**Staff Selection, Training & Management**

Staff Selection: A competent staff is the cornerstone to a successful program. Staff is ultimately the benchmark by which the program will be measured. It is the front line, and interacts with users every day. Their effectiveness as leaders, friends, teachers, problem solvers, and role models will determine whether your program is worthwhile and memorable.

Hereewith the basic criteria to consider when selecting staff:

- **Stability of staff:** This factor warrants high priority at the time of initial hiring. Give special consideration to bringing younger staff along and ensuring that in any year there is a good mix of staff at various levels of their education. The average worker is involved in the operation for three years, though there are many examples of those with five years. The ages of the staff can range from 16 to 65.

- **Compatibility of the staff:** Consider at the time of selection the likelihood that staff members will get along with each other. There is no substitute for telling a new candidate for a job the "whole truth." They should be told any and all "down-side" circumstances of the job. Staff members should understand that they are making a very serious commitment.

- **Instructional staff:** The number you hire will depend on the number of students you plan to teach at any one time, and their level of ability. Beginners will need more attention than advanced sailors so the teacher-to-student ratio should be higher for a beginner class. Your staff should be qualified to teach the level of skill you want your students to attain. Match your instructional staff to the goals and objectives of your program. When selecting your instructors determine what kind of sailing and teaching certificates they have. If you have classes for children, you need to hire instructors who like to work with children.

- **Rental staff:** Select people who are patient, personable, organized, know how to sail, know the boats, and can give sailing skills tests for renters who do not have certificates. If their responsibilities also include watching the renters in case they need on-water assistance or rescue, they should know how to operate the rescue/safety boats and have CPR, life saving and first aid training.

- **Maintenance staff:** Determine whether their working experience is appropriate to your program needs. They should have experience in fiberglass repairs, working in wood, repairing aluminum extrusions, using Nicro-press and swaging tools, the latest painting and sanding methods, and possibly repairing sails. Because it is so important to keep the equipment in working order, your staff must be able to work under pressure and deadlines, and remain innovative.

**Interviews**

Schedule a personal interview with each candidate. If your program has an interview committee, only two to four people should do the interviewing. At least one or two committee members and your manager/director should be present for all interviews. This will give the interview process continuity and enable you to assemble a team. The interviewer(s) should prepare for the session by reviewing the candidate's resume or letter.
and know the position for which the individual is applying. Prepare several relevant questions to ask each candidate. Every individual who applies for a position or participates in an interview deserves the courtesy of a written response even if they are not offered a position. For those selected, draw up a contract or formal letter outlining the terms of employment:
- Compensation
- Time Commitment
- General Responsibilities
- Start and Stop Dates
- Miscellaneous (room and board, other benefits)

**Chain of Command**
The staff must understand the chain of command of your organization. Hired staff and volunteers need a clear understanding of their responsibilities and authority. To whom does each member report? To whom do they speak if they have a problem with a user or another member of the staff? If a user or user's parent has a problem with a staff member, with whom should they speak?

**Staff Meetings**
Staff satisfaction and retention is largely a function of communication. Management should explain why decisions are made, and should hold regular meetings on a day when all members of the staff are present. At these meetings, each staff member should have a brief opportunity to say whatever is on his/her mind about the activities just ahead or those recently completed.

**Schedules**
Staff schedules should be designed to deliver the services expected by the public. Since peak demands usually occur on weekends and school holidays, schedules focus on these time periods. For instance, Wilmette's staff has a schedule that commits them to fix days per week, two of which are always Saturday and Sunday, but with one weekend off per season. Many programs supplement their regular staff with volunteers to satisfy this demand. Remember, that if private lessons are schedule for the convenience of the student, it will require that an instructor be available a substantial portion of every week. Another factor to consider are days of "bad" weather when a low level of activity is assured. Staff members who teach or rent equipment may have time on their hands. Do you give them the day off, have them do other jobs, or let them wait? These are policy decisions, but be consistent in whatever the policy is.

**Division of Labor**
This is both organizational and functional. Decide if you will have ranks of staff responsible for clearly delineated tasks. Opting for relatively little division of labor (i.e., assigning specific tasks only to specific people) is the management practice currently in vogue.

Staff can be divided into three categories.
- Office staff handles telephones, appointments, cash, contracts and general
questions.

- Senior instructors, usually the veterans of the operation, give the bulk of private lessons and are respected for their expertise and experience.

- Junior instructors might be relatively new, might require polishing their technical sailing skills, or might be younger; as a result they spend more of their time in group lesson settings or dealing with renters.

The critical point is that job descriptions do not relegate any task exclusively to one person or a group of people. Wilmette advocates a minimum division of labor. Its staff is told the more jobs they perform the more valuable they become. Garbage collection is done by whoever is not busy, "regardless of experience or sailing skill. Participating in rescue operations is a collective responsibility, as are the vast bulk of tasks on the waterfront. This produces a strong sense of esprit. All staff members are accountable if work is left undone.

At the end of the season each staff member completes a confidential peer evaluation in which he or she ranks all peers according to their "overall value to the operation." This is one criteria (along with the supervisor's evaluation) used to determine whether the staff member is rehired and at what hourly wage.

Social Activities for the Staff
Social activities in the off-season help maintain commitment and loyalty between seasons. During the height of the season at least one "blow-out" event should be planned to relieve the workers of feeling "burnt-out" -- a common experience that even the best workers will have if they have been doing their jobs intensively.

Staff Uniforms
The issue is not whether staff should have uniforms, but rather what the uniform should consist of. Conditions vary so dramatically that any inflexible rule would be ludicrous. In the span of one hour, conditions can change from a six-knot southwest breeze with haze and 85 degrees to a north wind at 30 knots, 8 to 10 foot waves and 60 degrees. Staff members will usually buy and use their own wet and dry suits. It's a good idea for management to provide two shirts, two pairs of shorts and a jacket in suitable colors and appropriate logos. A reasonable rule is to require the staff to wear any one piece of their choosing at any given time. There shouldn't be a problem if there's a reasonable uniform policy.

Staff Training
A well-trained staff is vital to the success of any operation. Routine training will be an on-going responsibility for the program director to ensure operations are safe, consistent and efficient. Different water activities will require specific training and certification to meet the standards set forth by the National Governing Body (NGB) for that particular activity. Refer to Section 7 Program Resources for a list of the NGBs. Specific training requirements that should be built into your staffing plan are

Safety training: All operating personnel (and office staff if possible) should
have CPR and first-aid qualifications and be thoroughly conversant with internal safety regulations and procedures.

Instructor training: Instructors should hold certification reflecting formal instruction in the techniques of teaching and managing classes, as recognized by the National Governing Body for that sport. For sailing, these certifications are offered by US SAILING for dinghy, keelboat and windsurfing. The associated insurance programs sponsored by US SAILING require US SAIL-ING-certified instructors as part of the risk management package.

Office staff training: Local training required as appropriate to ensure staff members are conversant with rules, regulations, operating procedures and use of office equipment.

Maintenance training: The maintenance staff must be taught how to accomplish repairs effectively and safely. Proper precautions with resins, paints, and other potentially hazardous materials need special attention. The program director should be required to verify the training and qualifications of staff members and to arrange extra training whenever it is necessary.

Your staff's effectiveness as leaders, friends, teachers, problem solvers, and role models will determine whether your program is worthwhile and memorable.