

Adult Involvement



**National Youth Network
Scouts Canada**

3. Explain how it works.
 - a. Who does what, where, when?
 - b. Can you give assurance that it will be a success?
 - c. Try to anticipate people's concerns.
4. Describe the benefits.
 - a. What are the benefits to the youth members?
 - b. What are the short term and long term advantages of this event?
 - c. Is it well thought out with concern to: safety, back-ups, organization, etc?
5. Answer questions, hear objections.
 - a. Prepare for questions.
 - b. Cover all your bases.
 - c. Be flexible and willing to change.
6. Suggest the next step.
 - a. What do you have to do now?
 - b. When does the project begin?
 - c. What will happen in the next week/month?
 - d. Establish a time for a follow-up meeting.

When presenting, always be prepared. Go over your notes before the presentation, and try to predict any questions or objections that may be raised. Make sure to keep your presentations short and on topic. Provide a printed summary of your presentation. Be positive and remember to smile!

Introduction

As young leaders becoming involved in leadership roles with adults, you will need to develop a positive working relationship with your council, group committee, leadership team and staff. This section on dealing with adults is designed for both youth leaders and Scouting's adults. This guide is written primarily for youth in area, council and national networking roles, however, many of the suggestions in this chapter are applicable within a section as well. Leaders and advisors refer to any adult members you work close with in your role. The following pages contain hints for youth leaders on getting adults involved, working with council, working with support staff, making presentations, and running an advisor workshop. For the advisors, turn to the sections on "Advice for Advisors," and the role of a staff advisor. This chapter should help alleviate any tension between you and the adults you work with.

Advisor Relations

The Scouting community is made up of many components: youth members, leaders/advisors, group committee members, council members and staff. All of these members have significant responsibilities, but being a leader/advisor is an especially difficult task. A leader/advisor must be a: friend, diplomat, cook, architect, repairman, mediator, manager, boss and counselor. And more often than not, when we need an 'adult' to help us out, we often turn to our leaders/advisors, which gives them another hat to wear. When asking a leader/advisor, or anyone else, to get involved, you must keep in mind all the other responsibilities they have. They do have lives, and your activity will draw on their free time.

Here are a few tips to help you recruit leaders or advisors:

- Start with a clear outline of the role you are recruiting for.
- Find someone who has an interest in your group (a Cub leader would probably be more interested in a Cub forum, than a Venturer advisor.)
- Ask your commissioner for the names of keen members.
- Import someone. Try to get council members or network members involved.

Maintain Support for Your Vision

One of the more challenging jobs that you will have to face is gaining the support of everyone around you. In order to obtain this support it is important to deal with people on a personal level. The most effective way to deal with them is by making a presentation at a council/network meeting. Presentations are a great way to introduce your group to everyone else. Let them know who you are, what your goals are, and what you hope to accomplish throughout the year. Keep them informed by copying them on documents. Keep them involved by incorporating your goals and action plans into those of the council. If your council doesn't have clear goals and action plans, you can be a catalyst to starting this process.

When presenting an activity or proposal, remember how the six steps to persuasive presentations can make a presentation great:

1. Introduce yourself and your group.
 - a. Introduce the people presenting, and talk briefly about your group.
2. Summarize the activity.
 - a. Describe the event in detail. Has this event been done before? If so, use the past success of the activity to persuade. Cover the financial aspect as well. Make your points clear.

Working With Your Council

- Newly elected networkers should request a meeting with the senior council members. To get to know each other and share goals, expectations, needs, and plans for the year. Both you and your council should contribute ideas.
- Prepare tentative calendar of events/activities planned for the year and clear it with your council. Take a look at other calendars to avoid conflicts.
- Provide your council with copies of all agendas and minutes from your meetings - it's an easy way for council to take part in your meetings when they may not have time to attend. This will also help them to understand the amount of work that you do and all the positive contributions that your network makes.
- Extend an open invitation to your council, asking them to drop in at any of your meetings.
- Ask for feedback! These people have a lot of experience and can probably share a few pearls of wisdom.
- Send thank you cards. Everyone can use a little positive reinforcement.

Once you have commitment from people, keep them interested and involved. Thank them for their constant involvement verbally, in writing or perhaps at an event. Not only does this make them feel appreciated, it also raises their opinion of your group.

Typical Roles of an Advisor:

- Coach the young leaders to develop necessary skills and abilities.
- Provide guidance in parliamentary procedure when it is necessary.
- Monitor the behaviour of the group's members while representing the group.
- Ensure that activities are within the guidelines of the organization.
- Provide estimates for ideas, cost, time.
- Provide the 'big picture' when the group develops too narrow a perspective.
- Be fiscally responsible.
- Act as a liaison between youth and adults.
- Ensure that members of the group are carrying their weight.
- Challenge the group to set challenging, but realistic goals.

It takes a very special person to be an advisor. Not just anyone would give up their spare time to spend a weekend helping a group of youth to develop their leadership skills. They are usually the first to arrive and the last ones to leave. For this reason they must have extra amounts of energy, enthusiasm, patience, tact, and humour.

Advice for Advisors

Here are a few tips:

- a) Plan well ahead of time; days have a way of creeping up on you very quickly.
- b) Establish responsibilities; it has to be very clear who does what!
- c) Keep everyone informed: youth, leaders, and council.
- d) Don't be afraid to ask for help; you'd be surprised how many are willing to lend a hand.
- e) Be accessible; make sure you have everyone's telephone number.
- f) Have patience; don't forget, not all youth have your background and experience.
- g) Remember, it's not your group. Scouting is for youth, so let the youth run it; don't try to do everything your way, let them make some mistakes. Sometimes it's the only way they will learn, (and they may be able to teach you things as well.)
- h) Establish lines of communication. Don't let them go over your head with items until you've discussed the ideas thoroughly. You want to be as informed as possible so you don't get any surprises.
- i) Don't forget; you are the advisor, not the organizer of activities. It's their responsibility to ensure the success of an activity.

Working with Support People

Here are a few tips to create a good working relationship between you and the support staff:

- a) Introduce yourself and the group that you are representing in a pleasant manner, and with a smile. Explain what you need done, and ask for help.
- b) Don't overload. When asking a favour (i.e. would you fax this?) do not pick the busiest time of the day. Be patient and smile.
- c) Do it yourself. If the favour you are asking is one you'll be repeating regularly, why not find out if you can do it yourself?
- d) Give them time. Make life easier by being organized. If you need something faxed, photocopied or mailed, let them know early, and give it to them well before your deadline to do it.
- e) Say thanks. Never forget to show your appreciation. Either send a card, or express your gratitude verbally. Remember, these people are doing you a favour, and making your job easier. Let them know how much their support means!
- f) Get help. If you find, after several attempts, you are not getting the help you need (i.e. constantly denied access to the photocopier, aren't getting your faxes) it is time to ask for outside intervention. Ask you advisor, commissioner, or other staff member to speak with the person about helping you.
- g) Be confident. Don't feel intimidated about asking for help. You are doing an important job as a young leader, and are trying to make Scouting better; something other people should be proud and grateful for.