



Supporter Liaison Officer

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL

UEFA CL&FFP Regulations

Art. 35 - Supporter Liaison Officer

1. The license applicant must have appointed a liaison officer to act as a key contact point for supporters.
 2. The supporter liaison officer must regularly attend meetings with the club's management and must collaborate with the security officer on safety and security-related matters.
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Introduction

- Article 35 came into effect at the beginning of the 2012/13 season.
 - Most national associations have not only adopted Article 35 in their domestic club licensing regulations but have also extended it to cover more clubs (Italy - 107 clubs).
 - SLO requirement extends to over 1,000 clubs across Europe.
 - Supporters Direct Europe appointed by UEFA to implement the SLO project in 2010.
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The history behind Article 35

- Germany introduced SLOs as part of its 1992 National Concept for Safety and Security in Sport (NKSS).
 - SLOs are one of two elements of the work with fans in Germany.
 - SLOs appointed by clubs.
 - Fan project workers independent of clubs (social work with risk fans).
 - SLO complements other approaches such as supporter charters, fans forums, fan satisfaction surveys, fans embassies.
 - SLO project offers the football family an opportunity to make a positive statement to the rest of society.
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Standard definition of an SLO's role and tasks

- Supporter Liaison Officers (SLOs) work for the club and are a bridge between the fans and the club, helping to improve the dialogue between the two sides.
 - Their work is dependent on the information they receive from both sides and the credibility they enjoy with both parties.
 - SLOs inform fans about relevant decisions made by the club management and, in the other direction, communicate the points of view of fans to the club management.
 - SLOs build relationships not just with various fan groups and initiatives but also with the police and security officers.
 - SLOs engage with SLOs of other clubs before matches to contribute to supporters behaving in accordance with security guidelines.
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Developing the SLO role in practice

- Three aspects of SLO work:
 - Communication: talking to and sharing information with main stakeholders.
 - Service: helping fans with requests and complaints and advising clubs on fan-related issues.
 - Prevention: attendance at security meetings to provide input for risk assessments before matches. Close cooperation with security officers and police.
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Supporter Liaison Officer

- Any questions or comments so far?



Recruitment

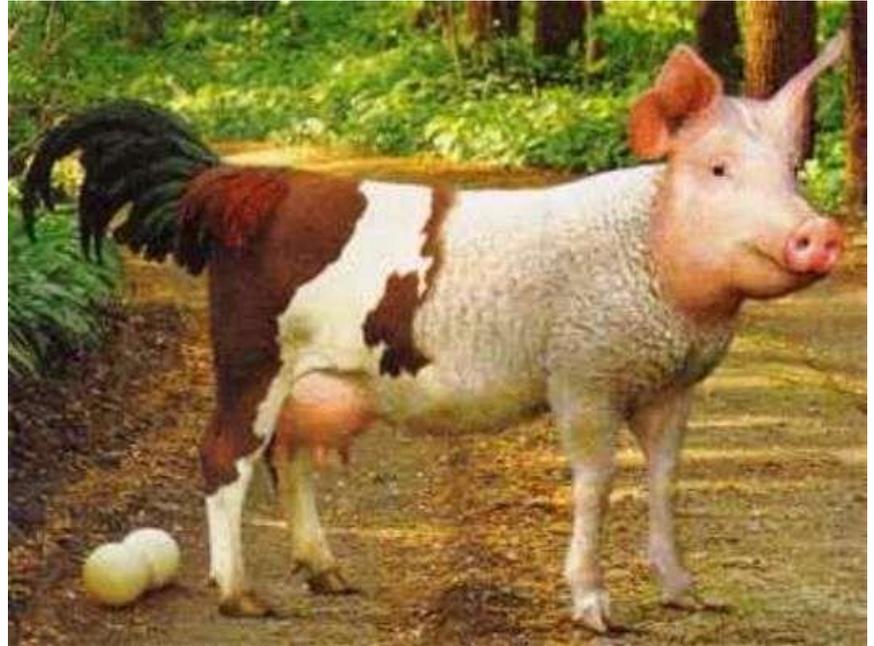
Extremely diverse skill set that is not ordinarily available on the marketplace!
Everyone knows what a taxi driver does, but an SLO?

- Communicator
 - Advocate
 - Diplomat
 - Psychologist
 - Educator
 - Social worker
 - Problem-solver
 - Translator
 - Conflict manager
 - Event manager
 - Travel manager
 - Organiser
 - Service provider
 - Negotiator
 - Babysitter
 - Public relations officer
 - Social media expert, etc. etc.
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Recruitment

"As an SLO, you are the egg-laying, wool- and milk-producing pig of football."

From *Ultras im Abseits? Porträt einer verwegenen Fankultur* (Published by Martin Thein and Jannis Linkelmann).



Recruitment

- Overarching prerequisites:
 - Well-known among the fan base.
 - Widespread acceptance from main stakeholders – "balanced player".
 - Deep understanding of the target groups.
 - Recommendation: appoint from the fan base. But not every fan can be an SLO!
 - Learning by doing. Might not get it right the first time.
 - Motto: "SLOs don't know everything, but they know everything better."
(Björn Eriksson, former director of the Swedish police service)
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Recruitment

Specific competencies (Doncaster Rovers FC, England)

- To love Doncaster Rovers!
 - A fervour for and deep knowledge of the heritage, history and values of Doncaster Rovers.
 - A good record of attendance at both home and away fixtures.
 - A strong ability to communicate face-to-face, in writing and through social media channels.
 - An ability to present arguments; factor in key information and produce reasoned ideas and thoughts.
 - An ability to manage data, including (but not limited to) supporter feedback (formal and informal) and other club data.
 - To live within easy travelling distance of the Keepmoat Stadium.
 - Good PC literacy.
 - A creative thinker – perhaps someone who has criticised the Club in the past for not adhering to perceived core values.
 - An ability to work with senior management & other senior personnel.
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Stefan Ryderfelt and Lena Gustafson-Wiberg, Djurgardens IF, Sweden



Employment status

- UEFA are convinced clubs will get more out than they put in.
 - Full-time position represents the optimum solution.
 - Opportunity to combine role with other positions in the club.
 - Volunteer role (minimum of three SLOs recommended).
 - Build a team.
 - Incorporate SLO/s in club organisation chart, agree a reporting structure.
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Interaction within the club

"Floating role in midfield"
(Tobias Larsson, SLO at Swedish top-division club AIK)

- Club board/owner
- Communications
- Ticketing
- Marketing
- Merchandise
- Security
- Membership
- Stadium owners



Supporter Liaison Officer

- Any questions or comments on what you have heard so far before we conclude with a summary of the expected benefits?



Summary of benefits

- Improved relationship between governing bodies/clubs and fans.

"The implementation of the SLO function has been one of the most important things in Swedish football. We introduced it in 2012 and haven't regretted it for a second." (Mats Enquist, CEO, Swedish Football League).

- Improved insight into supporter points of view and structures, improved (democratic) organisation among supporters.
 - Greater transparency in communicating decisions, reduction in misunderstandings.
 - Improved dialogue between fans of different clubs.
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Summary of benefits

- Reduction in violence/improved conflict management – reduction in fines for violence, racism, other forms of discrimination, etc.
 - Financial benefits through higher crowds, increased merchandise sales, closer identification of fans with the club/national team.
 - Improved atmosphere – greater home advantage?
 - Proven concept (part of fan hosting/security concept at 2006 World Cup) in line with Council of Europe recommendations and new European Police Handbook.
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Thank you