

# Successful Club Management

The club committee is the heart and soul of the archery club. As much as we would all love to spend our time shooting, a club will not function without a small group of individuals to govern and drive club development and policies. I have many times overheard complaints about politics getting in the way of the sport. Operating a successful club committee is by no means simply a structural issue, but relies more heavily on nurturing a positive culture and encouraging the right people into the right positions.

## Roles

Unless you're part of a privately-owned archery business, you'll most likely be an incorporated society. Incorporated societies have a fair bit of flexibility in terms of allowing clubs to design the management structure to suit them, but usually includes (at a minimum):

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Generally, the smaller the club, the smaller the management structure you want. There's no point having 12 positions on a committee when you only have 3 members! Some roles can be combined (apart from President/Vice-President), but you need to find what works best for your club. The President is responsible for running the committee meetings and annual general meetings, and is often the official representative of the club. The Vice President takes on these duties when the President is unable. The Secretary is the key point of contact for correspondence and undertakes the bulk of the administration works. The Treasurer, of course, maintains the club finances – incorporated societies do not let someone who has been bankrupt before take on this position.

As your club grows, other common roles you can consider are:

- Club Captain
- Coaching Coordinator
- Junior/JAMA Coordinator
- Publicity Officer

Each club will find its own requirements for roles and responsibilities, and there may be a number of general committee members co-opted to assist in governance decisions, or to take on specific tasks.

## Attracting the Right Type of Committee Member

It's common to see people stuck in roles they don't want, simply because there was no one else there to take the job. A healthy organisation is one where there is competition for positions. Competition drives performance, as if you don't deliver, you get replaced – this is one of the benefits of a structure where there are elections.

So how do you get competition for a role? My suggestions would be to:

- Advertise a role description (eliminate the uncertainty)
- Support committee members in their responsibilities
- Make them feel valued throughout their term – not just at the end of it
- Communicate your committee's successes to the members

- Shoulder tap some potential nominees before AGMs to sound them out (don't surprise them with a nomination during the meeting!)

Generating a sense of accomplishment and reward helps to retain committee members, which can be good for longevity and knowledge of a committee, but a well-functioning committee also attracts new talent. Far from keeping only the most experienced people in a committee, you need a mix of personalities and levels of experience. Newer faces will drive enthusiasm and bring alternative views to the table which can stop the committee stagnating. Remember that the younger members of the club are the future – give them some room to grow, and encourage their involvement in helping to run the club.

While you'll often get your busiest members doing all the jobs, because they're used to 'doing everything', it's also good to allow your experienced members to spend their time in activities outside of the committee adding value elsewhere (competing, coaching, judging, etc.). I strongly recommend encouraging parents of juniors to get involved in running the club. Chances are they'll bring some unique skills to the committee, and it is a good opportunity to integrate their families into the club environment more. Families often form the stable backbone of sports clubs. So talk to the parents when they drop their kids off for JAMA or club shoots, make them feel welcome, and offer them the opportunity to help out – they can offer a lot!

## Key Differentiators for Committees

What makes the difference between a good committee and a bad committee? More than I could fit in an article, but I have had the opportunity of working with some fantastic committees, and can offer the following elements of a great committee:

- Pragmatic and fair leadership
- Effective communication
- Defined roles
- Shared goals
- Passion
- A balanced cross-section of personalities and backgrounds

The central factor that drives most of a committee's value-adding potential is the culture that is nurtured from within.

In order to succeed going forward, great committees work to mission statements and strategic plans. Just like we'd teach an aspiring athlete, it's important to have goals that you can measure, because that allows you to focus your efforts, understand progress, and ultimately celebrate success. You can download templates from the internet for this, or borrow a template off another club or ANZ. There is no need to start out big for smaller clubs, but it helps to have plans in place and assist you with prioritising spending for a long-term plan.

Something our club committee started doing recently was to generate a committee handbook – a store of information on not just role descriptions, but a repository that tapped into the combined knowledge of the older heads in the club, and documented all of the peripheral things that could get lost between generations of committees. It might be worthwhile thinking if this would add value to your committee.

Committees can have a profound effect on the success of the club – invest in your committee, get the right people on board, and drive towards your common goals with a positive culture.

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