



Programmes Online - Programming planning for the future

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The Results

The Scout Association has developed an innovative online programme planning resource that supports adult volunteers in planning and preparing their weekly programmes for young people.

The resource is specifically aimed at Section Leaders and is designed to:

- ? Make programme planning easier and quicker;
- ? Increase the quality and understanding of programme planning.



In partnership with an external software development company, the Association has created an electronic library of well developed programme activities that are supported by backup material where appropriate. The library of programme activities enables adults to use a programme builder function to create a plan (with additional support material) for a weekly programme. It can also be used to plan camps and events over a number of days and this planning can take place over a year in advance.

The resource also allows adults to submit their own programme activities. The content is edited and moderated by content managers before these activities can go live on the resource. It is hoped that this collaborative element of the resource will allow the sharing of good practice and experience throughout the Association.

The resource has to meet the needs of a wide range of adults delivering Scouting at a local level. This ranges from the experienced Leader to the newly appointed Leader. The resource offers flexibility in that adults can 'dip in' to the content and pick out individual programme activities or they can build a full programme of activities.

The Methods

After consultation with adult volunteers through a small number of focus groups, an outline plan of the resource's basic

functionality was drawn together. This plan helped us to set out clearly the users' requirements. This was the first step in beginning the a process of finding and appointing an appropriate external partner. Once the software development company was appointed the technical system design was prepared and work began on the development of the resource.

A period of filling the resource with high quality content began shortly after the delivery of the content management elements. Once it was tested the resource was rolled out to Members.

The Reasons

There are two principal reasons to move towards an online programme planning resource:



? Recent adult volunteering surveys have informed us that adults have less time to devote to volunteering in Scouting. With this in mind we wanted to create a resource that would reduce the time taken for adults to plan programmes and essentially make it easier. It was clear that a reduction in the time taken to plan should not reduce the quality of the programme.

? In a recent review of the implementation of our Balanced Programme it was highlighted that there was a greater need to support adults in their understanding of planning a balanced programme. There is a need to show where activities fit into a balanced programme and what Programme Zones and Methods they fall into.

Our Learning

We learned a great deal throughout the whole process of developing this resource. From the needs and wants of our adult volunteers to what was technically possible with a resource of this kind. We learned that ensuring that programme activities are relevant and well researched is a significant task. We believe that researching and resourcing material centrally is the key and is actually what saves time for adults.

There is a significant amount of material in publications that could be entered into the resource, the limiting factor is the time taken by content managers to enter the material. This challenge has been met by slightly altering the responsibilities of members of programme staff (who are the content managers)



Our Future Plans

We are continuing to promote the existence and benefits of the resource to adult Members. We are using a number of methods to market the resource, ranging from advertisements in our bi-monthly magazine to reminders in our weekly email updates to adult Members. In addition we are keen to ensure that we populate the resource relevant and meaningful content that is well resourced. We are also looking to further enhance the programme building function of the system to enable more complex programmes to be created, allowing more flexibility in planning.