



VOLUNTEERING

ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS IN CLUB ACTIVITIES

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1. Background

The Australian Bridge Federation is a non-profit organisation and many of its affiliates rely heavily on the contribution of their volunteers. The aim of this paper is to assist clubs with the attraction, management, recognition and retention of volunteers.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many clubs affiliated with State Associations have a set number of volunteers who have been 'carrying' their club for a number of years. As clubs increase their membership and as these people grow older and become less active (and tired), the need for both increasing the volunteer pool and for succession planning is vital.

In 2015 the volunteering participation rate in Australia declined for the first time in 20 years.¹ Incorporating population growth, the sector lost 1M volunteers between 2010 and 2015. A further 1.1M are at risk by 2020 should declining rates continue. 86% of volunteer-involving organisations are struggling to find the help they need.²

Currently, 63% of volunteers participate in volunteering on a regular basis and 37% in one-off volunteering. Nationally, individuals aged 35-44 years are most likely to be volunteers, and more females volunteer than males.

Any strategy developed to increase the number of volunteers should be mindful of:

1. the motivational influences for volunteering
2. the types of volunteer options available, and
3. how involving members in 'volunteering' can improve their 'engagement' with the club.

2. Motivational Influences

Research³ indicates that there are different motivating influences to undertake volunteer work within our society. These can be identified against specific demographics as follows:

Who	Motivational Influences	%
<i>Millenials (18-34 years)</i>	Wanting to make a difference	60
	Passionate about the specific cause	53
	To gain valuable skills or experience	51
	Personal connection	45
	Connecting with like-minded people	38

¹ General Social Survey 2015, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

² The State of Volunteering Report 2016, Volunteering Australia

³ SEEK Group – Research with 1013 Australians who have volunteered in last 12 months or who are likely to volunteer in next 12 months. Data was weighted to be Nationally representative of age, gender and location (based on ABS Census data).

Who	Motivational Influences	%
<i>Generation Xers (35-54 years)</i>	Wanting to make a difference	61
	Passionate about the specific cause	48
	Personal connection	45
	To make me feel better about myself	34
	To gain valuable skills and experience	32
<i>Baby Boomers (55+ years)</i>	Wanting to make a difference	59
	To connect with like-minded people	46
	Personal connection	43
	To make me feel better about myself	34
	To have a purpose each day	33

In addition, research reveals that volunteers believe there are health benefits associated with volunteering. These include:

- 78% said that volunteering helped lower their stress levels
- 94% said that volunteering helped to improve their moods; and
- 96% said that volunteering enriched their sense of purpose in life.

It is also important to acknowledge the ‘second-order need’ of some prospective volunteers, namely gaining work experience. This is particularly relevant for younger members.

3. Volunteering Options

One size does not fit all. Check if there is alignment between the types of roles volunteers want to undertake, the number of hours which they are able and prepared to invest and the tasks on offer by the club.

Most clubs have numerous roles and tasks which can be allocated – see **Attachment A** as a guide.

Clubs need to be mindful of providing a number of different options for people to volunteer within a club environment. These include:

1) Formal volunteering

Formal volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain (perhaps involves a small honorarium), taking place within a club in a structured way.

2) Short-term team volunteering (eg a working bee)

This is where people volunteer together on a task to assist the organisation; examples are makeovers of gardens and assistance with a specific event at the club. This offers a great opportunity to build a sense of community amongst members of a club and, hopefully, to have fun.

3) Episodic volunteering

This is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain on an ad hoc basis. This mainly applies to people who do not have time to take on a 'set' role but do want to contribute by way of either a 'one-off' or an occasional contribution. This type of volunteering suits people who work or who have a lot of other commitments **but** do want to contribute to their club.

Roles particularly suited to episodic volunteering include acting as a stand-by volunteer for a specific bridge session perhaps once a month (part of a club's walk-in policy), providing a 10 minute briefing before a regular session on how to play and/or defend a particular hand (suited to your more experienced players) or being a mentor to a beginner for a couple of sessions to ease them into 'open' play at the club.

4) Virtual volunteering

This is where a volunteer's tasks are completed online, such as managing social media. Virtual volunteering is especially relevant for millennials (18-34 years of age).

5) Skilled volunteering

Skilled volunteering is where people with professional qualifications and/or specific experience in a particular field offer their skills and expertise to implement particular projects or tasks – eg web design, development of risk management/business continuity plans, evaluation frameworks, marketing plans, financial management, landscaping etc.

If a club has members who attend high school or university then they may wish to get them involved in projects of this type to help develop their skills and knowledge and to give them practical experience in regard to future career options.

4. Engagement Strategy

For clubs wishing to 'grow' their membership base, it is important to realise that people join and renew their association membership only if it is achieving their *value proposition* – ie the reason/s they learnt bridge and joined your club in the first place. Successful clubs connect people in ways that will provide them with meaningful, positive outcomes relative to that common interest.

ABF research reveals that the main reasons people play bridge include:

- a. to challenge themselves – keep their brain active
- b. to make new friends – to become part of a community of people with similar interests
- c. to have FUN.

Often the thing that people value most about their membership is intangible.

5. Volunteer recruitment and retention

Once you have a clear idea of the roles and tasks available for volunteers at your club, consider appointing someone to the task of recruiting volunteers. Their role would include responsibility for:

- creation of role statements for each position (*see Attachment A for role suggestions*) – who do they report to, outline tasks to be completed, approximate hours required for the tasks, what budget applies, accountability issues etc.
- determining how many volunteers are required to help the club achieve its vision for the future
- communication – making people aware of what is available (Notice Boards/ Club Newsletter / Target specific members / information before each session). To set the scene for prospective members it may be worthwhile explaining to people in your beginner classes what volunteering opportunities are available to them should they be interested. People like to feel part of a successful community.
- aligning tasks to the skills and interests of potential volunteers (making sure that those chosen have the necessary communication and interpersonal skills to undertake the role)
- establishing whether any *millennials* in the club would like to acquire some ‘work experience’ from undertaking a project either on their own or working with another club member (could include web design, social media or even hospitality)
- issuing confirmation letter to acknowledge the person’s role at the club
- organising training, a buddy system with an experienced volunteer or hand-over for the role to be undertaken.
- ensuring volunteers receive recognition (both formal and informal).

6. Recognition Strategies

Demonstrating your appreciation for, and recognizing volunteer contributions to, the success of your club is important on many levels. It is important for volunteers to feel welcome, part of a team, valued and appreciated.

First and foremost, we all want our volunteers to enjoy their experience and feel their efforts are appreciated. At the same time, saying thanks and formally recognizing volunteers is important to keep these individuals motivated and happy so they keep coming back.

Volunteer recruitment and training is time-consuming, so it is in the club’s best interest to ensure they have a fulfilling experience. Importantly, your volunteers are also bridge ambassadors – representing your club during social events, at congresses etc – and their volunteer experience will directly impact the way in which they represent or personify your club and its culture.

Developing an on-going process to thank and recognize your volunteers can have an impact the success of your club.

Volunteer recognition can be either informal or formal. Formal recognition is planned, institutionalised action which takes place on a given day (perhaps capitalising on International Volunteers' Day, State Volunteer Days or your club's Christmas function) and allows little room for spontaneity.

The International Volunteers Day on 5 December each year is a day of observance – designated by the United Nations since 1985.

By contrast, informal recognition is all about the small, everyday gestures one does to express gratitude for other people's efforts. Informal recognition reinforces the vital concept that the most vibrant and resilient clubs are made up of individuals, coming together and sharing their experiences.

It is important to give volunteers both appreciation and recognition.

Whilst each club needs to develop its own volunteer recognition approach, the following are suggestions which can be used as a starting point for creating guidelines for your club.

- I. **Make it a priority.** Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for any club that wants to retain its volunteers and attract new ones.
- II. **Do it often.** Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent and informal basis. Begin by saying "*thank you*" often!
- III. **Do it in different ways.** Vary your recognition efforts, from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats to more formal events. Here are some examples:
 - a. **Be sincere.** Make each occasion to recognize volunteers meaningful and an opportunity to reflect on the value volunteers bring to your club.
 - b. **Recognize the person, not the work.** It's best to phrase recognition to emphasize the contribution of the individual and not the end result.
 - c. **Make it appropriate to the achievement.** For example, a paper certificate accompanied by a private thank you may be appropriate for a few months of service but a public dinner and engraved plaque may better suit 10 years of volunteerism.
 - d. **Be consistent.** Make sure that whatever standards of recognition you establish can be consistently maintained by your club in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up expectations for future volunteers.
 - e. **Be timely.** Try to arrange recognition soon after an achievement has been reached—delaying until weeks or months later diminishes the value of your gratitude.
 - f. **Customize it.** Getting to know each of your volunteers and their interests will help you learn how best to recognize each individual and make them feel special.

These positions are elected annually and may attract a small honorarium.

Elected Positions **Duties**

<i>President</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chair meetings of Management Committee ▪ Represent the club at congresses, meetings and other functions ▪ Oversee strategic planning and performance of the club in conjunction with the Management Committee ▪ Identify projects that may be funded from external sources (including sponsorship) ▪ Prepare President's report for regular newsletters ▪ Prepare President's report for and chair AGM ▪ Manage PR aspects of Club ▪ Ensure adherence to the Club's code of conduct
<i>Vice President</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delegate for Club President as necessary ▪ Support other members of the committee in all aspects of club administration ▪ Advise on and implement changes to the Constitution and By-Laws
<i>Treasurer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint cashiers ▪ Appoint person to summarise cashiers' banking ▪ Pay supplier invoices including levies by due date ▪ Refund authorised expenses incurred by club members ▪ Maintain cash book of all income and expenses ▪ Prepare Business Activity Statements and Employee PAYG tax summaries ▪ Arrange employer superannuation contributions ▪ Report monthly to management committee ▪ Arrange annual audit ▪ Prepare annual financial report ▪ Ensure effective insurance coverage (premises/members/volunteers)
<i>Secretary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare and disseminate agenda for management committee meetings ▪ Prepare and disseminate minutes of management committee meetings ▪ Collect mail ▪ Disseminate Marketing Updates to Management Committee members ▪ Manage correspondence (electronic and other) ▪ Maintain documents (electronic and other) ▪ Manage communication including between ABF, State/Territory Association and relevant Office Holders ▪ Prepare and distribute Notice of AGM including annual reports by President and Treasurer ▪ Arrange proxy forms and scrutineers if needed ▪ Collate attendances and apologies for AGM ▪ Prepare minutes of AGM ▪ Manage registrations for beginners' classes
<i>Committee Member</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend management committee meetings ▪ Review and contribute to the achievement of the Club's Strategic Plan ▪ Support the executive in all aspects of the club administration

These are non-elected positions which could still attract a small honorarium. Some positions may have the duties divided amongst several individuals.

<i>Non-elected Positions</i>	Duties
<i>Building Maintenance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with yard contractor ▪ Arrange building maintenance as necessary ▪ Garden maintenance (pruning, culling, transplanting, fertilizing) as needed
<i>Director Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all sessions are appropriately directed ▪ Ensure the appeals process is conducted with the Laws of Contract Bridge and the Regulations of the State Association ▪ Develop opportunities for current directors to enhance their directing skills ▪ Initiate training courses / study groups etc to develop directing skills for all interested club members ▪ Ensure sessions are managed in accordance with the club's code of conduct
<i>Directors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare session reports ▪ Welcome players to session ▪ Set up and direct sessions ▪ Deposit net cash and report to safe ▪ Ensure premises are secure before leaving ▪ Complete incident reports as necessary ▪ Ensure sessions are managed in accordance with the club's code of conduct
<i>Cashiers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect and bank net revenue from sessions ▪ Prepare a summary for each deposit
<i>Communication Coordinator</i>	<p>Ensure the membership is well informed on functions of the club including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare club newsletter 6 times annually ▪ Arrange printing and circulation of newsletter ▪ Publication of upcoming events on Notice Boards ▪ Communicate directly with members through large scale emailing ▪ Maintain club's social media content in an up-to-date manner ▪ Liaise with the webmaster to ensure information is consistently distributed across all club's media forms ▪ Provide information for club's Facebook page
<i>Competition and Congress Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare entry forms for red point competitions and congresses ▪ Appoint directors, convenors and caddies for competition and congresses ▪ Collect entry fees, reconcile the money and prepare prizes for congresses ▪ Liaise with kitchen convenor re congress catering ▪ Arrange catering helpers for congresses ▪ Email congress entry forms to other clubs ▪ Prepare prizes for club competitions
<i>Concierge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome people as they arrive for a session ▪ Notify Director of any visitors or milestone events (birthday etc) ▪ Ensure players are aware of facilities of club ▪ Ensure players know which is best row (if club has novice areas etc)
<i>Congress Caterer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with Congress Convenor and check website for numbers of participants and format for the day

**Non-elected
Positions** **Duties**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organise kitchen helpers and request food donations on weekly announcements and Pianola communiques ▪ Plan appropriate food eg sandwiches, fruit, hot food ▪ Shop for food and prepare/cook as required ▪ Work with kitchen helpers to prepare and serve refreshments ▪ Wash up and clean the kitchen and surrounding areas. ▪ Wash tablecloths and towels used on the day.
<i>Dealer (Head)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain roster of dealers for sessional play and congresses ▪ Train dealers ▪ Acquire/maintain dealing machines, computers and printers ▪ Purchase playing cards, boards and boxes as required ▪ Deal for sessional play and for congresses ▪ Deal as relief dealer for ill or <i>holiday</i> dealers.
<i>Dealers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deal for sessional play and congresses ▪ Prepare hand records for each session
<i>Event and Charity day coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with key parties to ensure events run smoothly ▪ Arrange catering ▪ Collect fees ▪ Arrange sweeps and raffles ▪ Prepare posters and appropriate decorations
<i>Flower Provider</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide and arrange flowers in both play area and ladies' rest room
<i>Grants Liaison Officer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with Council and grants providers ▪ Prepare submission for grants
<i>Housekeeping</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with contract cleaner ▪ Arrange other cleaning – table cloths etc ▪ Arrange carpet cleaning
<i>IT Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure IT hardware and software is maintained to industry standards ▪ Continually explore opportunities to upgrade hardware and software ▪ Ensure documentation of hardware and software configurations is maintained in accordance with industry standards ▪ Liaise with and when necessary employ external IT professionals to ensure above issues addressed
<i>Key Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issue to/receive keys from volunteers as necessary ▪ Maintain key register ▪ Purchase additional keys as necessary ▪ Arrange labelling and storage of keys
<i>Librarian (Head)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purchase new books, videos etc ▪ Access new acquisitions and enter on database ▪ Organise roster for librarians ▪ Manage loans and returns ▪ Manage book table
<i>Masterpoint Secretary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administer ABF Masterpoint Scheme for club ▪ Allocate green point awards at Club level ▪ Apply to State Masterpoint secretary for approval of red point awards ▪ Complete and submit return for green and red point awards to ABF Masterpoint Centre monthly

**Non-elected
Positions** **Duties**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure results of gold point competitions are forwarded to State Masterpoint secretary ▪ Act as a go-between for Club members and ABF Masterpoint Centre ▪ Liaise with committee regarding Club representatives at Zone Finals
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process applications for membership ▪ Maintain membership data base ▪ Issue annual subscription notices ▪ Receive and bank annual subscriptions ▪ Prepare list of members booklet in July ▪ Reconcile membership with ABF in April ▪ Provide new members with a 'new member's information pack'
<i>Parking Marshall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist members to park their car in as stress-free manner as possible
<i>Program Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with State Association re congress dates before mid-May ▪ Liaise with committee re programmed red point and special events ▪ Update club information in program booklet ▪ Prepare annual program booklet and forward to printer by late November ▪ Send a copy of the program booklet to State Association and a copy of the program to the webmaster
<i>Promotions Officer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact local media outlets (TV/Radio/Newspaper) and provide them with interesting stories/photographs about the club and its members/events ▪ Seek opportunities for promoting bridge within local community (eg <i>demonstrations at shopping centres and seniors week/ notices on community notice boards / presentations to Lions and Rotary Clubs / information to golf clubs about beginner classes etc</i>). ▪ Report all media activity to the ABF National Marketing Officer
<i>Providore</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish roster for tea staff ▪ Maintain list of current contact details for kitchen staff ▪ Purchase morning and afternoon tea provisions ▪ Purchase other consumables ▪ Ensure the kitchen duties instruction document is kept up to date and available ▪ Ensure kitchen staff receive group certificates and superannuation statements where appropriate
<i>Recorder/s</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be available to receive complaints from members ▪ Attempt to resolve issues through conciliation ▪ Report to management committee on issues needing their attention ▪ In 'extreme' cases, alert the insurer to possible legal action
<i>Scorer (Head)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain roster of scorers for sessional play ▪ Train scorers ▪ Arrange maintenance of Bridgemate equipment ▪ Score sessional play and competitions ▪ Update scores to web and post results to notice board ▪ Manage manual scoring ▪ Maintain results board

**Non-elected
Positions** **Duties**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update club scoring manual as necessary ▪ Investigate players' queries re club scores ▪ Liaise with directors re scoring changes ▪ Effect and maintain a log of agreed scoring changes in line with club policy ▪ Score the monthly eclectic process
<i>Scorers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Score sessional play and competitions ▪ Update scores to web and post results to notice board
<i>Security and Fire Warden</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Receive calls from security monitoring and investigate as necessary ▪ Liaise with security firm ▪ Manage workplace health and safety issues ▪ Conduct annual fire drill
<i>State Association Delegates</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend State Association meetings ▪ Raise club issues at State Association meetings (as determined by the Management Committee) – eg events/ training/ marketing approaches and funding ▪ Advise Management Committee of significant issues ▪ Update copy of State Association regulations as necessary ▪ Raise the profile of the club – 'hand up' to sponsor regional meetings / events /forums etc
<i>Stationery Purchaser</i>	Monitor stationery needs and purchase as required
<i>Teachers (beginners / help with play / intermediate)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work towards ABF Teacher Accreditation ▪ Attend development workshops ▪ Ensure best practice in teaching methodology and materials ▪ Organise evaluation of all teaching activities at the club (for continuous improvement purposes) ▪ Ensure that the club' beginner classes are advertised on the State Association website ▪ Liaise with webmaster and communication coordinator in regard to advertising educational activities
<i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create role statements for each position ▪ Assess how many volunteers are required to help the club achieve its vision for the future ▪ Communication – making people aware of what is available ▪ Align tasks to the skills and interests of potential volunteers ▪ Establish whether any <i>millennials</i> in the club would like to acquire some 'work experience' ▪ Issue confirmation letter to acknowledge the person's role ▪ Organise training, a buddy system with experience volunteer or hand-over for the role to be undertaken. ▪ Ensure volunteers receive recognition (both formal and informal).
<i>Walk-in Program Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a roster for all day time sessions at the club ▪ Manage the program (replacements/ holidays times etc) for the club ▪ Recruit session volunteers when needed

**Non-elected
Positions** **Duties**

<i>Walk-in Program session volunteers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Attend session as nominated on the walk-in roster
<i>Webmaster</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arrange web hosting▪ Update web information▪ Organise Facebook page for club