

Building My Success

A guide for Explorer Scout Leaders



Item Code FS452038 Jan/2008 Edition no 1

0845 300 1818

Introduction

The most important component of the Explorer Scout Membership Pack is the Explorer Scout Record Book. The most important section of the Record Book is called "Building My Success".

There are four "Building My Success" pages for the Explorer Scout to fill in, one per year of membership of the section. Why this process is important, how each page should be filled in, and the role of the Explorer Scout Leader in the process, is explained in this fact sheet.

What is 'Building My Success'?

Explorer Scouting is about personal achievement. "Building My Success" is a way for Explorer Scouts to say what they want to achieve over the forthcoming months and years, and for their Leaders to document how they will support these aspirations. It is not a measure of success or failure; rather it is a way of helping the young person to get the most out of Scouting. An important role of the leader is to guide Explorer Scouts to achieve what is practical, encouraging them to succeed in what they try, perhaps to stretch themselves, and try new things. You may also need to help them adjust their ambitions and aims over time – whilst avoiding criticism if targets are not achieved.

How does the process start?

The process starts when the Explorer Scout Leader issues the Membership Pack to the young person. To support the Moving In process, it might be presented whilst the young person is gaining the Membership award, so that they will have somewhere to record their progress in that award.

Alternatively, you might present it when they make a firm commitment to Explorer Scouting (when they are invested).

Whenever it is presented, the Explorer Scout Leader (or Assistant Explorer Scout Leader) should make time to go through the Membership Pack with the Explorer Scout, explaining the various parts of it.

The Leader should explain about "Building My Success" at this time, and give the Explorer Scout the opportunity to think about what they want to achieve. It may not be appropriate to commit the first thoughts to paper, remembering that the Explorer Scout has only just joined the Unit and they and the leader do not yet know each other well. However, it is important to agree a date to meet again and fill in the first "Building My Success" page - in any case it needs to be done before or very soon after the young person is invested.

Who does What?

The Explorer Scout Record Book belongs to the young person, not the Unit Leaders or the District Explorer Scout Administrator (DESA) or District Explorer Scout Commissioner (DESC). This is important as the young person should feel that they 'own' the process by owning the book. They should be encouraged to bring the Membership Pack to any 'formal' Unit meeting, but not necessarily to outdoor activities or anywhere else that it would obviously not be needed and could get lost (Ice Skating, Bowling, etc).

The Leader should explain that the Record Book is the Explorer Scout's responsibility and that entries in the book will usually be made by the Explorer Scout, with help from a leader.

An exception to this might be where a young person is unable to fill in their part of the book due to a special need such as a physical disability or a learning difficulty. In such cases the Leader should assist by filling in the relevant parts - but it is essential that the words are those of the Explorer Scout. This reinforces the Explorer Scout's 'ownership' of the process.

Always allow the young person to express themselves in their own way - this is not a school test.

What Goes Where?

Building My Success is split into two main sections, the part that the Explorer Scout fills in and the part that the Leader fills in.

There is then space for the signature of both parties and a review date.

The Explorer Scout's Bit

The Explorer Scout has three sections to fill in: 'Things I want to do', 'How I am going to do them', and 'Support I Need':

Things I want to do:

The Explorer Scout should document things that they want to achieve in the next year or beyond.

These aims should be those that they would hope to achieve within Explorer Scouting, or which will contribute to their personal development.

They should be looking to do things which Scouting will help them to achieve. 'Passing my GCSEs' or 'reaching the age of 15' are things which either we as Leaders have no real control over or which will happen anyway given time.

For example, they might say that they intend to complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze award, they want to learn how to sail a boat or that they are going to join the local campsite service team.

It is important not to stifle ambition. If the Explorer Scout puts down 'Climb Everest' or 'Cross the Atlantic in a rowing boat', it is still what they want

to do, even if it might look unrealistic at the time. There is nothing to say that an enthusiastic young person aged 14 years old might not achieve it by their 18th birthday with drive and determination. However, applying common sense is important - discussion with the Leader should bring out the reality or otherwise of such ambition.

The Explorer Scout should be encouraged to put down more than one aim, especially if the first is unlikely to be achieved within a year.

How I am going to do them:

This is the Explorer Scout's opportunity to break down his or her ambitions into easily manageable 'chunks'. If they want to learn to sail, perhaps 'joining the local Sea Scout group as a Young Leader' or 'joining the local sailing club' might be a first step. If the ambition is Climb Everest, then starting with a trip to the hills with the County mountaineering team might make sense for a novice, but someone who is already an accomplished mountaineer might have a very different approach.

Support I need:

This is where the Explorer Scout considers what help they need to achieve what they want to do.

It might be simple help, such as information. It might require equipment (a loan of a hike tent and stove). It might be instruction such as use of map & compass or a session on the local climbing wall. It might even be financial assistance for training courses or help with fundraising for an Explorer Belt expedition.

Again, this is in the Explorer Scout's part of the page. The support required might be outside the control of the leader (such as specialist courses or finance). This doesn't mean "we can't do it so it shouldn't be in the box" - what it means is that we can't do it, but we can help find someone who *can*.

Date for Completion:

This does not necessarily have to be just before the next annual review. It could be that the Young Person has important exams this year, so they need to complete everything by February so they

have time to concentrate on schoolwork up to the summer. It could be that what they want to do can only take place in the Summer or Winter. Or there might be an external deadline such as completion by a specific birthday. Remember that this date does not have to be fixed in stone – be prepared to modify ambitions and timescales if circumstances change.

The Leader's Bit

There is only one section for the Leader to fill in: 'Practical support I will provide towards this Explorer Scout's development'.

The support should be stated in simple terms and should include a target date for completion / delivery. This part should be based on what the Explorer Scout thinks they need, along with guidance from the Leader about anything they might need later on.

Be honest about what you can reasonably offer. If you offer your help, make sure that you can give it. If you are unsure whether you can help, say so, and set a date when you will confirm what can be done.

This is the only commitment in the process that *must* be fulfilled. If the young person does not achieve their goals, there may be any number of reasons, but being let down by the leaders must not be one of them.

Now sign it

The Explorer Scout Leader needs to explain to the Explorer Scout that by each signing the 'Building My Success' page, they are making a statement of intent. The intention is that the Explorer Scout will try to achieve their aims and that the Explorer Scout Leader and their team will support them in their endeavours.

What happens next?

Both parties have signed the form so now there is nothing to do until next year....? Wrong!

Firstly, the leader should make a separate note of what has been agreed and keep it with their own records. There is a commitment to deliver support, and also to keep up date with progress by the Explorer Scout (and provide encouragement).

Finally there is always the possibility that the Explorer Scout may lose the record book!

Next, make sure you plan when you and the Explorer Scout will next discuss "Building my Success". An annual review is useful – use your membership records to look for anniversaries of investitures and use these to plan – but you should keep an eye on the Explorer Scout's progress on their various tasks at regular intervals through the year. With a capable and self motivated young person, this might take the form of a 'how's it going' chat at the end of a meeting. With other Explorer Scouts you might want to schedule something more substantial on a regular basis. Be on the lookout for things slipping or not going to plan and be prepared to offer extra help and support if it appears things aren't going to plan.

Ensure that support promised is given at the right time. If something changes, discuss it with the Explorer Scout and explain what will now be happening and the reasons why. Ask them if they are happy about any change and if they are not, see what you would need to do to restore their confidence.

Again, be prepared to help modify ambitions and timescales, celebrating success even if it might appear rather minor – remember, this is all about *personal development*.

When to fill in the next page.

The "Building My Success" process is designed to follow an annual cycle – one page for each year in Explorer Scouting. So it is intended that a new page is filled in at the beginning of each year. Remember also to award the appropriate Participation Badge to celebrate another year in the movement.

The first thing is to look back at what has been achieved. If you are keeping up to date with the Explorer Scout, there should be no surprises here. If the Explorer Scout has achieved their goals, congratulate them and start the process for the next year. If not, again be prepared to adjust goals and timescales - the key to this part of the process is to applaud whatever has been achieved,

encourage the young person to learn lessons from whatever progress was not possible, and move on with new aims and ambitions.

What about the fourth year?

The “Building My Success” section of the Record Book has four pages to cover the time an Explorer Scout will spend in the section.

A 17 year old Explorer Scout may be due to Move On to Scout Network before the final year is up.

Go through the process anyway. The young person owns the record book, not you. Just because they will be 18 (and no longer an Explorer Scout) at the end of the year does not mean that they will not have dreams and ambitions. One of their aims may be to move on into the Scout Network – Explorer Scout Leaders have a duty to encourage them to do so.

They should take the Record Book with them as a record of their time in Explorer Scouts.

Young Leaders

Young Leaders are Explorer Scouts, so “Building my Success” applies to them just like it does to all other Explorers in the district – even if (or especially if!) they spend all their Scouting time helping with the younger sections. The leader with direct responsibility for making sure each young leader “builds for success” is the Explorer Scout Leader (Young Leader).

Don't forget – Young Leaders mustn't miss out if they choose not to join a “regular” Explorer Scout Unit.

Where and how to meet

Remember the “personal achievement” mantra – it may be possible for two or more young people to discuss “Building for Success” together, but the ambition of one young person must never stifle that of another. And no one should feel they are being compared to someone else. It may therefore be better that you discuss with each member of the unit individually. However, as with any meeting between adults and young people, the Scout Association's ‘Young People First’ guidance (the Yellow Card)

<http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/child-protection/>

must be followed at all times. Ensure that you are meeting in sight and sound of other adults.

Remember that this may be the only opportunity a young person has to discuss something that is troubling them. If so, only deal with such matters sensitively, and again the ‘Young People First’ (yellow card) guidance always takes precedence.

<http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/child-protection/>

What happened to Mentoring and the Certificate of Achievement?

Since Explorer Scouting began, leaders were encouraged to make sure that every Explorer Scout had a Mentor – someone who was there to support them and to make sure they had the opportunity to get what they wanted from Scouting.

It became clear that whilst a ‘formal’ process of Mentoring was not generally happening, in successful Explorer Scout Units informal and sometimes more effective support was given by the leaders. “Building My Success” is a way of supporting this process, and allows the young person to record their own aims and achievements in Explorer Scouting.

Further Information

Information regarding opportunities for young people to progress in various aspects of their lives is available through your normal support routes, District Explorer Scout Commissioner, Assistant Area / County Commissioner for Explorer Scouts, and the Scout Association Information Centre.

If you have any unusual or remarkable achievements by Explorer Scouts, or have examples of different ways of helping Explorer Scouts ‘Build for Success’, please contact us at explorer.scout@scouts.org.uk.