

TOOLKIT DOCUMENT TK5

Document description: Developing the SLO role at smaller clubs

Document type: Checklist/case study

Context: SLO Handbook, pages 32-35

UEFA comments

With the correct philosophy, supporter liaison work can be done successfully no matter how small the club is, with the help of committed volunteers taken from the fan base. All clubs strive to better themselves in terms of league status. As a team climbs the league pyramid, attendances will rise. Laying your supporter liaison foundations early can pay dividends later on. It allows clubs to manage supporter structures while promoting a positive fan culture.

Reference	Description	Handbook Section
TK5	Developing the SLO role at smaller clubs	SLO tasks, Pages 32-35

Smaller clubs can develop the SLO role by adopting the following strategy:

Provide offerings for fans (match-going and stay-at-home)

- Supporter travel (coaches or lift-sharing)
- Supporter events with players, coaches and officials
- Regular fans forum to discuss problems or exchange information

Create lines of communication

- Organise supporters clubs
- Use communication channels such as club and fan websites, e-mail, newsletter, message boards, Facebook/Twitter, stadium announcements, match programme

Build the network

- Exchange information with other SLOs

Advantages:

- The more offerings are provided, the more fans feel looked after and the greater the sense of belonging, leading hopefully to higher attendances
- Organised travel makes it easier to manage supporter movement and promotes shared experiences
- Meetings with players, for example, help to create a personal bond between supporters and the club, improve the general mood and encourage fans to act as club ambassadors
- Supporter liaison helps to develop a positive fan culture, especially among the young

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Supporter liaison philosophy at VFC Plauen (Fourth Division North, Germany)

In the 2010-11 season, VFC Plauen had an average attendance of 1,207. The supporter liaison work at VFC Plauen is organised in three areas:

1. Supporter liaison

The supporter liaison team accompany fans at home and away matches. They establish contact between the club and the supporters. The supporter liaison workers involved in this part of the work serve as direct points of contact for fans. They also assist fans in obtaining approval for choreographies and clarifying what fan material can be taken on away trips. Supporter liaison workers play a mediatory role between stewards and fans, where necessary, and accompany fans on away trips by bus or train along with the fan project.

2. Hosting away fans

The aim is for visiting fans to be offered direct assistance by a representative of the VFC Plauen supporter liaison team. This contact person is responsible for dealing with any problems arising in or around the visitors section. He or she works closely with the away club's supporter liaison team and is always on hand to help whatever the issue, be it hanging up flags, mediating between stewards and away fans, or answering questions regarding their visit to Plauen. One of the aims of this supporter liaison service is to give visiting fans the feeling that they really are being treated as guests. Even the smallest matters are taken seriously in an attempt to deliver a de-escalation programme based on pro-action rather than reaction. In the process, the supporter liaison team attempt at all times to mediate between all the parties involved with the aim of achieving a positive outcome.

In association with the stewards and the club, we constantly look for new ways to make the time the away fans spend with us as pleasant as possible. Our visitors of today are our hosts of tomorrow.

3. Online supporter liaison

The online supporter liaison team look after the supporter liaison section on the main supporter website. They are in contact with supporters on the internet and keep them informed. They are also responsible for the media and publicity work done by the supporter liaison team.