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The role of cooperative relationship between the board president and sport manager towards the success of voluntary sports associations

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Background

The investigation about clubs and sports associations showed prevalence of the volunteers directors in the board manager of these organizations. However, it also shows a trend towards professional management of associations (Auld, 1998; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003; Inglis, 1997), particularly in the sport management level. The motivations that lead volunteers to perform the leading role it is associated with personal motivation and social needs, such as: solidarity, friendliness, dedication, teamwork, achievement and personal accomplishment. There are other interests that are identified as relevant to the involvement of volunteers in sports associations, specially in the associations who are supported by public financial resources. For example, the post of chairman of the board provides social visibility, status and projection for policy and public administration (Soares, Correia & Rosado, 2010). However, the role of chairman or president of the board (volunteer contribution) is not compatible with the requirements of a management that requires technical competence and a structured work. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate their role with the professional sport manager. In addition, it is expected that the sport manager (as a result of their training and preparation) be endowed with technical knowledge and specific competences in order to adapt to the demands of management in sport clubs and voluntary associations (Hoye, 2007).

Objective

The aim of this paper is to highlight the competences of the sport manager in his relationship with the president the board of sports associations. It also aims to identify the relationship between the volunteer leaders, who have the power of decision making in the board and, sports manager who have the responsibility of implementing those decisions.

Method

The study applied two techniques for data collection: observation of board meetings and qualitative interviews with the presidents of the associations' boards of six sport associations (30%). Firstly, during board meeting observations, we identified the participant's role and their influence in the decision-making process, including the sport management or the sport

coordinator. Then, by observation it was possible to analyze the data, to reduce and select the information and construct a category system (participants and power source), and consequently, understand the nature of the decision-making process and the influence of the members with responsibilities in the board.

Results

The role of sport manager, regarding support for decision-making board and the relationship with the president of the board is related to the following competences: a) communication and management of human relations through participative leadership style, ability to manage conflicts and the interests of members (sport team coaches) and staff; b) technical knowledge of the sport activity (ex. Athletics field), rules and issues related to organizing games and competitions, as well as specific knowledge of problems of teams and coaches, for whom the associations organize competitions. This is crucial in the case of associations with a larger organizational structure and where the sport coordinator's role is relevant; c) implement decision-making processes and coordinate the roles of technical and operational staff of the association; d) research and be informed about market demands, potential sponsors and partners to recommend to the board proposals for sports services.

A professional sports manager can provide great influence in the rationalization of financial and material resources, and attract partners and members. Finally, the results indicate that the associations that showed: teamwork, cooperation, partnership and trust between the volunteer president and sport manager, the results were more encouraging.

Conclusion

The most important competences of sports managers, regarding the relationship of support and cooperation with board's president, were: planning and grounding solutions to problems; control of information on relevant issues, criteria and rules for organization the competitions for the sport clubs; communication and leadership in human resources and capacity to anticipate and predict problems in the context of sport clubs and partner organizations. These competences require regular and systematic work of the sport manager and are not compatible with the role of a volunteer director, despite the decision-making and strategy processes are of responsibility of the volunteer leader, specially the president of the board.

References

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