



Attracting New Members and Retaining Members

When looking at growth and retention within your football club consider these four principles:

1. Understand your audience
2. Consider the quality of the environment at your club
3. Ensure you have a suitable offer for current members and for members that you'd like to attract
4. Have a clear idea of how you are going to market/communicate your offer

Understanding your audience

- Get to know your members
- Ask for their thoughts regularly
- Give members ownership of the club and of how it moves forward
- Have clear and easy ways for members to communicate with you

Quality of environment at your club

- Facilities that the club owns/rents
- Different coaching/playing opportunities available for members
- What social events do the club run?
- How does the club communicate with its members?
- Do you have different types of membership offers or discounts available?
- Do your facilities meet the needs of your members?

Having a suitable offer

- Who are you trying to attract?
- Why would potential new members want to come to your club?
- Can you deliver long term on promises?

Marketing

- Where will you advertise your offer? Consider social media, presentations at schools, leaflets, and newspaper adverts
- How much have you allocated to advertising?
- What partners can you work with to promote your offer?
- How will you continue to communicate with new members once they've joined?

Attracting new members

Attracting new members can be competitive with the many different clubs and other sports around the country. It is important that before you start recruiting new members you have a clear set of objectives in place. Think about:

- What members do you need/want?
- How many members are you looking for?
- Why would someone want to join your club?
- From where are you going to recruit these members? (Universities, colleges etc.)

Top tips for people recruitment

Sometimes football clubs don't realise the resources they have or the people already connected to their club. If you have roughly 100 children in your club think about the parents and their skillsets. Accountants, secretaries, social media gurus or even gardeners are handy people to help around the club on a voluntary basis. A welcome evening is the perfect opportunity to call for new and skilled people.

Create clear role descriptions and have the forms ready to share with every parent. By making the parents or guardians feel wanted they are more than likely to invest in the club's philosophy and help when needed.

If you are a senior club, try advertising via Facebook, Twitter and other platforms to promote the club's need for new volunteers. Volunteer Now have a platform that allows you to promote opportunities across Northern Ireland. By promoting this via your members you might find a retired accountant or groundsman who would love to volunteer at their local club.

People recruitment is about thinking outside the box and not being afraid to ask.

Club induction

What should the induction involve?

1. Health and safety instructions
2. Tour of football club
3. Directions of where to find everything connected with the club
4. Club policies and values
5. Introductions to other club members

Questions to consider when inducting people

- Do they require training?
- Do they need to be monitored over the first few weeks to help them settle?
- Do they need a partner for their volunteering role?

Matching people to the correct role

In order to minimise the number of people leaving their positions it is essential to try to match people to the correct roles within a football club. At the Irish FA we recommend that the best way to do this is to create an application process. This allows people such as the adult and junior members along with parents, to all help the club with different roles. If someone applies for a role, they are obviously interested in serving that specific area. An application process allows you to check if they have the suitable skills and knowledge for the role.

Retaining members

A club that retains the majority of its members is a club that delivers a great experience. It's easier to retain club members than to recruit new people. To retain someone you need to remember what motivated them to join your club in the first place. The reasons that most members join a club are:

- They enjoy the social element at the club
- They enjoy being with friends and family members
- They like to be valued by the club and know that they have some input into club affairs
- They feel welcome in the environment

Key considerations when retaining members include:

- Do you help new members to meet other members?
- Do you communicate regularly with members?
- Do you keep members updated with proposed changes?
- Do you ask members for their ideas?
- Do you regularly monitor the activities that you run for members and do these activities still meet the need a year down the line?
- Do you organise regular social events for members?
- Do you ask former members for feedback on why they left?

Key considerations

- Have a people recruitment officer
- Do you have a budget?
- Know your target audience
- Speak to existing members about a refer a friend scheme
- Have clear membership benefits
- Is it easy for people to join your club?
- What is your unique selling point?
- Have you got a 'JOIN US' section on your website?
- Do you have relationships with local schools, colleges and youth clubs?

Member feedback

Collecting feedback from current members of your football club is important to shape the future of your club. By regularly asking your existing members for their thoughts on the club you can:

- Get to better know members
- Understand why people are members. It could be for the social element, to help their kids or for love of their local club
- Help the club to provide a positive environment/experience for all new and existing members
- Help the club to attract new members by extending what it offers
- Know what other elements members would like to see, i.e., walking football, more social events or a mums' football session
- Recognise what younger people would like to see

Ways the club may gain feedback from customers

- Survey Monkey
- Google Forms
- Paper surveys at games
- Facebook surveys
- Suggestion boxes at the facility
- Emails
- Texts/WhatsApp
- Website feedback form

