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Using Scouting's Centenary for Adult Recruitment

Introduction

Scouting started in 1907 with an experimental camp for 20 boys. Today, Scouting is a million times bigger and involves girls and boys, women and men from every origin, religion and culture, and nearly every country in the world.

In 2007 we celebrate our 100th anniversary. We will celebrate the achievements of the past 100 years, we will celebrate Scouting today and we will celebrate the commitment that Scouts worldwide undertake to make a difference in their communities. Most importantly however we will celebrate the future, looking ahead to a second century of Scouting.

Our Centenary is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in exciting programmes and show the world what Scouting is all about. We intend to make the most of this unique year so that we can develop better Scouting for more young people in more communities around the world.

It is also a challenge for us to use the opportunities in 2007 to develop Scouting in our associations. It can be used as a method to achieve our goals and strategy rather than a series of separate events. In addition, your association may have its own Centenary in the year or years shortly following 2007 and this should also be seen as an opportunity for development.

This Euro.Scout.Doc is intended for those people working in National Scout Associations who are looking at ways of using the Centenary in 2007, or their own Centenary beyond 2007, to support adult recruitment efforts, in an effort to meet increased demand from young people.

Going for Growth

There will be many initiatives throughout 2007 which will offer increased public awareness, visibility and recognition. Celebrating a particular day or a particular year provides us with a special opportunity to think about the past, present and future. Celebrating 100 years of Scouting shows that we are proud of what has been achieved, learned and the impact that we have had on people and the Movement as a whole.

Whenever we organise large scale events and initiatives, we are perhaps too focussed on making sure things run smoothly. During the celebration events it's possible that we miss the considerable opportunities to grow our membership and promote the value of volunteering in Scouting to a wider audience.



Using Scouting's Sunrise, 1st August 2007

Many National Scout Associations are planning one or more significant Centenary related initiatives in 2007. One of the most significant initiatives is Scouting's Sunrise on Wednesday, 1st August 2007. The Centenary will be celebrated by Scouts worldwide, 100 years to the day when Baden-Powell blew the kudu horn on Brownsea Island to open his experimental Scout camp.

The basic idea is simple. Imagine the impact when Scouts gather across the world to celebrate the dawn of the second century of Scouting, united under the common theme of 2007: One World One Promise.

This is a day that is being promoted as an opportunity for us to renew our Scout Promise alongside former Scouts as members of the worldwide family of Scouting. This day, and the days and weeks that precede and follow it, can be used for adult recruitment purposes.

In the run up to the 1st August, you will need to:

Consider if it is feasible to invite former Scouts and Guides

- The 1st August is a Wednesday. Former Scouts and Guides might not have the possibility to attend an event during the day, so you need to consider if it is feasible. If not, it might be feasible to run an event around 1st August or possibly in the evening of 1st August.

Identify former Scouts and Guides to invite to your Sunrise Celebration

- You may be fortunate and have good records of former Scouts and Guides, including Leaders.



You may have maintained contact with them for some time. However, it's likely that even if you do have some records, there will be gaps and inaccuracies. Therefore, some work will be required to identify former Scouts and Guides that should be invited. Do not underestimate the scale of this task. We have many former Scouts. Caution needs to be applied to ensure that people who left Scouting for negative reasons are not necessarily approached with a view to participating. You also need to be sensitive to ensure that you know, as best as you can, about former Scouts who may have passed away.

Create a database

- A database of former Scouts and Guides should be developed to record and manipulate the data that has been gathered.

Promoting Scouting

- In the run up to 1st August, you should consider trailing news stories in local media relating the imminent arrival of the dawn of the second century of Scouting, and in particular, noting the invitation that will be sent to known former Scouts and Guides. This also provides an opportunity for people to contact you, advising new contact details and expressing a wish to participate in the special day. Try to promote the event through another story about Scouting, perhaps related to the impact that Scouting has had on the life of a particular Scout.

Invitation to Sunrise Celebration

- When the contact information for former members is complete, an invitation should be sent. As well as the expected information including date, time and location, its important to make it clear that the Sunrise Celebration is a special 'once in a lifetime' moment to recall the roles that many individuals have made in helping Scouting to achieve its mission.
- When considering the location and timing of the event, consider practical issues. 1st August 2007 is a Wednesday, which will not be ideal for many people. Therefore, why not consider a special reception to say 'Thank You', perhaps during the previous or following weekend.

Running the Sunrise Celebration

- During the Sunrise Celebration, or similar event, make a note of all those former Scouts and Guides who attended.
- Make use of the former Scouts and Guides to build a picture of their personal networks. For example, do they remain in contact with any other former Scouts and Guides? Do they have any children or grandchildren who are currently involved?
- Be prepared to field enquiries from adults who feel motivated enough to come back to Scouting. However, don't push people to commit at this time. Former Scouts and Guides, who express their support during a potentially emotional, symbolic event such as the Sunrise Celebration or similar reunion, may not be thinking clearly. Instead, note any expressions of interest and be prepared to follow up afterwards.

- See participation in the Sunrise Celebration as challenge. Perhaps challenge former Scouts to come as their former Patrol, if possible.

Follow up to Sunrise Celebration

- In the weeks following the Sunrise Celebration, take time to write to those that attended and thank them again for their participation.
- At this time, it would be appropriate to include general information about the current adult volunteer opportunities that exist. It can also be useful to explain how attitudes to commitment and volunteering have changed. We need to stress flexibility and the opportunity to volunteer in a number of ways, from Leadership roles through to non-uniformed support roles. Knowing the reasons why former Scouts and Guides left can be helpful. Many will be aware that their past commitment perhaps involved a lot of time, therefore, explaining flexibility is important.
- For people who expressed interest during the Sunrise Celebration, this is also the time to make contact, preferably in person, to identify if they were serious about their offer of support.
- In 12 months time, be ready to make contact with former Scouts and Guides again, in an effort to maintain contact, keep an open communication channel and to promote adult volunteering opportunities.
- If the Centenary of your own association is imminent, remind former Scouts of this too and repeat the exercise if appropriate.

Evaluation of Sunrise Celebration

- Several months after the Sunrise Celebration, it would be useful to evaluate the success of the approach and to identify if any further action is required.

Recruitment Techniques

In order to approach the Centenary as a strategic recruitment opportunity, several recruitment techniques have been identified and are outlined here for you. Some of these techniques are in use, and some are being considered. The pros and cons of each approach are explained. Feel free to adapt these techniques or create new ones. If you have any questions regarding any of the techniques detailed, please contact the World Scout Bureau – European Regional Office.

Word of mouth

Discuss the Centenary with friends and relatives. Talk positively about the social impact of Scouting and what it has achieved in the past, but also express the relevance of Scouting in today's society.

Pros

- This is one of the most effective methods and least expensive forms of promotion. It is particularly useful in smaller communities.

Cons

- Existing volunteers will tend to recruit people similar to them, which might not ensure diversity.
- There is also a risk that a new volunteer recruited by word of mouth is not welcomed to Scouting properly.

Personal Contact

Identifying an individual for a particular role and then making a personal approach is a useful way of recruiting. Before making the approach, consider the role and define the essential and desirable qualities needed and then see if these can be matched with people that you know.

Pros

- Targeted and effective. Particularly useful when looking at internal recruitment.

Cons

- Existing volunteers will tend to recruit people similar to them, which might not ensure diversity.



Recruitment Campaign

Recruitment campaigns can range from 'bring a friend' through to 'open evenings', or using casual volunteers to help with events that can introduce them to Scouting.

Pros

- Can double your human resources for a day.
- The 'host' volunteer will be accompanying the 'guest' volunteer.
- It can be attractive, memorable and fun.

Cons

- Unlikely to show the actual role that needs to be done.
- Potential to lose the meaning or purpose behind the event.

Approaching community groups

Arrange presentations to local groups including social, religious and minority groups. Such presentations can serve both to inform the public about what you are doing and to present the adult volunteer opportunities that exist. You might also identify opportunities to partner with local community groups.

Pros

- Enhances the visibility of the association.
- Promotes the recognition of the work done in the community by adult volunteers working in Scouting.

Cons

- Risk of ineffectiveness
- Could create tension inside the community.

Approaching local companies

With companies taking an increasing interest in corporate social responsibility, recruiting individual employees or groups of employees to volunteer to help with 'one-off' events could be helpful, both for them and us. Additionally, such opportunities provide a window for others to look inside, to see what Scouting is really like.

Pros

- Enhances the visibility of the association.
- Mutual benefit. Both the company and the association gain from the opportunity.
- Promotes the recognition of the work done in the community by adult volunteers working in Scouting.

Cons

- Risk of volunteers who are doing it because they have to, and not because they want to.

Partnerships

Agreements with local institutions, such as universities or other tertiary education establishments, could see students putting into practice, learning from their courses.

Pros

- Could become a long-term source of short-term volunteers. These could, in turn, become long-term volunteers.
- Enhances the visibility of the association.
- Promotes the recognition of the work done in the community by adult volunteers working in Scouting.

Cons

- Developing links with institutions could be challenging. If successful, other organisations might also try the same technique.



Direct mailing to former Scouts

Gather details of former Scouts and send them a personal letter, postcard or email, informing them of what Scouting is doing now. Invite them to offer their services again.

Pros

- Recruiting volunteers that have already been members means that they know more of the realities inside Scouting. Don't present an image of Scouting that is too perfect. They will know better!
- Could be focussed on people who have already passed critical life stages that traditionally affect involvement e.g. university studies, first job, marriage and children.
- Encourages family involvement.

Cons

- Risk of revisiting old conflicts
- Risk of conflict if people who return try to impose unpopular ideas

Direct mailing to other groups

Consider making contact with other groups such as schools, universities and student clubs, inviting them to promote volunteering opportunities in Scouting. Students as well as teaching staff may be interested. Why not invite them to participate in an outdoor activity as an introduction to Scouting?

Pros

- Targeted
- Potential for increased diversity if different groups are identified

Cons

- Risk of ineffectiveness.

Media exposure

As part of a co-ordinated communication strategy, place advertisements in newspapers, arrange to be interviewed on radio and television and promote Scouting through other media channels e.g. social networking websites, blogs etc.

Pros

- Enhances the visibility of the association.
- Promotes the recognition of the work done in the community by adult volunteers working in Scouting.
- Using alternative media channels demonstrates how Scouting evolves.

Cons

- Can involve significant financial investment
- Difficulties in using some media channels
- Might raise awareness, but not likely to have much impact unless the message is compelling

Special events and fairs

Scouting should be seen and heard. Consider special events and fairs that are fun in their own right, but will make the general public curious. For example, you could pitch a campsite in a strange place, like a pedestrian shopping precinct. Alternatively, consider other Scouting dates such as 22nd February, Founder's Day, or St. George's Day, when special events could be organised to promote volunteer opportunities.

Pros

- Enhances the visibility of the association.
- Promotes the recognition of the work done in the community by adult volunteers working in Scouting.
- Opportunity for face-to-face recruitment

Cons

- Can involve a lot of work without a return in the number of people recruited.
- Involves financial investment

Printed material

To support your adult recruitment efforts during 2007 consider producing posters, flyers and newsletters to communicate information about opportunities in Scouting. Be consistent with branding and look to present Scouting in an innovative way. Also use other printed media to promote Scouting. For example, featuring in newspapers.

Pros

- With printed material it is possible to target particular audiences
- Eye catching designs can create a positive image of Scouting today
- It is becoming increasingly cheap and easy to produce good quality material

Cons

- Involves financial investment
- Material can go out-of-date quickly

Volunteer Centres

Volunteer centres are involved in providing information to people interested in volunteering, as well as organisations looking for volunteers. If no volunteer centre exists, why not consider establishing one?

Pros

- People referred to Scouting by a volunteer centre will possibly have seen an outline of the role
- Some volunteer centres will be able to provide comprehensive information to a potential volunteer on what it is like to be a volunteer

Cons

- Unlikely to provide instant results
- Potential risk of volunteer centres not representing Scouting correctly
- Involves financial investment

Website

Consider preparing and placing information on volunteer opportunities on your website. Be clear to also provide information on what the volunteer gets out of the experience. Make it easy for people to make an enquiry about the role or roles being promoted and ensure follow-up.

Pros

- Relatively inexpensive to produce.
- Can reach a wide audience.

Cons

- Unlikely to provide instant results

Outdoor notices at meeting places

If your local group has a meeting place, but doesn't have any signage to indicate what the place is and what it is used for, then perhaps we are missing out on people passing by. Consider launching a campaign to ensure that Scouting venues are promoted by using relevant signage attached to the venue.

Pros

- Enhances the visibility of the association.
- Acts as a sign for people who have recently settled in the community
- Reminds past Scouts that Scouting still exists

Cons

- The message might be general and static

Annual General Meetings

At local level, consider using Annual General Meetings to focus on the important role of adult volunteers in delivering Scouting. Highlight the satisfaction and friendships that are made. Then, offer an opportunity for the parents/guardians of members to attend a Section meeting in the role of a helper. Ensure that current Leaders create a welcoming and open atmosphere for willing parents/guardians.

Pros

- It allows parents/guardians to experience what it means to help with the running of the Section

Cons

- Some parents/guardians may feel pressured at an AGM to say yes

Ambassadors for Scouting

Linked with Annual General Meetings, use youth members from a Section to identify parents/guardians to act as 'Ambassadors for Scouting'. One of the most successful means of achieving growth is by word of mouth; therefore, during the meeting ask them to nominate their parents/guardians to help in this role. An annual reward for the most willing Ambassador, as agreed by the youth members, can be made.

Pros

- This approach encourages young people to identify the importance of adult volunteer involvement

Cons

- Some parents/guardians may feel pressured by their children to respond positively

Considerations

For some adult volunteers, the Centenary will mark a milestone in their involvement in Scouting, and they may be considering retiring. Therefore, this time provides a particularly good opportunity to fully utilise the Adults in Scouting model by taking time to review, reassign and retire. We need to manage the process, so that we have the opportunity to offer reassignment as well as retirement.

Rightly, the majority of the events being organised during 2007 are focussed on providing opportunities for young people. However, many of the events that are being organised will demand additional human resources to enable them to happen. Therefore, it's important to be careful that people recruited to such events are not overworked to the point that they experience burnout. Additionally, it's important that their involvement doesn't draw them away from other local commitments. Some associations are actively looking to involve external volunteers to help with Centenary celebrations, in order to ensure that local commitments are fulfilled adequately.

With increased exposure to the media we need to ensure that the messages and images that are transmitted reflect reality. If we raise expectations of what it is like to be an adult volunteer in Scouting, and that differs greatly from real experience, then we will do ourselves no favours. New recruits will quickly leave if we don't deliver on what we have promised.

Scouting is passing from its first 100 years to its second 100 years. The potential to help Scouting grow and develop is in our hands. We should be ready to grasp the opportunity firmly.

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