



Assembling Volunteers for an Event – Getting Started

A VEX event often begins with the motivation of a single individual willing to create an opportunity for students in the area they live in. The motivation to “*make a difference*” in your community is all it takes to get started. A successful VEX Robotics Competition (VRC) event hinges on the ability of that individual to pull together a team of people who collectively share that vision, this is referred to as the Planning Committee. Once a planning committee is in place they will be the driving force to guiding the efforts of all the additional volunteers that come together to deliver a great experience for the teams and their supporters. The suggested key positions for the core planning committee with primary responsibility are:

Clicking on these positions (hold CTRL key down while “selecting”) will bring you to a more detailed description of the position.

Event Director: This person takes the leadership role for the creation of the event and assembles the core planning team. They set the tone and pace for the entire team.

Volunteer Coordinator: The responsibility of the volunteer coordinator is to recruit, track, assign, train, supervise and communicate with all other needed volunteers for the event.

Facilities Coordinator: The primary responsibility of the facilities coordinator is to secure the physical space required for the event and act as liaison. (Many times this position is combined with the Logistics Coordinator position)

Logistics Coordinator: The primary responsibility of the logistics coordinator is to develop the schedule and determine how the facilities will be used. (Many times this position is combined with the Facilities Coordinator position)

Pit Coordinator: The primary responsibility of the pit coordinator is to manage all aspects of the “pit” area.

Competition Coordinator: The primary responsibility of the competition coordinator is to manage all aspects of the “competition” area.

Judges Coordinator: This person organizes and oversees the judging process at an event.

There certainly are other key volunteers on the team but for a mid sized or larger event having these positions staffed will give your event a solid core of people to prepare for and rely on at your event. Smaller events may combine some of these positions to require only 3-4 planning committee members, but avoid trying to have any one person do too much and it will make the day more enjoyable for all involved.

For the large events, it makes sense to consider elevating a few of these positions to your core planning committee to give them greater visibility.

- Head Referee
- Technical Support A/V etc
- Set-up and Break-down
- Crowd Control/Security
- Media coordinator

The next page starts a list of the different volunteer positions by area that this core planning team will manage to deliver a great event. Each of the provided position descriptions follows this format:

Position Title: (Equipment requirements)

A short description of the primary role or responsibility of the position with *traits or characteristics considered helpful or desirable for the position in italics*.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in the Vex Robotics Competition program.

VEX Robotics Competition

Volunteer Position Summary by Area

(To activate the built in hyperlinks, hold down the CTRL key and click on the “field of interest” to be taken directly to the position description.)

PLANNING COMMITTEE

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VRC Volunteer Position Descriptions by Group/Area

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Event Director: (2-way radio, event schedule)

This person takes the leadership role for the creation of the event, solicits people to fill the following key positions on the planning committee. An event director is a *self starter* willing to cover new ground without always having answers to all his/her questions but *willing to forge ahead*. (It is the intent of the VEX support materials to remove as many of the unknowns from the equation for VEX event volunteers. A commitment to continuously improve these tools is behind everything done in support of your efforts.) The event director will frequently assume either the facilities or logistics coordinator position (below) as well.

Volunteer Coordinator (2-way radio, event schedule, facility layout maps, equipment for volunteers, access to a printer/copier, awards, medical kit for emergency)

The responsibility of the volunteer coordinator is to solicit, track, assign, train, supervise and communicate with all volunteers for the event. Many Volunteer Coordinators reach out to community and event sponsors to recruit volunteers from their respective organizations. Ultimately, it is the Volunteer Coordinator's job to ensure that you have enough volunteers to fill all essential positions so that the event can run on schedule. A scheduling spreadsheet will help the Volunteer Coordinator place volunteers where they are needed for the day of the event. The Volunteer Coordinator will collaborate with the event organizer to schedule training for the volunteers. This can be done the day before the event or the morning of the event. It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to communicate schedules and expectations to all recruited volunteers. This role is well suited for those who are *outgoing, organized, like to work with new people, and can communicate effectively*.

Facilities Coordinator: (2-way radio, event schedule)

The primary responsibility of the facilities coordinator is to secure the physical space required for the event and act as the intermediary between the selected location and the event team. A person *familiar with the site and who knows how to get things done* is a great asset to the planning team.

Logistics Coordinator: (2-way radio, event schedule)

The primary responsibility of the logistics coordinator is to plan out the schedule and determine how the facilities will be used in support of the event. The logistics coordinator needs to make sure that the needs of all the other coordinators are met. A person *capable of seeing the big picture yet understanding the detailed requirements for a great event* will serve the team well (This position may be a natural role for a potential Event Director in training).

Pit Coordinator: (2-way radio, event schedule)

The primary responsibility of the pit coordinator is to manage all aspects of the "pit" area. Because teams spend the majority of their day in the pit area, making this a positive aspect of their day is important to their overall event experience. This role is well suited for people who have a *high focus on customer service, patience (with adults and students) and are able to organize others in support of delivering it*. The ability to maintain a safe environment and *develop plans to identify and avoid or react rapidly to situations* is highly desirable.

Competition Coordinator: (2-way radio, event schedule)

The primary responsibility of the competition coordinator is to manage all aspects of the "competition" area (the location where all teams compete in the event) and to ensure the match schedule stays on time. This role is well suited for people able to organize others and plan effectively. Maintaining a schedule is extremely important and effective communications are required to keep all essential participants informed so they can contribute to running a smooth event. The ability to anticipate issues and avoid them or have contingency plans is highly desirable.

Judges Coordinator: (2-way radio, event schedule)

The judge coordinator deals with just the judging process at an event. They solicit, assign and train the judges to prepare them for an event. A "[Judges Guide](#)" will be available to reference and help train the judges. The Judge coordinator should be very familiar with and know the awards. It is best for the judge coordinator to avoid acting as a judge and focus on facilitating the needs of all other judges by monitoring the schedule, overseeing that the process is used correctly, and making sure decisions made are sound and timely for the awards announcements. It is extremely important that all judging decisions are made on time and the awards list/script is turned in to the Event Director before the Finals Matches begin. Ideally, this person would have past experience judging similar type

events (or at least observing one). A *good communicator* who is service oriented and can be *vigilant* about fairness will be an asset in this role.

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*** VOLUNTEER ROOM ***

Volunteer Coordinator's Assistant

Provide support in the organization of volunteers the day of the event. Begin by welcoming them and helping the volunteer to understand their roles, provides direction, and supply them with any required materials to perform duties (such as the appropriate type of volunteer shirt). Check to make sure all positions are filled. It is wise to have at least two assistants at the beginning of each day when people need to be checked-in, equipped and sent to their locations quickly to make sure positions are staffed in time to begin. At events without an Awards Coordinator, this position would take care of some of those responsibilities and prepare all awards for distribution. The ability to be *social, think chronologically* and move people as requirements change will be beneficial.

Volunteer Coordinator's "Food" Assistant

This person helps distribute water, snacks and meals to volunteers throughout the day and manages the volunteer lounge (if your event has one).

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*** REGISTRATION AREA ***

Registration Table (Team check-in folders, list of all teams with contact information)

Greet Teams. Each team should receive a folder of information with their team number on front. You should be familiar with the facility layout, be able to help teams as needed and able to direct teams to the pit area (having a printed facility and/or pit map to handout can be very useful). Stay until all teams have registered. If by 9:00am there are teams that still have not shown up, make calls to these teams to verify if they are in transit (coordinate with event director or other designated person). A complete list of checked in teams (and those verified in route) must get to the match scheduler no later then 9:30am so that the competitions qualification match schedule can be generated. When finished return to the volunteer room and help as needed. *Be welcoming and service oriented towards the teams, help them in any way possible.*

Information Table (Programs, schedules, maps, handouts, mailing list signup sheet, food service menus)

Greet guests, hand out programs, and help as needed. Encourage people to sign up on a mailing list to receive information about next years' events and volunteer opportunities such as planning committee members. Point out all areas for guests to visit; Competition area, pit area, food service, etc. Guests will only receive a general schedule of the day in their program. If they have specific match time questions, refer to the qualification match schedule available after 10am. *Social, talkative, knows the VEX program well, an ambassador for your VEX Robotics Competition, able to handle media inquiries and direct them to the right people in the building.*

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*** PIT AREA ***

Pit Manager (2-way radio, master schedule, pit map of teams, PA system, clipboards, highlighters)

Does what it takes to keep the event running by getting teams to the competition area on schedule. Work at the pit information table to monitor the schedule, make public announcements, and answer teams' questions as necessary. Communicate with on-deck manager in the competition area for queuing the teams. For the most part teams should be responsible for getting themselves to the scheduled matches on time, but can easily lose track of time as they prepare for the next match. For larger events or where teams are spread out over different areas, a Pit Assistant and/or Pit runners can help track down and queue teams as needed. This can go a long way to keeping the event on schedule. *Help teams be prepared to compete, support the schedule, be a resource for the teams.*

Pit Assistant (may use tools provided to the Pit Manager)

The Pit Assistant receives instruction from the Pit Manager and they work together to keep teams flowing to allow the event to proceed on schedule. In many cases the Pit Assistant will control the PA system and make only those announcements that are essential to keeping things moving.

Pit Runner

Tracks down teams as directed by the Pit Manager or Pit Assistant and queues them for the competition area.

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*** PIT AREA * Continued**

Practice Field Manager (stop watch, tether cords, signup sheet/schedule, rules)

Oversees the practice field(s) to be sure teams are getting equal access time and a safe environment is maintained at all times. Whenever busy, use the stopwatch to put teams on the clock to keep teams moving through. The Practice Field Manager can monitor two fields (providing they are adjacent to each other), but for larger events that have more than two practice fields consider adding an “Attendant” to each field. Make sure teams are set up to operate in the proper mode being used for this event (tethers or wireless). *A willingness to be decisive and maintain control is important.*

Practice Field Attendant (stop watch, tether cords, signup sheet/schedule, rules)

See “Practice Field Manager” above.

Inspector (Team List, inspection check-lists, clip board & pen, sizing box, PC’s for checking code)

Conduct inspections of robots to verify machines conform to specifications and requirements. All inspectors must read and understand the rules pertaining to robots before the competition. Some inspectors should be able to use and understand easyC (the most frequently used competition programming) to check software version compatibility before the robot is passed for competition. There will be a mandatory training on the morning of the event. (Suggestion: the referee team can be a way to augment the inspectors to facilitate most of the inspections before the competition phase of the day begins.) There needs to be at least one inspector available even after matches have begun. *Disciplined people that can apply the rules, weigh interpretations and make decisions are helpful here. There may be “teachable moment” opportunities to help get robots to pass inspection, which is the ultimate goal.*

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COMPETITION AREA

On-Deck Manager (2-way radio, master match schedule, highlighter, pen)

Communicate with the Pit Manager (or Pit Manager Assistant) via radio if necessary to stage teams in the competition area. The On-Deck Manager is responsible for keeping close track of what teams are in the queue and guides the teams on deck, directing them to the appropriate areas to prepare for matches. NOTE: Small tournaments (for example less than 20 teams) have a different challenge. Many times a team being sought out will be on the “live” field and have to return to the cue immediately after completing a match. This rapid turn around needs to be managed effectively, one suggestion is to increase the interval between matches to space things out more.

Team Queuers (master match schedule, highlighter, pen) (optional for larger events)

Most queuing of teams is done in the pit area between the Pit Manager and the On-Deck Manager. These people can handle the job for events up to 24 teams. For larger events you may consider adding Team Queuers in the competition area to assist the On-Deck manager with accounting for teams and escorting them through the preparation sequence before the matches. If crystals are required this adds a step in the preparation process.

Field Manager-one per field (crystals, match schedule by Field, highlighter, pen)

Interfaces with the on-deck boss to receive teams and correctly place them on the appropriate field and position for the next match. Remind teams to make sure their robots are ready to compete (red/blue alliance flags, and if required facilitate matched crystal distribution or check wireless communications). The field manager is key in helping to make sure that fields are turned over as quickly as possible to maintain the preset cycle time used in the schedule. Tip: Events fall behind because time is lost in between the end of a match and the beginning of the next, manage this and events will stay on schedule. Also maintain a smooth flow of traffic as teams retrieve robots, return crystals and leave the playing field.

Field Assistant

Primary function is to reset the game playing field after each match. Assist the field manager or referee in any way needed. Students with *high energy* make great field resetters. It is also common for events to assign one or two

Field Assistants as the Crystal Manager(s) for both alliances.

A/V Technology Support

The Technology support person is absolutely critical to the operation of the event. This person oversees and if necessary operates the scoring system and all A/V not handled by third party contractors. This person must be fluent with IFI Tournament Software, the computer running the scoring software, and all A/V equipment in use. This person supervises all the tech and A/V positions. *This specialized role has its own skill requirements; experience in media productions is a plus.*

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***COMPETITION AREA* Continued**

Timekeeper/Scorekeeper (Computer and field control system, match schedule)

This person should be dedicated to running the field control system, starting the clock for each match, and entering scores. Knowledge of how to operate the software needs to be obtained prior to the day of the event. Also coordinate with the emcee the displaying of match results at appropriate times. *Comfortable with using a PC and custom software.*

Referees, designate one head referee (clip board, pencil, score sheets, match schedule for the field)

Oversees that fields are properly reset for each match, is cognizant of time cycle of matches and helps the field manager to stay on schedule. Checks that teams are placed correctly at the field and prepares them to compete. The most important role of the referee is to correctly interpret and consistently enforce the rules of the game to score the match upon completion. It is beneficial to have a head referee who can organize and oversee all referees. Other duties of a head referee include referee training and being a final authority for any rulings. *Effective decision maker, confident, projects authority, good natured, consistent, willing to prepare properly.*

DJ (master schedule)

Plays appropriate music and works with the Emcee to establish a rhythm to keep the matches on schedule. Generally a 3rd party contract is used to hire a professional DJ.

Announcer* (microphone, detailed match schedules for announcing teams, team backgrounds if available)

Announces all teams for the matches. Coordinates back and forth dialog with the Emcee to help develop interest in the event

Emcee* (headset microphone, clipboard, match schedule)

Does the play by play and “calls” the games as they are played. Responsible for coordinating with the Announcer and maintaining an upbeat atmosphere at the event.

* At a small event the announcer and emcee can be combined into one role. It is wise to have periodic relief available.

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JUDGING

Each event has to decide how the judging process will be facilitated; the Judges Guide can assist with that decision. Pay careful attention to how this decision impacts volunteer requirements, some of the volunteers listed below may not be needed.

Judges

Judges have the responsibility to gather information from teams and assess it against listed criteria to determine the most deserving teams to be awarded a number of awards. Judges must read detailed descriptions of the awards before they get to the event and understand the process used to evaluate and deliberate over these various awards. Special training is required of judges to be properly prepared. The number of judges needed is proportional to the number of teams participating (generally 2 judges for every eight teams).

Awards Assistant

Assists the Judge Coordinator in many important logistical areas. The Awards Assistant will be in charge of collecting and tabulating ballots for any awards being voted on by teams or volunteers. The Awards Assistant will

maintain the Excellence Award Spreadsheet (if being used at that event), will help the Judge Coordinator complete the script for the award ceremony and will be responsible for setting up, displaying and managing the handing out of awards during the ceremony. The creation of a PowerPoint presentation that supports the awards ceremony is also desirable and can be done by populating an Awards Ceremony Template that will be provided.

Judging Staging Manager (early morning only, judging schedule, clip board, 2-way radio)

Coordinate with the pit manager to get teams to the judging staging area. Manager is responsible for staging each team to the appropriate room for each team's interview. (This position is not needed at events without awards requiring private interviews)

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JUDGING Continued

Judging Escorts

Take direction from the Judging staging manager. If necessary (small venues may not need to provide escorts) lead teams from the pit staging area to the appropriate room for each of their interviews. (This position is not needed at events without awards requiring private interviews)

Judging Interview Timekeeper (stop watch, schedule of teams to be interviewed, [Timekeeper's Instructions](#))

It is the timekeeper's job to keep these interviews running on schedule. This includes encouraging the judges to stay on schedule. Carefully follow the "Time Keeper's Instructions" to stay on schedule. (This position is not needed at events without awards requiring private interviews)

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OTHER

PR/Media Coordinator

The Public Relations or Media Coordinator is responsible for contacting local media and driving interest around the event while serving as host/hostess for media members in attendance. Having appropriate print materials to give any media in attendance can be useful (game description, team list, event program, VEX flyers or brochures, etc.). Many event directors will handle this themselves, and many event host institutions will handle this in-house. In essence, the Media Coordinator should collaborate closely with the event director and send out pertinent press releases. There should be an identified event "spokesperson" for requested interviews (this can be anyone, but frequently is the PR/Media Coordinator or the Event Director, or a key Planning Committee member)

Crowd Control/Security

Assess the need for this requiring a separate volunteer; it can be highly site dependant. They would help the venue control the crowd where needed, general enforcement of venue policies (like no running, no food or drink in seats, etc). This person is firm yet positive in dealing with offenders and takes direction from the Facilities Coordinator..

Volunteer Floaters (all day)

These are extra volunteers to assist on an as-needed basis. If all positions are covered the floaters can provide relief for other volunteers, as needed. At many events you might need to rely on team supporters to help boost your volunteer pool. Try to allow these volunteers to be relieved when it is time for their teams to compete so that they can go watch and offer support to their team.

Photographer (afternoon)

Documenting your event is important to your longer term effort to grow support and sponsorship. Don't miss the opportunity to capture the excitement and action at your venue.

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Optional Guest Speakers

Please consider your sponsors for key speaking opportunities. This may include keynote speakers as part of the opening and closing ceremony as well as award presentations. Many judges may be willing to act as award presenters.

Setup/Breakdown Team (previous day/night)

Assist in setting up for the competition on Friday evening. Various different tasks will be required to be completed.

1. Transport equipment from storage to tournament site.
2. Assemble registration information for each team.
3. Set up pit tables for each team. Table numbers facing the bleachers.
4. Set up practice area and competition area fields.

Clean-up Crew (Upon Conclusion)

Assist in cleaning up after the competition. Everything will need to be cleaned out of the competition area, pit area, and judging rooms. Equipment needs to be transported back to storage and put away. Do what it takes to restore the facility to as good as or better condition than you started, as you wish to be invited back.

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VEX Robotics Competition

TIMEKEEPER'S INSTRUCTIONS

(For use when using scheduled interviews for judges)

As a Timekeeper your primary tasks are:

- ❖ Keeping the team interviews on schedule.
- ❖ You **MUST** maintain a 15-minute block schedule for the interviews being conducted.

Interview Judging Session (15 minute periods)

- ❖ **0 Minute mark***: Have the team enter the room and take a seat. Judges should begin the discussion as soon as the team is seated.
- ❖ **9 Minute mark**: Give judges and team a verbal “*one-minute remaining*” warning.
- ❖ **10 Minute mark**: Say “*Time*” at the end of 10 Minutes, quickly proceed to show the team out of the room. Judges will begin to make appropriate notes of the interview.
- ❖ **14 Minute mark**: Alert judges to finish note taking if they have not already done so. If judges finish early, it is permissible at this time to allow the next team to enter early and be seated if you have the judge’s permission.

*** All sessions should begin promptly at one of these four times: “on” the hour, at “15 past “, “30 past” and at “45 past” each hour.**

DO NOT ALLOW THE JUDGES TO TAKE MORE TIME THEN ALLOTTED

(Remind them they will have the entire afternoon to follow up with teams.)