

# A Guide for Medium to Large Events

The number of volunteers, committee members and structure depends on the size and complexity of your event.

Your committee members become the leaders, the department heads that drive your event and based on their experience and commitment will determine your level of success.

It is important to prepare a realistic plan for your event, set goals and time lines.

Meet with potential committee members to review your plan and how you see the committee structure and responsibilities.

Start your planning early, 10 months prior to the event date and have your committee in place 6 to 8 months prior to the event day.

It is important to make sure there is someone responsible for every aspect of your event and they have the support required to be successful, this may be through additional volunteers, sub-committees, or outside contracts.

The following is intended as a guide only and designed for larger events but can be applied to any event and can be used to complement other basic information in your race directors hand book.

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*For additional detail event information review the Getting Started and Race Committee Guide posted in the Race Director section of the MRA website : [www.mraweb.ca](http://www.mraweb.ca).*

## 1) Types of Volunteers

Early recruitment of volunteers is important. Volunteers are your key to a successful event and will offer their support if they fully understand the need. They are individuals with specific skills. They also bring their connections as well as their networking skills. Developing a solid group of volunteers takes time, so keep your eyes open for people with specific skills you need as you go along.

**Committee Members** – These committee members make things happen, executing the tasks necessary for the success of the event. They will organize the food, put up the signs, and myriad of other jobs pre- and post-event. Providing good instruction, regular communication and organizing their efforts throughout the process is important to a well-functioning committee.

**Day of Event Volunteers** – These volunteers become the face of the event, interacting with participants on the day of the event, so it is important that they are enthusiastic and well-trained for their assignment

## 2) Volunteer Recruitment

### Strategies

- Identify connections already in existence
- Individuals who volunteered in the past
- Take advantage of networking opportunities
- Running events
- Schools
- Clubs
- Use the media to promote event and ask for volunteers, i.e. volunteer section in the Winnipeg Free Press.
- The skills and knowledge needed to carry out the responsibilities should be considered when identifying volunteers.
- Know what's going on in the community
- Attend community meetings or events

### Identify your needs

- Responsibilities of key volunteers (team captains) should be clearly identified
- A thorough understanding of your needs will help you better match possible prospects to each position.

### Develop Your Recruitment Plan

#### Information meeting for interested volunteers

- Used to identify potential volunteers for various positions
- Develop your invitation list. Include past event volunteers and committee members, contacts made through networking opportunities, referrals from existing volunteers, etc.
- Prepare an agenda for the meeting. Include information about the event, and the important role that volunteers play and an overview of volunteer needs.
- Give a brief description for each volunteer. But do not distribute job descriptions at the meeting. Save those for the face-to face meeting, once people have expressed their preliminary interest.

### **Identify Possible Prospects**

- Create a list of potential prospects for each position to be filled
- Establish your priorities for both positions and candidates.
- Meet with your prospect, give an overview of the event, discuss the position and how they can become involved, be prepared to answer all questions.
- It's important to follow up after your meeting with all prospects, regardless of the meeting outcome. (*Send a thank you note.*)
- Follow through on any action items or promises made during the meeting.

### **3) Orientation & Planning Meeting**

Now that you have successfully recruited volunteers for your committee, an Orientation & Planning meeting should be held for all committee members. This meeting should be held no later than 6 to 8 months prior to the event at a time convenient for the members.

Since this meeting will set the ground work and tone of your Committee for the months leading up to the event, attendance is vital. Consider polling your committee ahead of time to find out convenient meeting times and locations. If it seems that one date and location are not possible, then discuss holding two meetings.

The committee volunteers should fully understand their responsibilities, the event time line, their specific time line, event goals, and how they communicate with each other. The meeting should cover three primary topics:

1. Introduction to the event
2. Event goals
3. Event organization chart / structure
4. Job descriptions and assigned tasks

### **4) Keep Volunteers Engaged and Enthusiastic**

Once the committee orientation is completed, some volunteers may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility they accepted. Plan now to call them within 2 or 3 days following the Orientation & Planning Meeting to answer any questions they may have.

Volunteers are motivated to do a good job and will do so if they fully understand what's expected. Therefore it is extremely important during the recruitment process to describe fully the scope of the position and time commitment. Volunteers "need to be motivated" when expectations have not been fully described and a volunteer's understanding has not been confirmed.

Regardless, recognize volunteers for the work they do.

It will be impossible to "motivate" volunteers if any of the following reasons apply:

- They don't know how to do the job.
- Communication was ineffective.
- They don't want to do what they've been asked to do.

## **5) Recognizing and Rewarding**

Everyone working with volunteers must understand the importance of recognition for a job well done. They will not return if they do not feel valued. How do we accomplish this?

- Recognize a true accomplishment, not superficial
- Guide and encourage the volunteer
- Recognition is a positive and public way to encourage others to strive for the same
- Recognition is done;
  - On- the-spot
  - Thank- you letter
  - Mention in a publication
  - Volunteer Award
  - Media coverage of the event
  - Phone call
  - Invitation to special function
  - Presentation at committee meeting

**However you do it, do it often and sincerely.**

## **6) Race Day Volunteer Training**

Closer to the event, the Committee should orchestrate a training day for the race day volunteers. This is an important step in ensuring that your volunteers are prepared for, and committed to the success of the event.

### **The purpose of the training is to:**

- Introduce volunteers to the event
- Introduce them to the Committee and their team captains
- Train volunteers on their assignments
- Show appreciation and gratitude towards the volunteers

The volunteer training should be held no later than 1 - 2 weeks prior to the event. The location should be, if possible, at the event location so volunteers can familiarize themselves with the site beforehand.

### **How to Run Your Volunteer Training:**

Introduce volunteers to the committee and team captains – Gather all attendees in one place for the opening session.

Welcome everyone and give an overview of the event, then break out into groups with their team captains, it is important that everyone be aware of their responsibilities on race day.

Show appreciation and gratitude towards the volunteers – Never miss an opportunity to thank the volunteers for their time, effort and get them excited about the big day to come!

**This event may be the first time that many of these volunteers experience a running event. The Committee should organize the training with all the detail required, each team captain should have a hand out with detail information for each position, including maps, etc.**

## **Race Director**

**JOB SUMMARY:** The Race Director serves as manager of the event, recruiting, organizing and overseeing the committee and volunteers who will deliver the event experience. Team captains provide logistical support, recruit participants and volunteers, and secure pre-event promotional and media exposure to meet event goals.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Plan, coordinate and preside over all meetings.
- Work with the committee, team captains to recruit, train and oversee the committee positions and volunteer needs.
- Conduct orientation and planning sessions.
- Review volunteer activities and monitor completion dates
- Communicate with all Committee members on a regular basis to monitor progress toward goals and identify areas of concern
- Provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer team captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit.
- Preside over/attend other pre-event meetings as required
- Follow MRA guidelines for event
- Preside over post-event evaluation/critique meeting
- Preside over awards / recognition

*For additional detail event information review the [Getting Started and Race Committee Guide](#) posted in the *Race Director* section of the MRA website : [www.mraweb.ca](http://www.mraweb.ca)*

## **Fund Raising Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Develop a plan to implement successful fund raising strategies to meet event goals.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Communicate progress to the race director
- Assist with recruitment and training of volunteers
- Prepare a fund raising plan for;
  - Sponsorship (*could be different levels, with different benefits*)
  - Prizes (*this would be random participant draw prizes, silent auction, awards, and race kits*) work closely with the registration and accounting captain.
  - Develop an action plan with deadlines
- Be familiar and comfortable with fund raising
- Contact last year's donors; for prizes and donations, plus develop new contacts
- Identify a location to hold prizes and prepare for presentation on race day.
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit.
- Attend the volunteer training meeting
- Work with the race director to assure adequate sponsor recognition
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Race Day Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Provide Race Day Planning, Direction and Guidance.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Communicate progress to the race director
- With the committee, select and reserve event site and secure permits, prepare site plan layout.
  - Race day: supervise site set up / take down and clean up.
  - Have layout plan posted on site and confirm with attendees/sponsors of their location on site.
  - Coordinate the set-up of the bag check area, prize location, registration, award presentation area, sound system, first aid, food, etc.
  - Secure entertainment/disc jockey/band, sound system/mascots, warm up team, etc.
  - Secure race day equipment for event site as required, tents, tables, chairs, stage, port-a-potties, signs, etc.
- Recruit volunteers as required
- Work closely with other captains on identifying their requirements for race day.
- Attend the volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Overseeing all race day program activities at the event site
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Start / Finish Line Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Provide a fun and memorable experience for all event participants, while making sure the set-up and take down is done and all required support is provided.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Regularly report your progress to the race director
- Identify start and finish line locations and race starter
- Secure disc jockey/sound system to announce participant names as they cross the finish line.
- Confirm timing system and timer
- Provide volunteers to assist with timing of the event and participant control
- Coordinate finish line “traffic flow plan” with Logistics.
- Confirm photographer for finisher pictures
- Confirm First Aid for finish line (with safety/medical captain)
- Develop and implement plan and recruit volunteers for the finish line, including; water station, certificates or awards presentation at the finish line for finishers etc...
- Secure necessary equipment/for all start/finish line activities (tents, tables, chairs, platforms, finish line structure, clocks etc)
- Appropriate signs as required
- Develop an activity time schedule, to include;
  - Start and finish line set up and take down
  - When participants are to start heading to the start line
  - Run/walk start time/times.
  - Times for volunteers at the start and finish area to be in place.
- Identify location for spectators
- Coordinate take down and clean-up plan
- Attend volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Food and Beverage Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Secure and organize preparation and serving of sufficient amounts of food and beverage for event.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Prepare food and beverage plan, quantity etc.
- Secure donations and/or purchase food and beverage needed for race day, (*for participants and volunteers*)
- Obtain permits as required
- Make arrangements for pick-ups, deliveries and possible storage of supplies, coordination with race director, and Logistics.
- Recruit adequate number of volunteers to staff food tent.
- Develop a time schedule for all activities involving the food and beverages on race day.
- Work with the publicity and promotions captain to assure appropriate recognition of food sponsors
- Oversee day of event food set-up and clean-up volunteers.
- Coordinate food/beverage needs with water station captain to assuring adequate supplies are available for the water stations
- Attend volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Logistics / Parking and Traffic Control Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Serves as manager of all logistics, parking and traffic control

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend all meetings and coordinate committee needs.
- Work with all other team captains to provide support and help as required; scheduling pick-up and delivery of food, MRA equipment, course set-up / take-down, water station supplies, pick-up / set-up and take-down, prizes, awards, transportation for course marshals, etc.
- Confirm vehicles / drivers and schedules as required.
- Work closely with the route plan & set-up captain to develop a traffic control plan, to include;
  - Possible road closures
  - Volunteer parking
  - Participant parking
  - Control and enforcement
- Review event with the race director and other team captains as required to coordinate activities
- Regularly report progress to the race director.
- Oversee all Logistical issues
- Develop a detail schedule and time plan for all activities
- Attend the volunteer training meeting and provide appropriate training
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Safety and Medical Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Develop and implement appropriate safety and medical plan.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Recruit volunteers
- Keep the race director and logistics up to date
- Complete the following tasks:
  - Secure medical team for day of event
  - Develop emergency medical plan with medical team
  - Inform volunteers of emergency medical plan
  - Insure proper First Aid supplies are on hand
  - Secure a vehicle for emergency transportation
  - Confirm emergency communication, cell phones, walkie-talkies.
- Attend the volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers, assuring that all volunteers are aware of emergency procedures
- Provide Volunteer captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Implement all safety and medical plans on race day
- Develop a time schedule for race day activities
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## Route Plan & Set-Up Captain

**JOB SUMMARY:** Plan and coordinate all aspects of identifying, marking and managing the routes. Work closely with Logistics.

### RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Attend meetings as required
- Recruit volunteers
- Obtain all permits as required (*road, park, trail etc.*)
  - Measure and map route, produce maps for volunteers and participants
  - Maintain contact with city or park regarding construction projects that would impact the course
  - Identify locations for water stations
  - Identify locations for course marshals and the total number required
  - Identify locations for course signs, safety, turn, mile markers, km markers, water station, etc.
  - Identify locations for portable toilets, *if required.*
  - Complete MRA equipment list request form
  - Confirm with logistics to pick up the MRA trailer with supplies, signs and other supplies, confirm pick up time and return
  - Confirm team to set up the course and take down
  - Confirm lead bikes for runners, make sure they know what is expected of them.
  - Determine any potential hazards along route and implement solution plan
- Develop a detail race day schedule with times for all race day course activities, (*course set-up and tak-down, time for marshals to arrive and be in place, etc.*)
- Attend the volunteer training meeting and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide the volunteer captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit.
- Check route frequently to make sure it is still open and has no hazards
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Publicity & Promotion Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Develop a publicity and promotions plan targeting all forms of media to generate media coverage and pre-event visibility.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend committee meetings
- Communicate progress to the race director
- Work with the race director to recruit and confirm event media sponsors from TV, radio, and print (Internet, cable, sports networks and outdoor advertising).
- Find appropriate Internet sites that link to running events
- Identify and develop human interest stories, find the “hook” to get event coverage
- Develop and implement a publicity calendar including:
  - Press release announcing the event, etc.
  - Schedule pre and post-event press releases
  - Send articles to company newsletters, local calendars of events, running clubs, newsletters, flyer's etc...
  - Compile a thorough media list and send print ads, PSA's and press releases
  - Post-event press release announcing results
- Make follow-up calls regarding placement of above
- Assure that media sponsors start coverage on agreed upon date
- Identify opportunities, pre-event promotions, including distributing of run brochures at other running events, restaurants, sport stores, sport clubs, etc.
- Develop script and identify speakers for announcements on race day
- Confirm emcee for announcements, work closely with event day captain, on sound system, etc.
- Work closely with the race day captain to prepare a detail time schedule for race day activities and make sure all involved have a copy.
- Coordinate awards presentation following the event.
- Coordinate appropriate recognition for event sponsors and top donors
- With the race director, coordinate ordering/making of signs as required, coordinate placement of signs with race day captain
- Attend the volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Confirm photographer for event pictures
- Coordinate day of event photos, including photos of post-event, awards, etc.
- Send photos to MRA to be published on the web site
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## Water Stations Captain

**JOB SUMMARY:** Recruit enough volunteers and secure appropriate supplies for each water station.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Keep the race director up to date
- Complete the following tasks:
- Confirm water stations locations, (with the route captain)
- Determine appropriate quantities of water, cups and beverage for each station, coordinate with the food and beverage captain
- Secure volunteers for each station.
- Coordinate delivery/transportation, possible storage of supplies for the water stations, coordinate with the logistics captain.
- Determine set-up and shut-down times and volunteer schedules for each water station
- Develop appropriate signs (with route captain)
- Check with the medical and safety captain to see if First Aid supplies are required at the water stations.
- Communicate with water station volunteers prior to event
- Make sure all volunteers have all required supplies before heading to their stations
- Arrange transportation for volunteers to their stations (*if required*) confirm with logistics.
- Confirm set-up and take-down procedures for each station, including clean-up.
- There may be an opportunity to have a sponsor for your station/stations
- Attend volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Work closely with the route captain to provide help and support as required
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## **Registration and Accounting Captain**

**JOB SUMMARY:** Implement registration and accounting procedures to provide efficient registration and accurate records.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Prepare event budget
- Prepare plan with time lines for all activities in this area
- Recruit necessary number of volunteers.
- Coordinate registration form information and printing with the race director
- Set up on-line registration
- Confirm registration process, start date, closing date (*on-line date could be different from registration dates during race kit pickup and race day*), pricing, etc.
- Coordinate the preparation of race kits, content, preparation dates and times, bags, pick-up times, location etc. Work closely with the fund raising captain to confirm race kit contents and the bags to be used.
- Confirm location for race kit pick up, schedule times, activities and volunteers.
- Coordinate race day race kit pick-up, registration, donations and prize draws, coordinate with fund raising captain.
- Confirm plan for awards, participants and top donors (coordinate with publicity and promotion captain)
- Order awards, t-shirts as required for participants/volunteers, coordinate with the race director.
- Attend volunteer training and provide appropriate training for volunteers
- Provide volunteer captain with names, addresses and phone numbers of volunteers you recruit
- Oversee and supervise the registration and accounting volunteers during race kit pick-up, and on race day.
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting

## Volunteer Captain

**JOB SUMMARY:** Develop a plan to assess volunteer needs and help recruit volunteers to match committee requirements.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Attend meetings as required
- Identify potential volunteers
- Work with committee to identify needs and volunteers required for each position
- Volunteer t-shirts (*if required, coordinate with registration and accounting captain*)
- Contact previous years' volunteers to re-recruit for current year
- Contact potential new volunteers, based on needs identified by committee.
- Coordinate/assign all committed volunteers to specific task(s)
- Assure that all volunteers obtain appropriate training for their assigned role and that volunteers know the details of the position (who, when, where, etc...)
- Coordinate volunteer "Buddy Program". Assure that all first-time volunteers are assigned an experienced volunteer to help them and provide appropriate direction to fulfill their volunteer role
- Man the volunteer sign in table on event day
- Have all volunteer supplies at the volunteer station on race day for pick up, safety vests, communication equipment, water station supplies, etc.
- Maintain accurate volunteer records, responsible for obtaining names and addresses of all volunteers
- Plan and coordinate the volunteer training for all event day volunteers
- Send post-event thank you notes to all volunteers
- Attend post-event evaluation/critique meeting