

Smith RCC Training Call Materials – February 26, 2008

Succession Planning

Do you ever ask yourself why it is always the same people who put up their hands to help out around the organization? Why is it that the same faces always appear at meetings? When there is a meeting or workshop to be attended externally, why is it that the same person always attends?

What would happen if that person left your organization tomorrow? What would happen if other committee members left the organization tomorrow?

Succession planning is the process that can assist in ensuring that your club does not cease to operate due to one or several people relinquishing their commitment, and that the result of their work continues well beyond their involvement.

A good succession plan includes:

- **A business plan** – this does not have to be lengthy. It is a working document outlining the organisation's priorities, and should be consulted regularly throughout the year.
- **Position Descriptions** – this makes it easier to recruit new people to the position, and ensures that you know what jobs the vacating volunteer was responsible for.
- **Policies and Procedures manual** – this outlines the day-to-day tasks of your organisation, and who is responsible for carrying them out. It will also contain policies about selection processes, health and safety issues and volunteer management.
- **Reporting procedures** – these show the reporting lines back to the committee, either directly or through supervisors.
- **Education and development opportunities** – not only do these increase job satisfaction, but also they broaden the range of skills of each volunteer. This means that if someone suddenly leaves, you are more likely to have someone else ready to step into the vacant position.

Barriers to succession planning:

Consider how your organisation might tackle these obstacles:

- **The gatekeeper** – one person holding all the knowledge within a system only they understand
- **Believing they are irreplaceable** – considering that some members and volunteers are irreplaceable
- **Poor records** – a lack of formalised reporting procedures
- **Poor management** – a lack of volunteer management (i.e. recruitment, screening, orientation, training, recognition, replacement)
- **Seniors take all** – senior members taking all the administrative responsibility, restricting the development of juniors with an interest in the area
- **Time to go** – committee members who have served the organisation well for many years, but now may be reaching their 'best before date'
- **Fear of change** – a fear-of-change culture within your organisation

How will you know when you have a successful succession plan in place?

The ideal succession plan should allow the existing administrators, management, coaching staff and volunteers to walk away from the club without being missed!