The Role of a Club Chief Training Officer (CTO)

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1 What is a CTO?

The Chief Training Officer (CTO) is responsible for planning, coordinating and delivering surf lifesaving training and education within a club. It's about setting up the right team, supporting members, and creating a positive learning experience.

2 Building Your Training Team

- You don't need to do everything. Recruit trainers, assessors, and subject matter experts to support delivery.
- Identify the right people by:
  - Getting to know your club members.
  - Having casual chats about opportunities.
  - Supporting members to upskill or take on new roles.

3 Leading with Purpose

- Set the tone with a positive, organised, team-focused approach.
- Have a lead trainer for each course who:
  - Oversees delivery standards.
  - Directs subject matter experts.
  - Acts as the key point of contact.

3 Embracing Online Learning

- The move to blended learning (online theory + practical beach training) offers flexibility.
- However, not all members are digitally confident—support is essential.
- Provide:
  - Clear instructions before course starts.
  - Step-by-step cheat sheets and guidance.

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4   Communication is Key

- Explain processes upfront so learners know:
  - What to expect.
  - What to complete online.
  - When and where to show up for beach sessions.
- Support learners at all stages—not just during training.

5   Succession Planning

Dana highlights the importance of preparing others to step into leadership roles:

- Identify early who might be ready to step up.
- Offer mentorship and support—stay involved as they grow.
- Be honest about the time commitment but show that it's shared and achievable.

Top Tips from Dana

✅ Build strong relationships with your trainers, CTOs, and club members
✅ Plan ahead and break big jobs into manageable parts
✅ Encourage others to step up by showing them they're supported
✅ Know your personal values—they help you stay focused and make decisions
✅ Share the journey to avoid burnout

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