

Retention Best Practices

Choose LSC Officials leaders very carefully. In this portfolio you will find a Leadership training seminar to help teach leadership skills to local officials as they progress in their officials career.

Use proactive inter-personal two-way communication effectively as a retention tool. Keep in touch about meets and other things by way of: frequent, timely, blast e-mails, cute e-mails, monthly birthday greetings on line. (can be assigned to officials committee member) and many good hints and kudos to officials for service above and beyond the necessary.

Meet the three basic needs of officials.

1. The need to feel their work is necessary and appreciated

Reward their efforts. Use patches, hats, pins, and shirts as you give them a hardy hand shake and a sincere "Thank You" for a job well done.

Always debrief your officials at the end of a session. You get good feedback and they know their views are important to you.

Value their time. Don't keep them in endless meetings. Start the meets and end the meets on time so officials know what to expect.

Always emphasize that the officials are a team on deck and off. Judge the performance of the team as they work the meet. It is good when they work together and help one another to perform better.

Educate teams to help officials with registration and meet fees. Some LSC's have officials travel funds to help officials experience national meets and bring the knowledge gained back to the LSC.

2. The need to have fun and enjoy the association with other officials.

At a few large meets each year, plan a "decompression session" with all officials attending, strictly social, no hierarchy just good friends on equal footing enjoying an hour together.

Set a happy tone at the officials briefing each session. Tell a funny experience about yourself to disarm and let the officials know that you know you are human and imperfect just like everyone else in the room.

Always give plenty of rest and food and water. Remember SUCCESS SELLS.

Write down officials spouses names and other personal information, i.e., number of children, swimmer's name, etc. Recognize the contribution of the Officials families at award banquets, etc. The family sacrificed so the official could be on deck.

3. The need to have a well defined path and steps outlined for their advancement, if that is their desire.

Make sure every official has copies of the minimum standards, and all LSC requirements and timelines for advancement. Ideally, this could be part of the CD given to potential officials prior to their training.

Develop training lesson plans for advancement to new assignments such as starting or chief judge, admin referee, or deck referee, and re-certification seminars for all positions to keep officials informed as the protocols change in USA Swimming. Keep them as short as possible.

Be sure to offer leadership training to all wishing to advance in the ranks of officials. Leadership skills can be taught, and if practiced diligently can become ingrained to better all facets of their lives. (See leadership seminar enclosed)

Develop a succession plan by training certain referees and local officials committee members on the steps being taken to assure their advancement. Let them examine your records on them so they can see what is involved in leadership should they be called to step up.