

Volunteers

The Heart of Sport

May 2008



Purpose was to answer three key questions

- ◆ Who are they and what are they doing?
- ◆ How do volunteers feel about volunteering?
- ◆ How can SPARC and sports organisations improve volunteer management practices and retain their current volunteers?



We talked to a lot of people...

**1,800+ sports
organisations**

1,000 interviews

1,500+ volunteers

Response rate of 45%

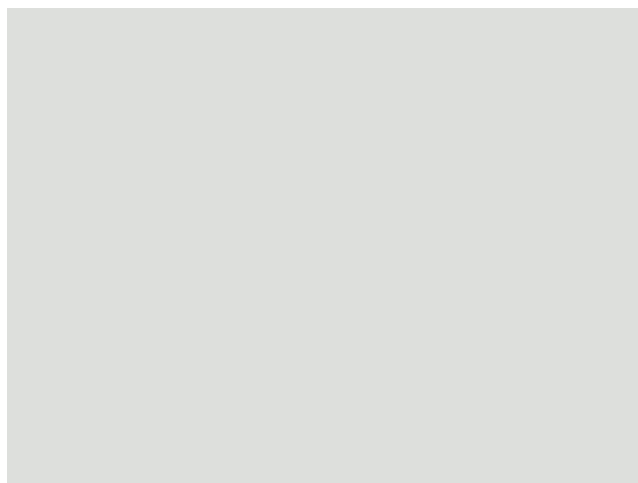
4,000+ households

+/-3.1 percent



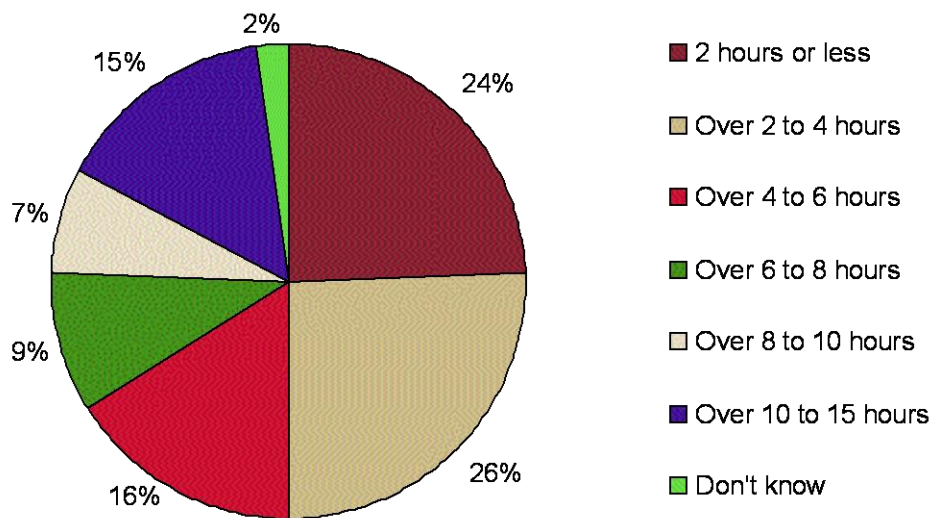
Profile of volunteers and their roles

What are they doing?



What are they doing? (cont.)

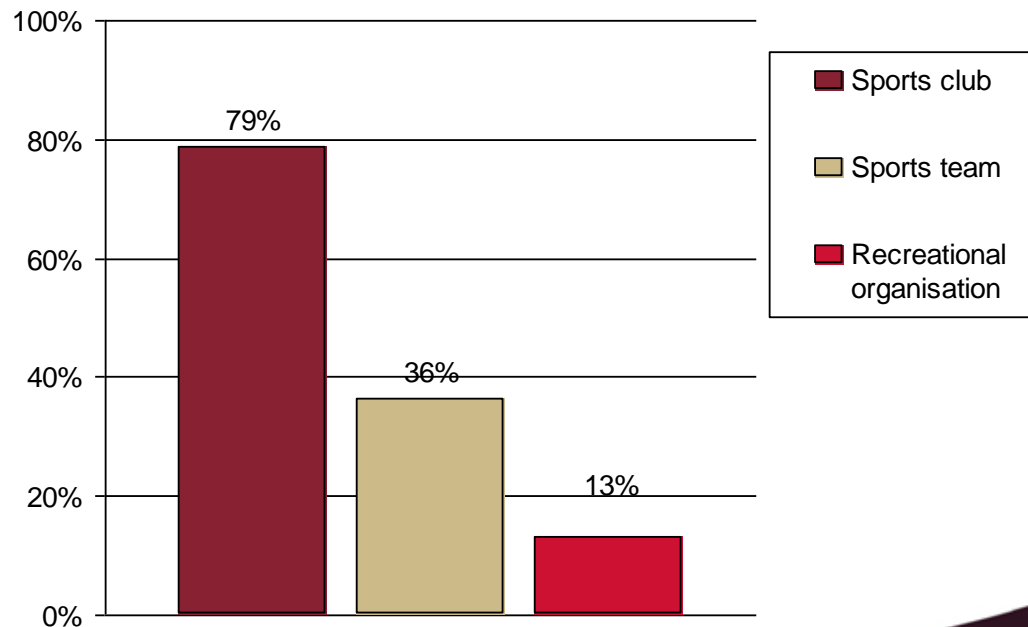
- ◆ Half have been volunteering for more than three years
 - One third for more than 5 years and 15% for over 10 years
- ◆ Two-thirds volunteer year round for their sports club or organisation



- ◆ Half volunteer for four hours or less per week (one quarter – 2 hours or less).

Volunteering has a community focus

- ◆ Most are volunteering with a sports club (rather than a team or recreation organisation)
- ◆ 4 out of 10 volunteer for more than one sports club/team/org.



Volunteering has a community focus (cont.)

Thanks to the half a million kiwis who do a ton of tough jobs every week, just for the love of it.



Volunteers
THE HEART OF SPORT
SPARC
Sports Recreation New Zealand

AS SEEN BY SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER, PETER BUSH.

www.sparc.org.nz

- ◆ 1 out of 3 are also doing some other volunteer work in their community:
 - At schools (sports and non-sports activities)
 - For charity organisations
 - Church.

Why did they start doing it?

- ◆ **Wanted to give something back to the sport or club**
- ◆ **A family member started to play the sport**
 - **Half of all volunteers have a child or other family in the club or team that they volunteer for (1 in 5 used to)**
- ◆ **Love of the sport**
- ◆ **No one else ‘stepped up’**
- ◆ **Wanted to pass on their skills and experience.**





How do volunteers feel about volunteering?

Volunteering makes them feel good...

- ◆ Enjoy seeing others succeed in sport
- ◆ A way that people can give something back to the community and society
- ◆ Lets them give something back to the sport they love
- ◆ When people do well in sport, it reflects positively on their community/whānau/the club as a whole
- ◆ When someone they've worked with while volunteering succeeds, they feel they succeeded as well.



9 out of 10 sports volunteers are satisfied

- ◆ Over a quarter giving a '10 out of 10' score
- ◆ 95% of sports volunteers recommend being a sports volunteer to other people, because:
 - It is fun and enjoyable
 - They enjoy and love the game and the job
 - They enjoy seeing players develop
 - Great team and people they work with.

A map of New Zealand is centered on the page, colored in a vibrant green. The map is surrounded by two large, light blue, three-dimensional looking swirls that spiral outwards. The background is white with a dark blue curved border at the bottom right. The text "However – there are some 'warts'" is written in a bold, dark purple font across the middle of the map.

However – there are some 'warts'

More than 1 in 3 of all sports volunteers have considered quitting

- ◆ Time and work commitments
- ◆ Personality clashes/club 'politics'
- ◆ Feeling like it is time to move on
- ◆ Family commitments
- ◆ Not feeling like their efforts are valued.

Some negative things about being a volunteer...

- ◆ 1 out of 2 feel that people don't recognise the value of volunteers' time
- ◆ 1 in 2 agree that some people who come to watch sports events are abusive of coaches and referees
- ◆ 1 out of 3 feel volunteering is a bigger commitment than they thought it would be
- ◆ 2 out of 3 volunteers agree that people need to know what's involved before raising their hand
- ◆ 1 in 5 feel their efforts have been unsuccessful, when the people they work with don't do well in their sport.



Volunteers want greater support

- ◆ **3 out of 4 volunteers identified one or more changes that would improve their satisfaction with being a volunteer, including:**
 - **Having more volunteers**
 - **More financial support for the club/team**
 - **Sharing their volunteering responsibilities with others**
 - **Having parents more involved with the club or team.**

60% of volunteers would like more assistance from their sports club...

- ◆ **Coaches/assistant coaches:**
 - Coaching seminars and training
 - More support in general
 - More/better sports gear and equipment
- ◆ **Club committee members:**
 - Written guidelines regarding their roles
 - More support in general



Additional support that would assist volunteers (cont.)

- ◆ Referees/judges/umpires/marshals:
 - Seminars and training
- ◆ Team and club managers/assistant managers:
 - Seminars and training (including coaching training)
 - Financial help to cover out-of-pocket expenses (petrol, food, beverages)
- ◆ Fund raisers and event organisers/coordinators:
 - Training and seminars
 - More support in general
 - More volunteers to help share the responsibilities.

A map of New Zealand is centered on the page, rendered in a vibrant green color. The map is surrounded by a soft, light blue glow. Two large, light blue, three-dimensional looking spirals are positioned on either side of the map, one in the upper left and one in the lower right. The background is white with some faint, light blue decorative lines in the top left corner.

**So what does this mean for the future of
volunteering?**

The findings challenge some of the ‘pre-conceptions’ about volunteering

- ◆ **There are not enough sports volunteers**
 - According to SPARC’s estimates, 1 in 6 adult New Zealanders is a sports volunteer
 - 2 out of 3 volunteer year round
- ◆ **That sports volunteers are quitting in ‘droves’**
 - Most volunteers stick with it for at least three years, one third for more than five years (and about 1 in 7 for over 10 years)
- ◆ **That the general public does not ‘put their hand up’ for the job**
 - 4 out of 10 volunteer for more than one sports organisation
 - 1 out of 3 also do other volunteer work in their community.

Overall...

- ◆ **The ‘shortage’ of volunteers does not appear to be due to insufficient numbers of people, but rather...**
 - **The amount of time donated to by each volunteer (24% volunteering for 2 hours or less a week and another 26% – between 2 and 4 hours a week)**
- ◆ **We also know that even though they are very satisfied, most are ‘time-poor’...**
 - **Many find it a bigger commitment than they thought it would be**
 - **Most frequently, those who have thought about quitting said it is because of time and work commitments**

Some implications for consideration...

- ◆ **Volunteers are heavily skewed around the child-upbringing years (1 in 3 are aged 40 to 49 years old)...**
 - **Two thirds live in a family household with a child under 18 years old**
 - **Half of all volunteers have a child or other family member participating in the club or team that they volunteer for...**
- ◆ **Specific strategies will need to be designed to retain younger volunteers...**

Other implications for consideration...

- ◆ 1 in 3 volunteer during certain months of the year or only during special events...
- ◆ There are fewer women (40%) than men among the sports volunteers...
- ◆ A similar issue exists in relation to fewer single parents being sports volunteers (5%)...
- ◆ The under-representation of Asian peoples among sports volunteers (1%)

Acknowledgements

- ◆ **Martins Consultants, NZ Rugby, Special Olympics, Sport Clubs Association of NZ, Surf Life Saving, Rugby Southland, and all of the clubs that provided contact details of their volunteers**
- ◆ **Most importantly, we also would like to thank all of the volunteers who took part in this survey.**