

Management committee member induction

Welcoming new committee members is about creating a warm, welcoming environment that sets them up for success. The importance of properly inducting new members of the management committee often goes unnoticed, but it can be the difference between a new volunteer staying for the long term or feeling burnt out.

When welcoming new committee members, you should strike a balance, providing them with enough information to get them started but not overwhelming them.

A well-structured induction program can help new committee members understand their responsibilities, connect with the team and feel comfortable in their new role.

The time when new committee members join is critical for both the committee members themselves and the organisation. As they transition from outsiders to insiders, they can't be expected to immediately understand their responsibilities or how the organisation functions day-to-day. A well-planned induction process reduces stress for new committee members, helps them feel welcomed and can decrease the likelihood of turnover.

The induction program

Your induction program should be simple and manageable. It's about setting a positive first impression, but not overwhelming new members with too much information. Here are some key elements to include:

Make them feel welcome

Start by making new committee members feel welcome. Introduce them personally to all other committee members, as well as other key organisation personnel like administrators, bookkeepers, head coaches, age group coordinators and leaders of business units like the canteen and merchandise. Show them around the organisation so they know where to find essentials like the coffee machine and toilets. Let them know who they can turn to with questions and ensure they have access to the organisation's documents and files.

The organisation's legal structure and constitution

Provide an overview of the organisation's legal structure as an incorporated association and walk them through the constitution. This walk-through should include what's covered in the constitution, how to use it and what is addressed in other documents like bylaws and policies.

Understanding not-for-profit

Explain what it means to be a not-for-profit organisation. It's important to clarify that 'not-for-profit' doesn't mean 'no profit'!

Personal liabilities and duties

Let new management committee members know about their personal liabilities and how to avoid getting in trouble. This includes acting in the organisation's best interest, acting in good faith, acting with reasonable skill, care and diligence, not improperly using their position or information, not trading while insolvent and disclosing and managing conflicts of interest.

Meeting expectations

Provide an overview of what meetings committee members are expected to attend and what their roles in these meetings will entail.

Essential information

Provide written copies of organisation documentation, such as health and safety guidelines, codes of conduct, legalities (committee member rights, liabilities, insurances, working with children Blue Card, confidentiality, data protection), names and contact details of relevant people, the strategic plan, purpose and values of the organisation and the organisation's history, programs and community.

A note on Blue Cards:

If you're volunteering or working at a sport or active recreation organisation that caters to children or conducts activities with them, you'll need a Blue Card. It's not just a requirement; it's our commitment to protecting our children. Always be compliant and ensure safety first!

Understanding the role

Explain the specifics of their role, including their particular responsibilities, expected time commitment and schedule. Discuss both the organisation's expectations of the committee member and the committee member's expectations for the role and the organisation.

It's helpful to assign a mentor to new committee members to explain the specific activities expected of them and to provide ongoing support.



Volunteer induction guide

After induction

A good induction program helps new committee members understand their roles and feel comfortable and confident in their new positions. After the induction program is completed, set a date for a catch-up to see how everything is going. Remember to provide recognition and make volunteers feel valued and appreciated. You can host social events to support volunteers in feeling connected and welcomed. Regular training and professional development opportunities can support volunteers' ongoing improvement.

While some organisations may feel uncomfortable asking committee members to sign off on their induction, it is a good idea to have them acknowledge in writing that they have received and understood the information shared during the induction process.

General volunteer induction

While providing an informative induction program is helpful for incoming committee members, it's also important to have a simplified induction process for general volunteers. Here are some key elements to include in a general volunteer induction program:

Welcome and introduction

Make volunteers feel welcome by introducing them to key personnel and giving them a tour of your facilities.

Role explanation

Explain the specifics of their volunteer role, including responsibilities and expected time commitments, where they can go for help, if there are specific benefits they'll receive (e.g. a meal voucher while on duty) and details of the support they'll receive (e.g. access to training and resources).

Always evaluate the cost, quality and relevance of training programs. Ensure they're truly beneficial for your volunteers. If a program feels ineffective or time-wasting, it won't enhance skills. Seek feedback and prioritise meaningful training experiences!

Safety briefing

Ensure volunteers understand the organisation's workplace health and safety guidelines and procedures. This includes providing them an induction in the safe use of equipment, emergency procedures and who to report to in the event of any safety concerns or incidents. Volunteers should be requested to confirm in writing that they have been properly briefed in the safe use of equipment and materials, including tools, chemicals and machinery.

Access to information

Provide volunteers with access to relevant organisation documentation and resources. This could include codes of conduct, volunteer rights and responsibilities and any specific information relevant to their role.

Check-in and support

After their induction, follow up with each volunteer to see how they are going. Provide ongoing support and make volunteers feel valued and appreciated by regularly and personally thanking them for their efforts. Offer further training for volunteers as appropriate to help them grow in their roles.

The induction process for general volunteers may be less formal than for committee members, but it is still helpful in ensuring they are provided the necessary skills and instruction to complete their jobs safely and effectively, while feeling part of the team.