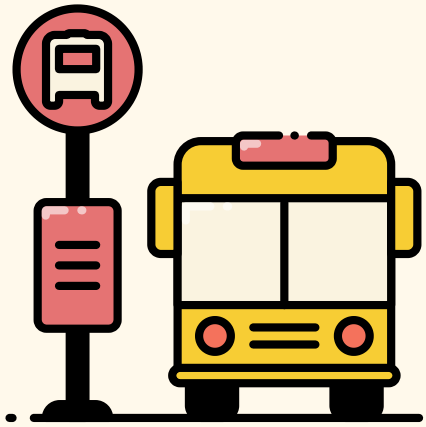
SpacetoCo™

HOW TO ATTRACT, ENGAGE AND RETAIN



COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

INTRODUCTION



Being on a committee that manages a community venue, like a hall, church or local facility can be a rewarding way to give back. Many people serve on committees for years and have lifelong friends, memories and achievements to show for it.

However, it seems that as our lives get busier, people have less time to commit to being on a committee and as a result, it's much harder to get new people to volunteer or get a more diverse cross section of the community to get involved.

It can also be hard to retain enthusiasm when issues crop up, like managing difficult personalities, divisive topics like COVID or just the normal challenges of getting a group of people to work effectively together.

This guide has helpful tips and suggestions gathered from people that work on successful community venue committees to help you attract and retain the people that will help your venue thrive. This guide focuses on ways to get the most out of people. It's not about the specifics of how to run a meeting or committee governance, but we have included some helpful resources in the appendix.

Think of your committee like a bus. It has a driver, and a team of people who are all riding the bus and hopefully it has a clear direction for where it's headed.

CONTENTS

In this guide, we're going to explore:

01

How to get people on the bus?

Ways to attract new people to get involved in your committee and venue. ***(pg 3)***

02

Keeping people on the bus and enjoying the ride

Making sure the committee is operating in a way that helps people do their best work and want to keep giving time and energy. ***(pg 5)***

03

Making sure the bus gets you where you want to go

How to make sure you are achieving what you want to achieve. ***(pg 7)***

04

Resources

Further reading to go further on the bus! ***(pg 9)***



CHAPTER ONE

HOW TO GET PEOPLE ON THE BUS?



01

Cross pollination of committees

If there are organizations that have a close relationship with your venue, it might be helpful to have reciprocal committee members. For example a local school PTA who uses a hall venue regularly could send a member of their committee to the hall meetings and vice versa. That way you can encourage collaboration and resource sharing.



02

Gateway projects

Many people do not want to join a committee because they are worried that they might let people down and don't want to commit to a long term commitment. By creating smaller, short term 'gateway' volunteering opportunities that have less commitment, you can ease people in to getting involved. These projects could be a specific event, fundraising drive, clean up or planting days.



03

Annual or regular events

Community events are a great way to meet new people local to your venue and attract new people to get involved. It's a good idea to assign a couple of committee members to actively try and speak to as many people as possible and capture contact details to follow up. Often committees can get bogged down in managing the event, food, stalls etc, and miss out on the opportunity for connecting with new people.

HOW TO GET PEOPLE ON THE BUS?



01

Don't waste a good crisis

Nothing brings people together like a shared enemy or cause. People tend to be much more motivated to get involved when there is a really strong thing that needs to be fixed, changed or stopped. If you have an issue that you think will help your community rally together - then use this as a catalyst to get new people participating.



02

Advertise...

...but make it clear what's in it for them! There are lots of ways to advertise for new committee members e.g. local papers, local Facebook community groups, letter drops, flyers in local businesses etc. But what people forget to highlight is WHY someone should give their time. E.g. You'll get to meet new people, help preserve local history etc.



03

The personal touch

Advertising is great, but If you know someone that you think would be a fantastic asset to your committee - ask them to join! It sounds obvious, but people are much more likely to take up a position if you ask them directly and tell them why you think their unique skill set would be helpful.



04

School/youth program

Young people are often looking for ways to build their skills and experience to help bolster their CV or uni application. It could be a great opportunity to open up a couple of youth positions on your committee that are offered as part of a school civics program or to guides/scouts groups.

CHAPTER TWO

KEEPING PEOPLE ON THE BUS AND ENJOYING THE RIDE





Respect people's time

It can be really awkward to cut people off or stop a discussion, but it's much more frustrating for volunteers to have to stay late or to not get to the key things you needed to agree. If you don't like playing timekeeper then agree timings for each slot and set an actual timer - this makes it really clear that it's not a personal decision and motivates people to be succinct.



Clear roles and responsibilities

Does everyone know what their role is on the committee? There are the obvious roles like chair, secretary and treasurer, but it's also helpful for everyone to understand what role they play and what they need to do. E.g. events, fundraising, liaison, bookings etc.



Get to know what people are good at or what they want to work on

Have you taken the time to get to know your committee members and what their strengths are? Taking one meeting to get everyone to share their skills and the stuff they like to work on can help you allocate tasks to the right people. For example, it's good to know who likes doing research versus who likes manning a stand and chatting to people.



Create subcommittees

If a project is large enough and would take up a significant portion of your regular agenda, then consider creating a subcommittee or task force who work on it as a separate endeavour. This gives others an opportunity to step up and lead on something they care about, and ensures regular meetings can be focused.

KEEPING PEOPLE ON THE BUS AND ENJOYING THE RIDE



Create a safe space - e.g. dealing with difficult or overbearing personalities

This is probably the biggest cause of people dropping out or getting frustrated whilst on a committee. Most people are very well meaning, but everyone knows how awkward it can get when someone has a specific agenda to push or personalities clash.

The best mitigation strategy for this is to set a strong foundation for how to deal with this when it comes up and breed a culture of respect and safety in the group.

Feeling safe means everyone feels comfortable to speak up, be themselves and also to receive constructive feedback. Here's three ways to build this environment.

1. Create a code of conduct - what you all agree are the behaviours and topics that are acceptable. Make it clear how deviations will be dealt with. Remind people of the code at the beginning of meetings.
2. Making it a safe space for feedback - get everyone comfortable with giving and receiving feedback on ideas and have a clear process for people to give feedback on something they feel uncomfortable about.
3. Reflect as a committee - regularly take 10 mins to check in on how you're operating. Get people to share what's working, not working and what can be improved. You'll be surprised by how much consensus you find!

Have fun! Head to the pub, get to know each other as people.

Making your meetings something people enjoy and look forward to coming along to will keep people motivated to participate. Maybe having time for socialising with tea & cakes or a few drinks or heading to the pub afterwards.



Documentation & communication

Do you have the basics documented? Is it stored centrally and would a new member be able to get up to speed quickly? Choose an open channel. Ineffective communication can be a huge source of frustration. No-one enjoys email chains that go on forever or having issues arise when emotions run high. It can be helpful to set guidelines around how people communicate when working together between meetings. Although email is convenient, many committees are moving to more open, informal tools like Facebook Messenger that help reduce long email threads.

CHAPTER THREE

MAKING SURE THE BUS GETS YOU WHERE YOU WANT TO GO





Do you have a clear purpose?

It's so much easier to motivate people around a shared goal or vision. It also helps keep everyone focused and reduce the risk of working on something that's not relevant or distracting. Having a clear purpose statement and setting out the key projects and regular responsibilities you're working on will help make this clear. A perfect example of this is having a simple 5 year plan.
Some helpful resources and examples for how to do this are in the appendix.

Levers for change

If you're working on a shared cause like fundraising, getting planning permission or trying to stop something it can be really helpful to take time to understand what the levers for change are i.e. the people, skills or actions you need to take to get the outcome faster. Many changes come down to a small number of key decision makers and governance processes, so taking the time to understand what needs to be done or how you can influence something can have a much bigger impact than more broad actions.

MAKING SURE THE BUS GETS YOU WHERE YOU WANT TO GO







Do you have the right skill set?

Getting the right expertise can make all the difference. Use your network to get experts to advise your committee. They don't have to join forever, but their input can help you find solutions faster or make sure you're on the right path.

Don't get distracte.....

Often people bring new ideas to the table that they are excited about. This is great but taking on too many new initiatives can also be distracting. Having guidelines on how and when new ideas can be raised can keep the door open but also keep it controlled, so new ideas don't monopolise time that's needed for what's already on your agenda.

Celebrate the wins

It can be all too easy to forget all the great things that you're delivering for your community. Whether it's an event or getting WiFi installed, make sure you celebrate and recognise these achievements. Having a few minutes each meeting to share good news, say thank you and celebrate is a great way to keep people motivated.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESOURCES

Check out these awesome resources for further reading, to get your committee bus going further!



Watch our Community Venue Learning Series webinar about how to attract, engage and retain committee members at your community venue

RECRUITMENT

How to recruit new board members

Quick guide to finding new committee members

101 Ways to get new members for your organisation

How to attract and engage younger members



How to attract, engage and retain volunteers



Guide to running effective committees

Guide to keep volunteers engaged and energised

ENGAGEMENT & RETENTION

RESOURCES

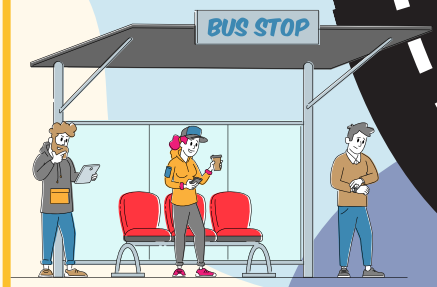
CONFLICT

Characteristics of a dysfunctional team

Ideas on how to manage conflict in a group

Article on psychological safety

5 signs of a toxic team culture



COMMUNICATION

Committees, roles and meetings

4 communication styles and how to navigate them



Tips for committee or board meetings

TEAMWORK

7 icebreaker games to build team connection

7 essential skills for teamwork



INSPIRATION

32 non-corny teamwork quotes

6 inspiring teamwork examples through the ages



Join the **Community Venue Facebook Group** for more inspiration, connection and support - by community venues, for community venues!



SUMMARY

Whether you're a committee pro or a newbie, we hope there's been a few sparks of helpful advice in here to help you get the most out of the amazing volunteers you have on your committee.

For more guides for community venues, head to: https://spaceto.co/resources

SCAN ME

5 YEAR PLAN TEMPLATE

APPENDIX

VISION

Write 1-2 lines for what you would like the hall to become in 5-10 years

Think about a statement that will inspire people to be part of what you are creating.

GOALS

Create 2-3 goals that will help you achieve the vision

Goals can be SMART e.g. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound.

INITIATIVES

Create 1-5 initiatives or things you'll need to do to achieve the goals

This could be a project, a fundraising campaign, and action, event or anything that helps move you towards the gaol.

1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

SCAN ME

APPENDIX

CHECKLIST FOR A HEALTHY AND HAPPY COMMITTEE

Having a regular review of how you're working together is a good way to get feedback and continually ensure everyone is feeling involved and looked after.

We've pulled together a checklist of things that are present in committees that are working well together. You can use this as a conversation starter with your group to see how you're doing and identify ways you could work better together. An important part of this conversation is making sure everyone feels like it's safe to speak up and share what they feel.

CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES

Does everyone know what their roles and responsibilities are?

DIVERSITY

Is your committee a good representation of your community? Are a range of genders, ages and races represented?

NEW MEMBERS

Do you get new members join every year? Is it easy to attract new volunteers?

FUN!

Do your team look forward to working together? Are your meetings full of laughs? Do you have fun together?

PASSION PROJECTS

Do your committee members get to work on things they believe in and are passionate about?

EFFICIENT PROCESSES

Are you asking people to spend time on things that could be automated or improved? When did you last review how you work?

VISIBILITY

Is the information you need to work effectively e.g. actions, notes, reports etc visible and easy for everyone to access and use?

SAFE & WELCOMING

Does everyone feel comfortable to voice their ideas and opinions? Does everyone take the time to listen and take feedback? Are debates heated or friendly?