Recruitment and Retention Workshop – Organisers' Guide

CCCBR Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup (April 2020)

The Central Council Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup has developed a resources pack to allow local associations/branches/clusters of towers to run their own Recruitment and Retention Workshop. This interactive workshop will help ringers come up with a plan for their tower(s), using resources from the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) and from the Central Council. The workshop was trialled in Sussex in early 2020, then run on a much larger scale at the V&L day during the 2020 ART Conference.

This Guide will help you plan your workshop by covering:

1. Workshop overview
2. Organisation in advance, including publicity
3. Running the workshop on the day
4. Follow-up

Many of these aspects are also applicable to e.g. Association/Guild meetings, training days, fundraising events, etc.

1. Workshop overview

This workshop can be run on a small scale e.g. around 10 attendees, or much larger, up to 100 or more attendees (which would then be divided into smaller groups). The slides and notes for facilitators are included in the resources pack.

The workshop follows the structure of the **ART Recruitment Toolbox** - 10-Point Plan for recruitment & retention. This includes: raising awareness; thinking about what you want to achieve and who you'd like to recruit; planning recruitment events and publicity, and following these up; how to integrate new recruits into an existing band (keeping everyone happy) – and things to help you hang on to your new ringers.

1.1 Outline programme

We suggest that you run a **half-day workshop**, with the following timings:

15 mins	Introduction to the workshop and aims, including a very short intro from each of the invited new recruits
50 mins	Recruitment Toolbox Exercise 1 – What you want to achieve, who to recruit, raising awareness
10 mins	Break with refreshments
50 mins	Recruitment Toolbox Exercise 2 – What to do
10 mins	Break with refreshments
50 mins	Recruitment Toolbox Exercise 3 – Retention
15 mins	Wrap up, including thoughts/feedback from the new recruits

Ask attendees to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the start, so that you can begin promptly.

If you have multiple discussion groups (see below), remember to allow 5-10 minutes at the end of every discussion session for individual groups to feed back their main points to the whole group. If you only have one discussion group, use this time to summarise the key points.

You may wish to start with some refreshments, as an ice-breaker.

1.2 Discussion groups

- Ideally no more than 10 people per discussion group; 20 as an absolute maximum
- **One facilitator per group** – to make sure that everyone gets a chance to contribute equally (the facilitator will need to ask open questions, and avoid telling people what they would do themselves!)
- Use flip-chart paper and/or post-it notes to note key points
- Different groups could concentrate on different aspects, e.g. tower vs branch level, or different age groups

- You will need a designated time-keeper – to give 10 minute warnings to facilitators, and to mark the end of each discussion session with something loud (e.g. handbell)

1.3 Including new(ish) recruits

It's very important to have at least **one newer recruit per discussion group**, to give their perspective. Ideally, this should be someone who started ringing 1-2 years ago – so it's still fresh in their memory. You will need to invite these people individually (consider offering to pay their travel expenses).

2. Organisation in advance

Before you do anything else, you need to decide **how many attendees you are aiming to have** at the workshop (be realistic!). This will affect the rest of your organisation and planning.

2.1 Venue

You will need a hall or group of rooms (with toilets) that are large enough to accommodate the number of attendees, with significant space between the discussion groups if in the same hall, so that the groups can talk without having to shout over one another. Remember to check how many tables and chairs there are. A kitchen area suitable for serving refreshments is ideal – check in advance what the exact facilities are, and whether you will need to bring anything (e.g. mugs, tea-towels, bin bags, kettle, washing-up liquid and sponges…!).

Things to check before booking the venue:

- What the booking arrangements are
- What the cost is and how to pay (cash, bank transfer, invoice to the guild/association)
- Is a deposit required?
- What times the venue is available (remember you'll need extra time at the beginning and end to set up and pack away – probably 30-45 mins each end)
- Access arrangements – how will you get in, who will lock up; also access to kitchen, tables and chairs, etc
- Are you allowed to use blu-tak on the walls? (If not – use the windows!)
- Do you need to provide a risk assessment, safeguarding policy, etc?
- Do any of your attendees have special access requirements, and can these be accommodated (e.g. level access, accessible toilet)?
- What are the parking arrangements, and are there any public transport options nearby?

2.2 Costs and charging

Things to find out and decide:

- How much is the hall hire?
- How much will refreshments cost to provide?
- Will you need to pay travel expenses for the leader and facilitator(s) or new recruits?
- Will you need buy any materials, e.g. flip-chart paper, pens, post-it notes?
- Are you going to charge attendees to cover some/all of the costs, or is your association/branch/tower going to cover the costs?

2.3 People

You will need someone (or some people) for the following things (some of the participants may be able to help with refreshments, clearing up at the end, etc):

- Setting up at the beginning
- Providing refreshments (e.g. tea, coffee, milk, sugar, cake, sandwiches)
- Presenting/leading the workshop
- Facilitator(s) for discussions
- New recruits (see above) – it's best to personally invite some people who you think will be willing and able to contribute

- Designated time-keeper
- Clearing up at the end

Make sure you have the key people in place (including new recruits) and the date agreed before you start advertising.

2.4 Advertising

Before you start advertising, make sure you know/have decided the following:

- Date, start and finish time (people need to plan!)
- Location (give the exact address, including post-code for sat-nav – don't assume that everyone knows what you mean by e.g. "St Mary's church hall"!)
- Arrangements for refreshments (ask people to let you know if they have special dietary requirements)
- Cost and whether it is payment is in advance (how?) or on the day
- Parking (including cost or any special arrangements) and public transport options
- Name of workshop leader
- How to book – who to contact and how (phone and/or email address and/or through online form), deadline for booking; remember to ask for special requirements (dietary, access)
- Do you need to know in advance which tower/district/branch each attendee is from (for working out discussion groups – see "Planning the final details" section below)?
- You will need a short paragraph ("blurb") to describe the workshop and to persuade people that they should attend.

How are you going to reach everyone that you need to advertise to? Some things to consider:

- Who do you want to come to this – is it an open invitation to the whole guild/association, or are you targeting particular areas/towers/people (e.g. tower captains)? Adjust your advertising strategy accordingly.
- It's best to use as many different advertising methods as you can, so that you can reach as many people as possible – website, Facebook, Twitter, emails to members, emails to tower correspondents, posters, newsletters/magazines…
- Bear in mind that the towers most likely to struggle with recruitment (and perhaps also retention) are those with an older demographic of ringers – these are the people least likely to be on email, social media or able to visit websites. How are you going to reach them? You might need to write some letters and make some phone calls!
- Remember to make sure that all the information listed above is available – don't worry if you can't fit it all on the poster or Facebook post; emphasise the key details and signpost to the webpage that has all the information on it (or include it in the letters).
- It takes more time, but direct, personal invitations are much more effective than mass mailings. So if you're struggling for numbers, try reaching out directly to people who you think would benefit – you might discover that they "thought it wasn't intended for them"!

Remember to **start advertising as early as you can** – you can announce a "save the date" with minimal details first, then follow up with more information once finalised. But be careful not to say things like "We are hoping to be able to run a workshop or something, it's probably going to be on this date, somewhere in the county" – that just gives the impression that you don't have a clue and that it will be a poorly organised event! There's no point in starting to advertise just a week or two before the event – by then, most people will already be busy on the day.

What's the **maximum number of people that your venue can accommodate** (or that you can cope with!)? Keep an eye on the number of attendees and make sure you don't go (much) over this (one or two people are likely to drop out at the last minute).

2.5 Planning the final details

Make sure that the organisers, presenters and facilitators have a meeting (can be by e.g. Skype, Zoom or WhatsApp) to run through the plans for the day, so that everyone knows what they are doing and when, and who is bringing what with them (see below). Have a think about things that might be awkward or could go wrong, and how you might deal with them. For example, have you got the phone number for the person unlocking the venue; what if loads more/fewer people turn up than you were expecting; etc? Do you need to make an announcement at the beginning about fire escapes, etc? How will you deal with attendees with constant negative views or those who may try to dominate group discussions (see below for some suggestions)?

If you are going to have more than one discussion group, it's useful to have worked out who will be in which group (including the facilitator and new recruit) in advance. When deciding who goes in which group, remember that it can be very helpful to mix up people from different towers/branches/districts, so that are able to share experiences.

Will you have different discussion groups focusing on different aspects of R&R (e.g. tower vs district vs association perspectives; or different age groups)? Are you happy for people to split into groups based on these topics on the day (you might get vary varied group sizes, and you will need to allow extra time for this in the programme)? Or do you want to sort this out in advance?

Do you want to give out the ART Recruitment Toolbox (10-point plan document) at the beginning, part-way through, or at the end? Do you want attendees to come up with their own ideas first, or to fill in the plan as they go through the workshop? Should the group facilitators have situation scenarios to use if needs be, to aid or stimulate discussion?

Feedback and follow-up (see Section 4 for more details) – think about and plan for this in advance.

2.6 Contact your attendees in advance

About a week before the event, contact your attendees to confirm all the details (remember to use email addresses in Bcc for GDPR compliance). Ask them to let you know if they can no longer come, or if they know of someone who would like to join but hasn't registered (assuming you have space for more). You might also want to direct attendees to some online resources (CCCBR and ART) to look at in advance.

3. On the day

3.1 Things to bring with you

To run this workshop, you will probably need the following things (you might choose not to use them all):

- **Laptop** (to run slides), with the slides loaded (check in advance that they run properly – Macs format fonts differently from Windows machines, so you might find that the PowerPoint slides look odd; if so, run a PDF version of the slides).
- **Projector and correct cable to connect to laptop** – if different people are bringing the laptop and projector, make sure that they know what the connections are on each item, and have the appropriate cable.
- **Projector screen** – you might be able to use the wall, if it's painted a pale colour.
- **Print-outs of slides and notes** for facilitators and presenter – you probably don't want to provide printed copies for everyone (that's a LOT of paper) but, if there are any attendees without internet access, you should bring printed copies for them.
- **Print-outs of the ART Recruitment Toolbox** for attendees and facilitators
- **Stickers and marker pen** – for name badges.
- **Flip-chart paper, post-it notes, pens, marker pens** – for the discussion groups to make notes.
- **A handbell or something else loud** – for the time-keeper to ring at the end of each discussion session (NB a mobile phone won't be loud enough!)
- **List of attendees and discussion group members** – so you know who should be coming, and who should be in which group.
- **Refreshments**!

- **Feedback forms** (if using these – see below)
- **Potato masher (or equivalent) of Mayhem** – see Tips for Facilitators, below!
- **Anything that the venue can't provide** – kettle, mugs, bin-bag, tea towels, washing-up stuff…

3.2 Setting up the room(s)

Remember to allow plenty of space between discussion groups. For smaller groups (6-8) it might be useful to have a table; for larger groups, arrange chairs in a circle. Make sure that everyone can see the screen. Allow yourself plenty of time to set up, check the projector is in focus, etc.

If any attendees turn up really early, either politely ask them to go away and come back later (suggest they go to a nearby café) or ask them to help you. There's nothing worse than having someone engage you in conversation when you're desperately trying to finish setting up an event!

3.3 Running the event

See the presenters' notes (in the resources pack) for suggestions of what to cover/discuss/suggest. The .pptx slides can be edited, so you can adapt them for your individual needs. Make sure you keep to time – it's very difficult to make time up later, and people will need to leave promptly at the end (you will probably also have to clear the venue promptly).

Tips for facilitators:

- Ask open questions (see the *Facilitators' Notes* in the resources pack for suggested questions and topics)
- Encourage quiet people to give their views, e.g. "What do you think about this, Margaret?"
- You need to prevent the chatty people from taking over the discussion; you may have to interrupt them – "OK, those are good points Richard; now let's hear what everyone else has to say."
- Make sure the new recruits get to give their perspective – "Katherine, when you first started ringing, what did you feel about…?"
- Keep everyone on-topic – "We're going to discuss that in the next session", "We're going off-topic here; let's keep to the question of…"
- Be aware of time and make sure that all the discussion questions are covered – "We've discussed this very thoroughly; let's move on to the next point."
- The "Potato Masher of Mayhem" (or equivalent) – very useful tool to ensure that only one person speaks at a time; only the person holding the object (e.g. wooden spoon, toilet brush, conch shell…) can speak. The facilitator can pass the object to the next person.

What are you going to do with all the **notes and ideas generated** from the meeting? Attendees may wish (and should be encouraged) to take the flip-chart/post-it notes away with them (they could take photos). The organisers may also want to capture the ideas – photos of the notes are the quickest way to do this at the end of the event (and will need typing up and summarising in order to be useful).

Take some photos (ask consent) during the event for social media, newsletter, website news etc.

Hopefully all your planning will pay off and everything will run smoothly!

4. Feedback and follow-up

4.1 Feedback

It's useful to gather feedback at the end of the event or immediately afterwards, so you can find out whether people felt the event was useful, what was most useful, and if there's anything you (or others) could improve next time. V&L and ART would also appreciate feedback about useful resources that can be passed on.

How are you going to gather feedback? A paper form and/or online form immediately at the end of the event work well. Think about what questions you are going to ask. Try to keep it short – people are only prepared to spend a couple of minutes on this!

Suggested feedback questions:

- What did you find most useful?
- Did the workshop meet your expectations? If not, why not?
- If you could change one thing about the workshop, what would it be?

How are you going to analyse the feedback and make use of it?

4.2 Follow-up with attendees

Contact all attendees immediately after the event (within 2-3 days – don't leave it longer or people will have lost interest). Thank them for attending, remind them to complete the feedback form (if needed), and point them to helpful resources (links to ART and CCCBR online resources, and any others specific to your association/branch). Attach electronic copies of the slides (PDF format) and Recruitment Toolbox document.

You might also want to follow-up with attendees at a later date (3 months/6 months/1 year later) to find out what they did as a result of the workshop, and how successful it proved to be.

4.3 Write a good news story!

Remember to celebrate your success! On the day itself, post photos on social media of people having a great time discussing ideas (and eating cake!); and write a good news story (with photos) for your association website and newsletter/magazine. Remember to link to the online resources, so people who couldn't attend can still get something out of it.

If you have any comments or suggestions about this guide, or the other materials in the Recruitment & Retention Workshop Resources Pack, please contact the Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup lead: vllead@cccbr.org.uk

This R&R workshop, with resources and supporting articles, has been produced by: Matt Lawrence, Steph Pendlebury, Sonia Field, Deb M-B, Paul Lewis, Tim Hine; V&L and ART working in partnership.