

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Presented by the Adult Resources Service
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INTRODUCTORY LEADER INTERVIEW

Introduction

All adults new to their role in Scouting should take part in an Introductory Interview during their first month of service, or better yet, before taking on the job.

Introductory interviews help us to ensure that we are selecting potentially good Leaders who are taking this first step to learn about their role in Scouting. The Adult responsible for confirming the Mutual Agreement between Scouting and the Adult Leader usually conducts introductory interviews.

Preparing for the Interview

Arrange for a time and place to conduct the interview. Allow 30-60 minutes for the interview time.

Review your notes - including a brief history of Scouting - questions that you wish to ask the volunteer, group policies, training courses, expectations.

Have on hand:

- Orientation kit for new volunteers (with contact addresses, information about Scouting, training course plans, job description etc).
- Your Associations By-laws, Policies and Procedures manual.
- Any relevant section and Leader Handbooks.

During the Interview

Be friendly! Try to put the prospective Leader at ease. Encourage them to take an active part in the discussion. This gives you a broader picture of the person's potential, acts as a check on the degree of understanding of the information presented, and provides the opportunity to deal with their specific questions and concerns.

Have the candidate tell about him or herself.

Why do they want to become involved in Scouting? Probe to assess their sincerity.

Topics which should be covered during the interview:

What is Scouting trying to achieve?
Outline the Aim and Principles of the Scout Movement.

Importance of the Adult's commitment to ideas in Aim and Principles.

Outline the specific position in Scouting being considered for the applicant.

Highlight a few features of the appropriate section (use section pamphlets or section handbook).

What is the role of the Adult in Scouting?

What help is there for the new Adult in Scouting?

The Group's expectations: special religious requirements; equipment purchase policy; handbook cost; other.

The Group's support: Group's policy on financial support - registration, uniform, training courses; equipment purchase policy; handbook cost; other.

Time Commitment: Leader meeting, program planning/section meetings, extra/outdoor activities (hikes, trips, camps), training courses.

Individual question: Allow the candidate to express any concerns on questions they may have about Scouting.

Closing: Review the expectations of Scouting and the main responsibilities of the job, determine the degree of willingness and individual shows for taking on the position, thank the individual for taking part in the interview. Inform them that they will be notified about the outcome of the interview.

After the Interview

- Assess the suitability of the candidate.
- If the candidate is accepted, then accreditation is recommended to those responsible for Leader accreditation.
- Notify the person about the result of the interview. NOTE: if the individual is not accepted, it might be

best to simply thank the person for applying and participating in the interview process. It is not necessary to give reasons for refusal or to give a list of faults.

- For a successful candidate, contact the appropriate persons responsible for supporting the new volunteer in their position.
- The Group representative should ensure that the person is registered with the Association.
- Pat yourself on the back. You have played an important part in ensuring that a new person has a positive first glimpse of their role in Scouting. Keep in touch with them to make sure they continue to get the support they need to become a more effective Leader.

Possible Questions:

What do you know of Scouting or this particular section?

Have you ever been involved with Scouting as a young person or adult? *As a young person* - did you enjoy? which section? *As an adult* - when? what section and group?, did you enjoy? *Why did you leave?*

Have you worked with youth of this age group? *Yes* - what do you think of them? *No* - do you have any expectations of them?

What made you think of becoming a leader? *Like children* - how much time available to help? do you have children of your own in this age group? *Group needs help* - how much time do you have to help?

Do you prefer working as a team member or on your own? (you're trying to get a sense of whether the person will work in a team style or do things all by themselves).

Would you be interested in taking training to help you in the role of leader? *No* - why? (tell him/her it is required and look for response). *Yes* - what type would suit you better? weekends, weekdays, on-the-job or written?

(continue overleaf)

Do you work? Full-time, part-time, shift work, self-employed, at home, unemployed, other?

What do you feel youth of this age group require?

Adapted from Hamilton-Wentworth (Scouts Canada materials).
By Maimu NÖMMIK, Member WARC

The following is from Scouts Australia's Personnel Committee Handbook and is another way to carry out Getting Started and Selection Interviews.
Submitted by Kirsty M. BROWN, Member WARC

Who do you want for the Job?

We are not looking for just any person to fill a gap in the organisation. A particular task requires a particular sort of person with particular skills, knowledge and attitudes. If we are going to find this person, we must first spend some effort defining in specific terms just what he or she is going to bring to the job.

Usually the starting point in this process will be the job description. When a selection of sample job descriptions is available these will provide an important starting point. However, sometimes the actual job descriptions may vary from those in the sample. So first make sure that you have the current, up-to-date and approved job description for the particular role which you intend to fill.

Generally a job description details a range of aspects of the job - its objectives, the functions which the occupant will be expected to undertake - and the competencies and personal qualities which the occupant will need if she or he is to do the job properly.

Selection Criteria

In practice there are three key questions in selection of staff:

- Can this person do the job? (covering knowledge and skill).
- Will this person do the job? (covering motivation and attitudes).
- Will this person fit in with the team (covering personality).

You, as a Personal Adviser (PA) must ensure that each of these three areas is explored with care.

The selection criteria for the particular job being considered should be care-

fully set down in writing, well in advance of the interview. The PA should not be constrained by the job description, and the actual selection criteria might include some or all of the following matters, or other considerations not listed:

- Qualifications and training
- Knowledge of Scouting
- Youth leadership experience
- Previous Scouting experience
- Personal abilities (what can the candidate offer?)
- Motivation (why does the candidate want to become a youth Leader?)

In preparing selection criteria, be realistic. Simply put, we help no one when we set standards, which are too high, or too low. There is always a natural tendency to want to set high standards and to aim to ensure that every Leader is a "super-leader". Few can realistically meet such high aspirations. Unfortunately, however, there is sometimes another tendency: to believe that it is better to put anybody into a Scouting job than to see it empty and see a training section remain without leaders or under-staffed.

For a range of reasons, some candidates will be unsuitable to do the job for which they have applied. PAs need to be sensitive to this reality and to ensure that the selection criteria provide them with an objective basis on which to make a decision.

Having identified the selection criteria to be applied to a job, PAs should carefully distinguish between the *essential criteria* and the *desirable* (or nice if we could get it!) *criteria*. The essential criteria are those which a candidate must meet or be unacceptable (in the job applied for). Setting and applying these essential criteria honestly and carefully will make a major contribution to the selection of Leaders.

When interviewing, you will be seeking evidence of competency in each of the essential (and also desirable) criteria. If an unsuitable appointment is made, training will not compensate for key deficiencies, and the youth members will miss out.

PAs will be aware also of anti-discrimination laws when they exist.

Links with Adult Training and Development Programs

PAs should be aware that for each job/function description in Scouting, the

required competencies are described in the relevant Adult Training Programs. These competencies provide useful information in preparing selection criteria for particular roles.

The defined competencies are offered to all Leaders through the Association's Training and Development programs. However, new Leaders who already possess one or more of the required competencies will be able to receive credit for these under the process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

A recruited adult, who brings to the Association a range of existing competencies relevant to their role, will be at least part way to meeting the selection criteria. He/she needs to be able to demonstrate the competencies in a Scouting context.

The Importance of Interviewing

Much of the work of the PA will necessarily involve the interviewing both of prospective new adults, and adults who have been involved in Scouting for varying periods of time and a corresponding amount of experience.

Many professionals in the relationship fields agree that interviewing is an inefficient process and frequently leads to the wrong outcomes. It is relatively easy for those who are interviewing to be "conned" by someone who has the gift of the smooth presentation, attractive appearance and engaging personality.

However, these professionals equally agree that interviews are often unavoidable. They are relatively cheap to conduct, they are easily accessible to interviewers and interviewees, and they take a minimum of time. By contrast some of the more sophisticated selection tools are expensive and inaccessible and in practice don't necessarily guarantee a better result.

With all their shortcomings, interviews remain the most widely used selection process throughout the business world and we often rely on them in Scouting.

The challenge, therefore, is for us to make sure that the interviews which we conduct are as good as we can make them and give us the correct outcome as often as possible. This means that all of us involved in using interviews within the Scouting framework must develop our competence at using this difficult and challenging tool.

(To be continued)