *Special skills or training required (if applicable)*

5.1 Recruiting

Your Branch may like to start a Volunteer Register, which will enable it to call upon volunteers when required.

When recruiting volunteers emphasise the benefits for the volunteers rather than the needs of the organisation.

By designing a programme that best suits volunteers' needs and having an idea what motivates them, the recruiting process will be straightforward. One myth to dispel about volunteers is that they share exactly the same interests, expectations and reasons for volunteering. Remember volunteers may include a wide variety of people such as grandparents, students, parents, friends, neighbours, etc.

5.2 Retaining

Your Branch should make a considerable effort at making volunteers feel part of the Branch. The volunteers should be aware of The Australian Stock Horse Society Vision, Aims and Mission and how their position contributes towards that direction. Offer them lots of support, reward them for their efforts and listen to their ideas.

The four pillars of retention are:

- Satisfying motivation (Checking that outcomes of work match expectations)
- Sense of belonging (Social interaction, involvement in decisions, Christmas Cards, etc)
- Recognition of volunteers (Badges, t-shirts, certificate schemes, etc)
- Keeping down the negatives (Providing good tools for the job, two way communication and conflict resolution)

5.3 Recognising

Remember, volunteers work without pay and their motivation for continuing to work depends on their feeling of value and accomplishment. Recognition is extremely important. By understanding the needs and interests of the volunteers, appropriate rewards for each person can be devised.

Most importantly be consistent about recognising the achievements and efforts of your volunteers. This should be done as soon as possible in relation to the event. It is advised not to leave this important task until the end of competition season or after all the Branch activities, as you may then lose your volunteers.

Your Branch may like to adopt a 'Volunteer of the Day' award. Be creative about recognition and the way it is done, personalise it so that each volunteer is recognised in a way that is special to him or her.

Here are some ideas:

- Use VIP recognition awards
- Letters of thanks
- Certificates of appreciation (refer to Template in Section 4.6.6 Useful Templates for Secretaries)
- Identification pins, buttons, t-shirts
- Recognition of outstanding effort in newsletters or in Committee meetings
- Special awards for Volunteers, presented at the Annual General Meeting (note this down in minutes)
- Award hard working Volunteers the honour of life membership
- Reimburse Volunteers for "out of pocket" expenses
- Allow time to listen to their ideas
- Nominate your Volunteers for local and state awards

5.4 Common Reasons for Loss of Volunteers

As it is hard to find volunteers it is important to secure them once you have sourced them. To help your Committee in retaining volunteers the following 10 grumbles should be kept in mind.

1. *I do not know what I'm doing here* – some of your volunteers will not know a lot about the Society or event, they'll be there because a friend or relative asked them. It always helps to explain why the event is being held and provide some background about the Society.
2. *I do not know what I'm doing* – make sure your volunteers have clearly defined tasks.
3. *I do not know why I'm doing this* – volunteers need to understand how their job fits in with what everybody is doing and where they sit in the wider scheme of things.
4. *I do not know why I'm doing this* – try to match volunteers and their skills to jobs.
5. *I do not know how to do this* – be sure volunteers have enough training to carry out the job satisfactorily.
6. *I do not know if I'm doing this properly* – volunteers like feedback to verify if they are carrying out their task properly.
7. *I'm thirsty and my feet hurt* – ensure volunteers know where the bathroom is and provide a good work environment (food and water).
8. *I haven't got a pen* – ensure volunteers have the equipment requirements for their role.
9. *Nobody loves me* – as volunteers are not paid they need to be rewarded in another way – certificates, praise, t-shirts, pep talks, and/or post-event events.
10. *Are we having fun yet?* – anything you can do to make the day enjoyable is a big plus. Think about contests between different volunteer teams, pizza and beer to follow etc.

Good Volunteer Management Practice results in:

