



NSW COUNTRY RUGBY UNION REFEREES ASSOCIATION

MATCH OFFICIAL DEVELOPER RESOURCES

EIGHT WAYS TO AN ENGAGED REFEREE... and Association

As coaches and senior members of our Associations, it is up to all of us to support members and to assist them in being fully engaged in what the Association is trying to achieve – better, more consistent referees for games. In coaching referees, we often set the tone for our referees and hence have a large impact on the 'culture' of the Association.

Our problem is not the referees who quit and leave; it's referees who quit and stay!

This comment makes a telling point about the damage that can be done to our Association's effectiveness by people who remain but do so as minimal contributors or worse... One way to assist in ensuring that members are engaged is to provide effective coaching and support.

In his book, *'First, Break All the Rules'*, Marcus Buckingham raises the issue of the engaged employee to a business. Buckingham, of the Gallup Organisation, argues that employees fall into 3 main categories:

- **Engaged:** those who are loyal, motivated and productive,
- **Not Engaged:** those who are going through the motions and merely putting in the hours, and
- **Actively Disengaged:** those who are unhappy and are spreading this negativity to others.

As a result of some extensive research Buckingham estimates that some 20% of the workforce falls into the 'actively disengaged' category. People in this category have the potential to do a lot to undermine organisational success.

An engaged workplace is a good place for everyone: employee, manager and shareholders. So what's the secret? How do you get it? And, how can that relate to a referee's Association?

It is never simple, quick or easy but the following approaches, based on the research in *First, Break All the Rules*, seem to be significant in building an 'engaged' workplace. In our Referees Associations we, as coaches and mentors, might do this through:

- Helping referees see the overall purpose of what they are contributing towards – game enjoyment for themselves and others.
- Invite referees to contribute to how to best achieve their goals and listen to their input – supporting the 'how'.
- Clearly define expectations and support them in living up to those expectations.
- Provide frequent, positive feedback.
- Celebrate success and achievements.
- Encourage learning and acknowledge and support the growth of the referee.
- Ensure that referees have an opportunity to use their talents across all areas of the Association – on and off field.
- Develop the skills of the other coaches and mentors who are supporting referees.

What emerges from these suggestions is overwhelming confirmation of the value of integrating a strong coaching approach to the way referees, and your Association, is led. Consistently implementing these kinds of practices will go a long way towards building an Association that referees are willing to join. This will go a long way to ensuring that referees don't 'quit' and either leave the Association or, even worse, 'quit' and stay.

When coaches and mentors bring a positive energy to their Association, anything can happen! What do you do to contribute to that positive energy?

This article was copied, and then edited to suit our context, from:

<https://www.growthcoaching.com.au/resource/9-ways-to-an-engaged-workplace/>.

Growth Coaching International is a company I have done some professional training with in my former roles in schools.