

# **Rebound: Volunteer Recruitment & Retention For**



**Submitted by Dina Bell-Laroche  
Sport Law & Strategy Group (SLSG)  
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## SUMMARY

In its continuing efforts to provide helpful and relevant information to local Ottawa sport clubs, the Ottawa Sport Council, supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation’s Resilient Communities Fund, has launched Rebound – a free, 6-part program to support pandemic recovery.

This workshop focused on identifying existing challenges of recruiting volunteers in sport and gave participants an opportunity to identify the skills required to serve as Directors, Coaches, Committee members, Team Managers, and Safety Officers. Moreover, participants worked through the various recruitment, retention, renewal and recognition strategies to enhance their existing volunteer practices.

The following brief provides a highlight of the workshop and the contributions from the participants throughout the day served to create an engaging experience for all.

## OPENING COMMENTS

Marcia welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a great overview of why community sport is so important to supporting a healthy pandemic recovery for Canadians.

Dina Bell-Laroche was welcomed and shared the highlights of her volunteer experience as a local soccer coach and why volunteering matters to her.

### I am feeling ...

The meeting norms were highlighted in the Chat Box and included:

- Maintaining an open mind and heart
- Be curious
- To engage meaningfully
- And to honour the indigenous lands from which we were all meeting today



**RED ZONE:** Extremely heightened state of alertness. Feeling angry, overwhelmed, aggressive, out of control, focusing on priorities only.



**YELLOW ZONE:** Heightened state of alertness. Feeling busy, stressed, anxious, near my limit, worried, irritated, confused, nervous.



**GREEN ZONE:** Optimal state of alertness. Feeling productive, balanced, happy, positive, grateful, calm, content, optimistic, ready to learn.



**BLUE ZONE:** Low state of alertness. Feeling bored, distracted, disconnected, sad, tired, disappointed, depressed, isolated, lonely.

We used a **CHECK-IN TOOL** as a way of connecting. Participants were invited to share their ‘I feel’ state and Dina reminded participants of the benefits of using this tool across the various domains ... with Staff, with other Board members, with Coaches, and with Athletes. This Check-In Tool has been used extensively throughout sport and has proven to be a useful way for individuals to connect.

Dina then shared highlights of volunteer trends affecting all of sport. A copy of the PPT Deck has been provided alongside this summary.

A highlight of the workshop was the focus on the 5 Rs of Volunteerism. Participants were then invited to share in diads their reason for volunteering and how they liked to be recognized. Some shared that they:

- A small acknowledgement was sufficient
- Personalized thanks you were greatly appreciated
- Providing an opportunity to grow through learning opportunities
- Giving Back
- Feeling connected to a sport I love
- Making a difference

### 5 Rs of Volunteerism

- ✓ **Recruit wisely** ... have a plan, have and review job descriptions, conduct interviews and do reference checks.
- ✓ **Retain** ... provide feedback, express gratitude, talent ID, set clear expectations (time, commitment, skillset), provide other opportunities.
- ✓ **Renew** ... pay/ cost share training, be proactive.
- ✓ **Recognize** ... little things count, say thank you, awards, personalize.
- ✓ **Retire** ... provide term limits, exit interviews, transfer knowledge, acknowledge contribution.

Volunteers were then invited to share in smaller groups to explore the challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteers since the pandemic and what were some of the needs, fears and challenges that they faced when recruiting and retaining volunteers. Some of what was shared included:

- Concerns about how tired and exhausted people are.
- Concerns and challenges that people don't feel they have the time to volunteer.
- Some are not volunteering because they don't feel they have the right skill set.
- Some are scared to return to volunteering because they don't trust that people will be following the protocols.
- Some are overwhelmed with the sheer requirements of what is needed to run a 21<sup>st</sup> Century sport organization.
- Concerns were raised whether coaches feel equipped to deal with athletes from an emotionally intelligent and trauma informed perspective. For more ways on supporting coaches to access more than just technical and tactical information, please check out this blog: <https://sportlaw.ca/into-the-deep-accessing-the-5th-dimension/>
- Additional insights were shared when we came back from plenary and are identified below.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

- Identified parents as safety protocol officers
- Delegation was harder
- Board members or staff had to do more of the work
- Recruiting people back from the Pandemic who might now be volunteering elsewhere
- Helps to provide honoraria
- Hard to plan if you are an indoor sport
- Becoming more mindful of how to communicate with our volunteers - drifting off to other areas
- when volunteers leave, we lose volunteer knowledge which shifts culture - importance of transferring knowledge

- Program interruptions which is hard to maintain momentum and challenging to recruit
- Changing nature of rules
- Liability and safety issues - especially for younger age groups - extra burden
- Cleaning equipment needs to increase safety requirements
- hard to keep people engaged
- Creating smaller groups so volunteers might feel safer
- Level of unpredictability with moving targets
- difference between one and done v consistent/ long term volunteers
- hosting events/ tournaments helps us attract new volunteers
- challenge is we aren't hosting events; retention might be good but it's hard to get new ones.

- People are burned out; always same group of people
- So many unknowns, uncertainty of what going back will bring
- Fear of the unknown
- Will we survive?
- Allowing people to volunteer as much as they can - being accessible -find your way in
- Increase level of competencies required including training to fulfill legal requirements
- How might we coordinate our collective needs so that we are working together as sport community in Ottawa in common areas of needs?
- volunteerism creates socialization opportunities but this has been disrupted - not meeting fundamental need

Following lunch, participants were invited to break into small groups, each using the Recruitment and Retention Tool that was provided to them in advance of the session. The responses are shared in **Appendices 1 to 5**.

Some of the highlights included:

- Ensure your Risk and Safety commitments are being attended to through a committee with clear Terms of Reference and job descriptions. Risk management is everyone's responsibility and includes not a broader expectation around safe sport, concussion safety, pandemic protocols, Rule of 2, equity/diversity/ inclusion/ indigeneity.
- Small efforts can go a long way. Something as simple as showing more diversity in our photos will communicate our Club's interest in being more diverse. We need to 'see them' to 'be them'.
- We need to create opportunities for younger people to serve on Boards by ensuring we have mentors and mentors to support them. Also ensure Board members have the required skills to serve and are aligned with their values.
- Need to ensure coaches have the required training to support an ever increasing demand that is beyond the technical and tactical. Things like [Respect in Sport](#), [Mental Health First Aid](#), [Emotional Intelligence](#), and [Holistic Return to Sport](#) are practical examples of an expanding requirement to offer emotionally intelligent coaching. In turn we mitigate the risk of unnecessary conflict and a reduction in complaints.
- Create inspiration videos to keep your people motivated. Here's [one example](#) and another way to say thanks [here](#) provided by Tony Zito.

## CONCLUSION

Participants were encouraged to complete the survey to ensure that these sessions continue to meet the needs of participants. In addition, participants were asked to express one word that reflected how they felt about the session.





**APPENDIX 1**

**Rebound: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

**Volunteer Group: Managers (Al, Linda & Kim)**

**What might be their motivations for volunteering post pandemic: Giving back to community - social - support of their kids sport/activity - sense of obligation - rebuild and regroup**

<b>Skills required</b>	<b>Recruitment Strategies</b>	<b>Retention Strategies</b>	<b>Renewal Strategies</b>	<b>Recognition Strategies</b>
Leadership	Strong network to reach out and connect for referrals	- Creditability	Training requirements	Gear - volunteer medal ...key ppl
Attention to Detail/ Organized/ Reliable	- History/Past - culture of organization	- Gratitude		- Difference and appreciation of the organization
Communication	- Advertising of the event	- Expectations - Job descriptions/ details		- Recognize some and not others - can create issues
Coachable/adaptable	- Community Endorsement (creditability) to support the event/ organization/club	- Communication - stay in touch		- Social media post - TY (series of them) - Athletes recognizing key volunteers. (win for athlete, volunteer and organization).



## APPENDIX 2

### Rebound: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy

#### Volunteer Group: Risk and Safety Officer

What might be their motivations for volunteering post pandemic:

Skills required	Recruitment Strategies	Retention Strategies	Renewal Strategies	Recognition Strategies
Detailed and organized	Email, social media, and website notice to members with description	Allow to keep the risk and safety position focused on only their core role.	Identify appropriate training in all policies pertaining to Risk and Safety.	- Constant thank you's and recognition to the significant events that are managed by the safety officer
Excellent communication via oral and written			- Rowan's Law - Covid - Respect in Sport - Conflict Management	- Lifetime supply of coffee
Management skills-can lead a committee for assistance			- Safety in Sport	
Good in pressure situation that might occur in a safety situation			Access to professional and legal assistance if needed	



APPENDIX 3

Rebound: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Volunteer Group: **Coaches (Lisa, Tony, Michael)**

What might be their motivations for volunteering post pandemic:

Area/Sport	Skills required	Recruitment Strategies	Retention Strategies	Renewal Strategies	Recognition Strategies
<b>Water Polo</b>	- NCC Certified	- Training Paid after 2 years	- National Sport		- Swag Hoodies Mask - T shirt
<b>OCSL</b>	- Competitive need certification	- Coaches come with teams. - Can be selected from known entity			- Swag with logo
<b>Futsal</b>	- Competitive Certification	- Previous teams' coaches - Parents	- Love of the sport.		- EOY - Tournament
	- Rec basic training				





**APPENDIX 4**

**Rebound: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

**Volunteer Group: Board Recruitment (Graeme, Hector, Jeremy, Mike)**

**What might be their motivations for volunteering post pandemic:**

Skills required	Recruitment Strategies	Retention Strategies	Renewal Strategies	Recognition Strategies
Budgeting/Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best recruitment is an excellent retention Strategy</li> <li>- Board Recruitment plan Networking in business/finance Roles clearly defined (Jr/Sr) OSC/Volunteer Ottawa Nomination Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement</li> <li>Feedback Loop</li> <li>Input</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Acting on input/recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to date policies</li> <li>Current Training</li> <li>Informed Volunteers</li> <li>Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer events</li> <li>Gestures</li> <li>Verbal thank you</li> <li>Honor/award</li> <li>Gift</li> </ul>
Risk Management – Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best recruitment is an excellent retention Strategy</li> <li>Board Recruitment plan Networking in business/finance Roles clearly defined (Jr/Sr) OSC/Volunteer Ottawa Nomination Committee</li> </ul>			
Commitment/Dedication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best recruitment is an excellent retention Strategy</li> <li>Board Recruitment plan Networking in business/finance Roles clearly defined (Jr/Sr) OSC/Volunteer Ottawa Nomination Committee</li> </ul>			



**Rebound.**  
OSC Community Sport Resiliency Program

**Sport Law & Strategy Group**

Relevant Experience	Best recruitment is an excellent retention Strategy Board Recruitment plan Networking in business/finance Roles clearly defined (Jr/Sr) OSC/Volunteer Ottawa Nomination Committee			
Motivation aligned with Org's vision, mission/philosophy	Best recruitment is an excellent retention Strategy Board Recruitment plan Networking in business/finance Roles clearly defined (Jr/Sr) OSC/Volunteer Ottawa Nomination Committee			
Demonstrated Leadership	Best recruitment is an excellent retention Strategy Board Recruitment plan Networking in business/finance Roles clearly defined (Jr/Sr) OSC/Volunteer Ottawa Nomination Committee			
Organization Skills				



**APPENDIX 5**

**Rebound: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

**Volunteer Group: Committee (Dave, Jacob, Rodrigo)**

**What might be their motivations for volunteering post pandemic:**

Skills required	Recruitment Strategies	Retention Strategies	Renewal Strategies	Recognition Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure it's a diverse group representing all, including team sports, individual sports etc. Members from all regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural representation is not always easy</li> <li>- Develop a wide net as possible, we don't want an inward-looking board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begins in recruitment, with clear job descriptions</li> <li>- Term length should be clearly identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two terms max</li> <li>- At renewal phase, see if their expectations are being met, and if not, how it can be improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awards</li> <li>- Dinner out with staff</li> <li>- Social media recognition</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sport expertise and skills for a wide representative committee</li> <li>- Coach certification, ppl coming who know that world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't want to yell into an echo chamber, instead get unique and different perspectives</li> <li>- This is the true value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As they're accepting the role, they have a clear understanding of what is expected so as time goes on they don't feel taken advantage of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review job description, ensure staff and committee are happy</li> <li>- If there is a lax of leadership in each of the roles (other board members, etc.) Fix It.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formally recognized at the yearly banquet</li> <li>- When we share lockdown rules, comments from parents means a lot</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Away from committees, too many delegations, nothing got done</li> <li>- Being open and have discussions, be flexible and challenge each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't judge recruitment on a single skill, it's a unique skill set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retaining members, reminding them of family and values; they're coming back because their children are getting something out of it too</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketing and advertising to show inclusive and diversity; this will lead to diverse members joining the sport, and in-turn, future committee members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not going back to the well too often</li> <li>- Award certificates, kindness, showing appreciation</li> <li>- One or two in-person visits to better connect out to dinner, to build a relationship</li> </ul>		