

# Member Retention

As part of the club's risk management, communication, marketing and strategic planning, the committee should understand how fast it is growing. Understanding why people join, continue, or leave the club is vital information when looking at how the club operates. This information also feeds back into medium and long term financial planning, facilities planning and volunteer planning, as it impacts on the club's capacity to service its members.

It's good practice to do an audit of participation figures or registered members each season/year and compare those figures to the previous season/year. This information will give your club an idea about the growth in members and/or decline. If the figures show you are losing more members than you are gaining, this should be a concern for your club's future.

You may consider your club to have the best programs or competitions in the world, but if it is not what people want, you're wasting your time. It might be because they are dissatisfied with what the club has to offer or it might be that their circumstances have changed. Whatever the reason, you need to know so you can determine if it's possible to get them back and to reduce the likelihood of other people leaving for the same reason.

There are many ways to get feedback from members who have left. Below are a few options:

- **Ask them:** The simplest way to find out why they left is to ask them. This can be done in person or over the phone. This is not always easy to do, particularly if the feedback is negative, but if you want to improve your club, you need to know why people are leaving. Before you start asking for feedback you need to ensure you are prepared to respond and change.
- **Questionnaires and surveys:** Asking members to put their thoughts in writing on a questionnaire or survey is one of the most well-established feedback techniques. If your club has an effective database of contacts for your members, it should be easy to email something out to members who have left. Another easy option is to use one of free online survey tools, such as Survey Monkey or Survey Gizmo.
- **Website feedback:** If you have a website, you can set up an area for members to provide feedback. Hopefully you can hear about any discontent before it leads to members leaving.

Understanding why members leave is crucial for the sustainability of your club. Not everyone is prepared to provide feedback, but those that do should be listened to. If one person has something negative to say regarding your club, you can be certain that there are more out there who won't say anything, but will take their membership elsewhere.

## Principles for providing great service to your members

- Be happy if members voice their concerns to you. The ones you need to worry about are those who tell their friends about their concerns via social media.
- Make it easy for members to provide feedback. That way you know exactly where the issues are within your club and can work to resolve them.
- Make member servicing everyone's responsibility. Adopt a policy of continually improving member service.