

Successful Planning for Recruitment and Retention: how are you getting on?

We hope that this series of articles has provided plenty of practical recruitment and retention suggestions for you and your band to action. The current ringing environment is nowhere near what any of us would call 'normal' and pre-lockdown strategies are likely to need adapting. Equally, new possibilities emerging as a result of lockdown have already been usefully employed and will probably retain their usefulness as we move forwards. So, while we wait for a full return to ringing, there are still plenty of ideas that we can implement to create a successful recruitment campaign.

Here are our key messages:

- Planning is essential: as lockdown measures ease, we have an ideal opportunity to develop recruitment and retention tactics. Positive action and strategic planning now will be of immense benefit as ringing gradually resumes.
- Seize every opportunity to raise the awareness of ringing: the greater the profile, the higher the likelihood of a 'bite'.
- Plan ahead: it's easier to cope with a steady stream of new recruits than training a band from scratch. Recruitment and retention should be an ongoing all-year-round process.
- Recruitment and retention go hand in hand: we need to plan to *retain* our new ringers as soon as, or even before, they are *recruited*.
- Plan and tailor your recruitment drive to your specific requirements: one size does not fit all.
- Start small, look for quick wins: encourage lapsed ringers to give ringing another go or ask everyone to invite a friend to your virtual practice.
- High quality, structured teaching is essential: make sure this takes place in a supportive and vibrant learning environment. New (or returning) recruits need to be nurtured and provided with the necessary foundation skills to integrate into a band speedily and confidently.
- Manage expectations: be clear that learning to handle a bell takes time and committed practice. Skills developed in *Ringin' Room* will certainly not be wasted, but may not be of immediate use once in-tower practices resume.
- Take advantage of all the existing online learning sites and Apps: you'll find there's a lot on offer! Use available activities to hook and motivate both new and more established ringers.
- Don't reinvent the wheel: make use of resources and information; there's a lot of this available online too! Share ideas. Join our Facebook group to discuss issues. You may have to try out a few different ideas to find the optimum for you - let us know what works...and also what doesn't...
- Share the workload: collaborate with other ringing teachers and towers.
- Be prepared: enable training for would-be ringing teachers, and refreshers for existing teachers. ART training courses provide fantastic support for everyone. Module 1 covers bell-handling and Module 2 covers the development of the band once handling is secure.

And finally:

- Reflect on your success: use your newest recruits in planning your ongoing recruitment and retention strategies. They are a fabulous resource. Ask for their feedback and thoughts; listen to, and learn from them.
- Involve the rest of your band from the start: with everyone involved in recruiting and retaining new band members, success is assured!

Resources:

A new area on the Central Council website has been created to host recruitment and retention resources for everyone to use: cccbr.org.uk/resources/recruitment-and-retention/

Here you will find a complete downloadable resources pack for running your own recruitment and retention workshop (including slides with notes, an organisers' guide, and facilitators' guide). The workshop can easily be adapted to operate in an online format, or a series of shorter online workshops, e.g. using Zoom with break-out room functionality.

ART recruitment and retention resources, including the 10-point action plan template and case studies: ringingteachers.org/resources/recruitment-and-retention

The ART YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/c/ringingteachers/playlists

Join the discussion, share success stories, and ask for advice on the new Recruitment and Retention Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/BellringingRecruitmentandRetention

A better understanding of why ringers lapse will help guide your retention strategy – ART has published a report on their research which is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/who-do-ringers-lapse>



The Lilleshall band before (left) and after (right) a successful recruitment campaign; strategies discussed in this series of articles were used to keep new recruits interested, and to ensure recruitment worked for the whole band.

This series of R&R articles, and the workshop, was produced by: Sonia Field, Matt Lawrence, Steph Pendlebury, Deb M-B, Lesley Belcher, Paul Lewis, Tim Hine; V&L and ART working in partnership.



This article was first published in the Ringing World, No. 5702, 7 August 2020, Page 782.