

# Retain – Ten Hints for Retaining Volunteers

## 1) Produce a 'welcome pack'

- this could include a guide about the club (ethos/facilities etc.), responsibilities, contact details for committee members, details about expenses that can be claimed back, basically general information about the club and what is expected of the volunteer.

## 2) Good communication

- ensure that communication channels are clear. Use various resources including a notice board, newsletter or a website to communicate with your volunteers.

## 3) Training

- if you are able to provide training for your volunteers you could include informal powerboat training or RYA qualifications. With the correct training volunteers will be able to offer the club more.

## 4) Set standards

- most volunteers want to do a good job and will appreciate knowing what standards the organisation expects, early on, rather than being told they are doing something wrong after an event. Explain the following to your volunteers:
  - ❖ commitment needed
  - ❖ the extent and limits of their responsibility
  - ❖ child protection policies and your clubs good practice guidelines
  - ❖ working relationships with others – respect other volunteers and paid staff.

## 5) Practical support

- encourage new volunteers to shadow a predecessor. This could be for a couple of weeks through to a couple of months. Consider using:
  - ❖ a **buddy** -- someone who has done the job before or who knows enough
  - ❖ a **mentor** – somebody who can provide feedback as a new volunteer gets to grips with a job
  - ❖ a **Volunteer Coordinator** – make sure they spend time with the new volunteer early on to check that everything is going according to plan.

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## 6) Respect your volunteers

- make sure volunteers know they are appreciated; a simple 'thank you' will go along way

## 7) Listen

- take time to listen to your volunteers. It is important to:
  - ❖ provide honest and constructive feedback
  - ❖ find out if they are enjoying the job they're doing
  - ❖ discuss other roles or responsibilities they might like to do
  - ❖ find out if they are getting what they wanted out of the role.

## 8) Value people's time

- arrange meetings to suit the majority of your volunteers, rather than the minority.

## 9) Involvement

- try to ensure that your club is not only a top down organisation by encouraging volunteers to contribute to decision-making. Do not let your organisation reflect a hierarchy.

## 10) Teamwork

- work as a team; use your team strength both on and off the water. By working in a team this will provide:
  - ❖ a balance of skills, knowledge and experience
  - ❖ support for each member by the others
  - ❖ shared goals and targets
  - ❖ shared workload
  - ❖ opportunities to find substitutes where necessary