Armchair Recruiting – From: Paul Reagan

Physical Requirements: Phone and Computer
Time requirements: +- 6 hours for a 70-club district
Software requirements: NAYEN Recruiting Website and Excel

Setting:

1) Many schools won't let visitors in during school hours, due to restrictions resulting from the Pandemic and also from violence in schools.
2) Schools have a built-in resistance to "outside" programs due to
   a) potential for abuse
   b) staff over-commitment

Study Abroad Scholarship. Use of the term "Youth Exchange" is heard by the school as a task instead of an opportunity for recognition.

Busy school start-up time. Recommend not reaching out until late in 2nd week of school or beginning of 3rd week because staff are so focused on getting the school year started

Solution:

1) Present the school with a "Scholarship" opportunity for their students, and
2) Link the "Scholarship" to Rotary by implication (RI won't let YE call the program a "Rotary Study Abroad Scholarship"), gaining a positive reputation via association, and
3) Request parents be included in the distribution, indirectly eliminating concern about youth predators.
4) Never use the words "Youth Exchange" in your conversation. That is a Rotary-only term, recognized by very few schools. On the other hand, "Study Abroad" is a term understood by most every school.
5) And the word "Scholarship"? That is understood by 100% of schools. To have a student be awarded a scholarship is kudos for the school.

The Outreach Process

1) Call the school and say "Hello, I am _____ with the _____ Rotary Club. Who at your school is in charge of getting scholarship announcements to the students and parents?" If someone asks, "What kind of scholarship?", tell them it's for a year of high-school study abroad.
2) From the person answering the phone, always get a Name, Position and Phone number/extension of the "announcement" person at that school. Don't get off the phone without getting the info you request. At most schools a student aide answers the phone. You may need to be patient and explicit. Some students want to transfer you immediately; so, you have to stop them until you get the contact info for the announcement person.
3) Most of the time, when transferred, you will get VM, as staff is very busy at the start of the school year. Here is the message to leave: "Hello, my name is _____, with the _____Rotary club. I understand you are the person who distributes announcements about scholarships. Would you please call me to discuss distributing information on **our** (Implied association with Rotary) year-long Study Abroad Scholarship. My phone number is _____. Thanks, and look forward to talking with you."

4) Once you get the person responsible for scholarship announcements on the phone, say "Hello my name is _____. I am with the Rotary Club of _____. Are you the person in charge of getting an announcement to the full student body and their parents about a study abroad scholarship opportunity?"

5) They either say "Yes" or give you name and contact info for the person who is. In either case, continue the conversation this way:

6) "**Our** (use plural; implying Rotary) Study Abroad Scholarship is for all HS age groups. How exactly do you get the message to the students and parents at your school? Do you use email or newsletter or digital video or some other method." (Write that info down and keep it. You will see why later)

7) Then say "We are having multiple Zoom/GoogleMeet info session, on the scholarship, for both students and parents. If I got you the best announcement message(s) to go out over your Whatever their distribution method(s) is/are) would you pls see that it goes out the day before and the day of the info session(s)? (Everyone I talked to said "Yes"). ~75% followed through.

8) Then say: "I can send that to you by email. What is the best email address to reach you?"

9) Then say: “I know you are very busy; so, if you don’t mind, I will send you that announcement shortly, but I will also follow up just before the distribution day, as a reminder. Is that OK with you?”

10) Try to add a personal note at the end of the conversation. Someone you know in their family. Someone you know in common. Something important to you both, etc. People tend to follow through better if you make a personal connection. Thank the person and hangup.

11) Immediately send the attached email to that person.

The above process is critical because it

Gets you past the "Who is this person anyway?" questions because you

a) Represent Rotary, and
b) Are offering a scholarship, and
c) Include the parents, which in their mind eliminates you as a sales agent or a predator

The final step, sending the "message" the school will use, is also critical because

a) School doesn't have to draft the message; you provide it, and
b) In the message is the link to "studyabroadscholarships.org", which grants you unquestioned legitimacy, especially if the person in charge of announcing goes to the link and views the site. Immediate unquestioned legitimacy is a powerful step in recruiting. The Armchair Recruiting scenario is a " no-questions-asked lean-in" strategy. It won't work without a smoothly functioning Study Abroad Scholarship website.

Once the applicants go to the Study Abroad Scholarships website, they fill out a very short interest form. That automatically gets forwarded to your district YEO of record at RI. Finally, using the student info, one person on the district team reaches out to the student, invites him/her **and** his/her parents to the Zoom/Google Meet info session or to an in-person info session.

Using the standard recruiting process (school visits, etc.), for the 2022 exchange year D6110 had 6 students to interview. For the 2023 school year, with no school visits and ~2 hours of calling and emailing and 6) 1-hour Zoom sessions, 6110 had 22 applicants asking for the Zoom link. That's a 350% increase. And that's using the above method for only four school systems in our district, one of which did not follow through.
But be prepared for:

1) Larger interview numbers,
2) Larger number of partners
3) Larger hosting numbers

Final note Re: <u>Scholarship Message</u> delivery to school

D6110 gave the school announcement-distribution contact the planned Zoom dates and asked them to send the notices out for two days in advance of each Zoom date. They all agreed. But when D6110 had very low numbers for the second date, we circled back to the schools and discovered that we needed to send a reminder, along with the "message", to the school a day or two in advance of <u>each session</u>. School personnel are simply too busy. Make it easy for them by being their calendar and their memory.

I am attaching the messages we used, which can be modified as you choose. But make sure to keep any email notices or PA announcements very short. Message board announcements and Newsletter announcements can be a bit longer and have graphics. Remember, the attention span of your target audience is VERY SHORT.

If you develop some more attractive images to use, pls share on NAYENTalk.

Whatever you do, it is important that all your announcements have the studyabroadscholarships.org hyperlink.

D6110 LT Outbound Team