



**COMPANY SECTION / SENIORS  
RECRUITMENT TOOL BOX**



## Do you want your Company to engage more young people?

Does the adventure really begin here for young people in your area?

It's easy to believe when you start a recruitment campaign for under-11s that you are going to have some success. However it's not so common to do a similar campaign with the older age groups. Why do you think this is the case? There are real issues to face, but this guide will help you to identify potential barriers and come up with ways to deal with them. Read through and see how you can develop an equally effective recruitment campaign for Company Section/Seniors. Remember that unlike the under-11 campaign you will need to focus heavily on young people inviting their friends. As young people get older their parents have a diminishing role in making such decisions, although they will have some say. All these ideas are based on activities that have actually worked in Boys' Brigade Companies, so be inspired!

We know that 83% of young people believe that their community doesn't care about them. Let's get out there and show them that not only do we care but God does as well.

### Your challenge is:

- To grow each section by at least one new member
- To have at least 10 young people in the age group
- To retain at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of young people as they transfer sections

### BACKGROUND

Before we started developing this toolbox we undertook a survey of young people focusing on how we could best equip them to recruit more young people into The Boys' Brigade. Below are some key findings:

- Outdoor, sporting and music-related images were seen as the most appealing for their peers, as was a sense of achievement
- Younger members of the age group liked to be associated with "older" activities.
- 60% of the young people surveyed said they had invited a friend to come to BB.
- 30% said they started coming to BB because of the invitation of a friend.
- Very few young people responded that they wouldn't want to help recruit.

Complete the self assessment to give you some guidance on the direction that you might like your campaign to take. Finally as well as all the ideas contained don't forget to read about three other key ideas:

- **Integration** – how will you ensure a successful welcome into your group that means that the young people stay?
- **Barriers** - what barriers are there to a successful Company Section/Seniors recruitment campaign?
- **Transitions** – how will you ensure that you keep hold of existing young people particularly when they move between the age groups?

# SELF ASSESSMENT

Use these questions to help you decide what you need to consider next . . .

## **1. How would you describe numbers in the Company Section / Seniors age groups over the last couple of years?**

- a) Declining                      b) Stable                      c) Growing

➤ Take a look at the Transitions section to see how you can keep hold of young people moving up from Juniors.

## **2. How often do your young people bring a friend along to BB?**

- a) Never                      b) Very rarely                      c) Regularly

➤ Are the young people aware that they can bring a friend along?

## **3. Do you hold special activities in order to get existing members to bring their friends along?**

- a) No, I don't think we would cope with any new young People.
- b) We've tried but the results aren't that fruitful. Sometimes they come along, but after a couple of weeks we don't see them again.
- c) Yes, every time we encourage them to do so they bring friends.

➤ Make sure that you look through the pack at all the ideas and get an idea of what might work for you.

## **4. Do your young people feel comfortable telling their friends that they are in BB?**

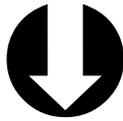
- a) They hate being seen in their uniform, and do anything to hide it from everyone.
- b) They tell only their closest friends
- c) They seem to be comfortable and proud of what they do at BB.

## **5. Do you regularly talk with your young people about what they think about your group?**

- a) No, our group is entirely adult led.
- b) We ask the young people for ideas on our programme.
- c) Our Company fully involves young people in all areas of decision making.

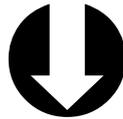
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Count up which letter you answered most often,  
and see which route we recommend for you:



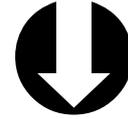
**ROUTE A  
BARRIERS**

It may feel like there are too many barriers in the way to stop the decline your group is experiencing, but there are things you can do to change the situation. Just stick with it. You need to focus on the Transitions and Barriers section first. There may be underlying problems that need to be resolved first. Then begin working with your existing young people. Get them on board and you will make a difference. However you're going to have to give them the chance to say what they really think, and act upon it!



**ROUTE B  
STEP-OUT**

You're at a stage where you could go from good to great. Be creative in what you do, look at all the ideas and be prepared to do something different! Look at the Integration section and see how you can turn friends into regular members. Think about using the ideas in the media section as well.



**ROUTE C  
CARRY-ON RECRUITING**

Great! You're doing well. The young people in your Company love what you do and feel at home with you and your leaders. Don't rest on your laurels though, why not try some of the ideas in the Community section. Remember what an asset you are to your community, and keep on building.

**YOUR CURRENT NEEDS & TARGETS FOR THE FUTURE . . .**

**Current numbers:**

Company Section  Seniors

**Estimated Capacity:**

Company Section  Seniors

**Targets** (what you plan to achieve and how):

1.
2.
3.

**Action Timeline:**

Within 1 Month	6 Months	1 Year

When a young person comes to BB for the first time you often only get one chance to show them that your group is a great place to be. This means that how you welcome them and integrate them into your Company is crucial. Read the following ideas to make sure that you do your best to make sure this happens.

## ➤ Overview of activities

Give the young people and their parents/ guardians an overview of the activities that they will take part in over the year. As well as weekly activities, include competitions, residentials and any special activities. You may like to produce a small programme leaflet for them to take away. Have a section for contacts; include the Captain, relevant leaders and the Church.

## ➤ Review of the year

As well as telling the young people what they might have the opportunity to do over the coming year, show them a video or pictures to music of the previous year. Remember to include activities from the older age groups. These will be aspirational for those of a younger age.

## ➤ Hook for the future

If you plan for a period of recruitment activity, ensure that in 4-6 weeks times there is a special activity or event that you can tell the young people about. This might give an incentive for them to try BB out for a longer period of time. Why not give them an invitation to camp?

## ➤ Friends

When a young person arrives at BB remember it can be very intimidating. Put a young person in a group with their friends and other young people of a similar age.

## ➤ Group Identity

The strong group identity of a Boys' Brigade Company is a real asset and helps keep hold of young people, but that strength can also be a weakness. Young people may find it hard to break into the group. Really focus on this in the first few weeks. Try and give them a uniform as soon as possible, and include them in everything that you do.

## ➤ Buddy Up

Ask a specific young people to befriend a new young person, even if they have come with friends. They can show them around, be a friendly face, and encourage them to come back.

## ➤ Leaders

Get every leader to introduce themselves personally to any new young person. Make sure that in any subsequent weeks you all say hello to them by name. If they don't come back give them a phone call and show that they are really welcome.

**Check out the website for additional resources and support:**  
[www.boys-brigade.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/recruitment)

If you think that there are problems too insurmountable for you to recruit anyone to BB, keep your mind open, and then read through this section.

## Young People

Some Companies have told us that they have difficulties convincing their existing young people that there is any need to get any more young people attending there group. Below we suggest some reasons for this and possible solutions:

- **Scared of change** – Some young people may love your group so much that they don't want it to change. Explain to them some of the benefits of having more young people. You may be able to do a wider range of activities, and tell them that you want as many people as possible to experience what they do.
- **Embarrassed** – Some young people feel too embarrassed to tell their friends that they go to BB. Try and work out what the reasons are for this, and see what you can do to change the situation.
- **Programme** – Do the activities your group offer attract young people to attend, stay and invite their friends? Make sure that you are talking to them about what you are doing. Sometimes it can be difficult to reflect critically on something that we have been doing for years, but it may be necessary if what we are doing is not attracting young people. Are you using the new programme material?

## Volunteers

If you do not have enough leaders for your group to grow, take a look at the “Changing Lives – volunteer recruitment toolbox. It's right that you start there first.

# TRANSITIONS

When we look at recruiting more young people, it's important not to forget that the most direct way to do this is to keep hold of those in the younger age groups as they move up. This section will help you look at retention, and give you ideas to make any transitions between age groups as smooth as possible. Don't just assume that it will happen. Think carefully about some of the potential difficulties:

- It's a time of big change as in some areas young people will also be changing schools.
- Older age groups often happen on a different night, and there may be other commitments or activities that take place.
- The leaders may be unfamiliar
- Those coming up are going to go from being the oldest and biggest, to being the youngest and smallest!

The first few nights in the new section are critical and may determine whether the person stays. A positive welcome, friendly face and exciting activities can go a long way to address any obstacles. Check out some of the ideas . . .

## Dedicated Leader

Appoint one of your leaders to be the liaison between the sections. Think carefully about who this person should be. Make sure it's a familiar face to the oldest Juniors. It may be a leader who works in both age groups, but if not try and get someone who can spend time there getting to know them. If possible get one of the Company Section leaders to go to Juniors for a couple of weeks before they change age group. Get them to tell the young people about all of the exciting things that they are going to do. When they start Company Section this should also be the leader who is going to spend the most time with them.

It could also be that one of the leaders of the Junior Section is able to spend time for the first few weeks of the session in the Company Section supporting the new members.

**Key tip!** Every year take some of the older members of the Company Section along to the Juniors to share what they do and excite them about moving up. They could even plan and lead the whole evening. Use the Discover programme to help you do this.

## Summer Activities

If the Company Section runs a summer programme, can the top year Juniors join in? Many successful Companies transfer Juniors in the summer so that they get to know both leaders and young people.

Is there a residential or camp that the third year Juniors could attend? If you haven't thought about this, would it be possible? At such an event it's really important that the older ones understand the significance of including the young ones and making them feel welcome.

## Exciting Programme

This goes without saying, but ensure that the activities the members are moving up to are exciting and progressive. What are they now able to do that they couldn't as members of the Juniors? And don't just wait until they come along to tell them about this, let them know well in advance so that it's an attraction.

For example, if you're planning a trip or visit in the first few weeks, let this be known before you break for the summer.

**Key tip!** Don't forget that there is a key transition period between Company and Seniors. Most young people leave BB at this time. Often Companies don't run separate activities and this can be a contributing factor.

## Information

Have the young people and their parents got all of the important information about starting the Company Section. There will be new times, possibly a different night, what will happen about uniform for the first night etc. Sometimes lack of certainty can cause anxiety and some may rather not go than make a mistake or be the odd one out.

Make sure parents get the information well in advance. Some Companies hold a meeting for parents before the summer break to give out information and answer questions. Some Companies visit homes over the summer holidays. Some ensure that the youngsters receive a letter reminding them about all of the details and telling them how much the leaders are looking forward to greeting them.

**Not all of these ways will be suitable for you, but it's important to be organised and let parents be confident about the section.**

**Key fact!** Research shows that young people decide to leave a group like BB two years in advance of the time that they eventually leave.

See if your existing young people will invite their friends along to BB.

## > RESOURCES!

- Young People's Leaflet (*available from BB Supplies*)
- Friend's Night Invitation (*available online*)
- Information leaflet (*available online*)
- "Organising a Friend's night"  
(*Community zone, Discover Programme*)

## A FRIEND'S NIGHT

**Have you ever run a friends' night?  
What can you do to entice other  
young people to attend?**

A Friends night can be a great way of recruiting into this age group. It's all about getting your existing young people to invite along their friends to a specially planned night. Put together an invitation (template available to download) that they can pass on to their friends, but the most important part is getting your young people to think that they should bring a friend along.

It is important that you plan the night well, so that you have sufficient staff and resources to cope with the additional young people (you should work on everyone bringing at least 1 person). It may be that you run things slightly differently on this night, but try not to stray too far away from the normal!

Remember you may only get one opportunity to engage with the young people that come along for the first time so make sure they feel welcome, included and want to come back! Showing them what is on offer throughout the year is important, as there will be lots more your Company will be doing (e.g. camps, holidays, trips, competitions etc).

Give your young people the opportunity to plan the programme for the night! This will make them feel more comfortable inviting their friends. Have a look at the "Organising a Friend's Night" activity in the Community zone of Discover.

## TRIPS

As part of your programme of activities you may arrange regular trips and outings every term.

Why not open these up for the young people to bring friends along as well.

When they are there make sure that you talk to them about what else you do, and give them a leaflet containing information about your group and future activities.

**Key tip!** Give the new young people something to look forward to in 4-6 weeks time, e.g. maybe you are going on another trip, going on camp or doing a special evening. This will help ensure it isn't just another one off visit to your group.

**Purchase your  
Recruitment resources  
from BB Supplies  
on 08707 442 292  
<http://shop.boys-brigade.org.uk>**

**Key tip!** If you have a video of the year or highlights from your summer camp/holiday then this would be a great thing to show what goes on outside of a normal night.

## REWARDS & INCENTIVES

Use your existing young people as your sales force to recruit new members. In business many sales people will be driven by incentives and rewards and this is a method some BB Companies have used effectively.

Whether you offer credit in canteen/tuck shop, or a reduction on a trip, camp, or holiday, this will reward your existing young people for their efforts in recruiting.

## BRINGING FRIENDS

“One evening a member of our group said “Are we allowed to bring friends along to BB?” It suddenly struck me that we had never formally invited them to bring their friends along to BB. The first thing we did was to tell them that it was OK, and every time we go on a trip we remind them to bring their friends along as well.”

## EXPERIENCES

“The first experience that some of our young people have had of BB is our summer camp. This was a great and exciting way for them to start their time in BB.”

**Key tip!** Make it clear to your existing young people how the system works. Joining may mean different things for different Companies, but this could be when a young person buys their Uniform or pays their subs.

**Check out the website for additional resources and support:**

[www.boys-brigade.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/recruitment)

## RESOURCES

Resources available to help you with your recruitment campaign:

■ **Young people’s leaflet** *(available from BB supplies)*

This leaflet is aimed at young people. You will note that the images and words reflect those highlighted in the research undertaken. The images are mainly of older young people as this reflected what the young people wanted to be associated with and aspire towards. There is space for local contact details to be added to the leaflet. A boys only version and mixed (girls/boys) version are available.

■ **Friend’s night invitation** *(available online)*

This leaflet is again aimed at young people, but is intended to be adapted by Companies to invite friends to specific activities.

■ **Information leaflet sample** *(available online)*

This should give young people and parents all the necessary background and programme information. Adapt this example for your own Company.

■ **Promotional Video** *(available online)*

This movie is aimed at young people. There are lots of outdoor, sport, music and “church hall” activities. This reflects both every week activities and those yearly highlights that every Company has. The images and words again reflect what was highlighted in the research undertaken.

**Also available:**

- School assemblies outline *(available online)*
- RS/RE lesson outline *(available online)*
- Website banner *(available online)*

Engaging with the local community . . .

## > RESOURCES!

- Leaflet (*available from BB supplies*)
- Friend's night invitation (*available online*)
- Information leaflet (*available online*)
- School assemblies outline (*available online*)
- RS/RE lesson outline (*available online*)
- Promotional Video (*available online*)

## SCHOOLS

**Do you have any links with your local Secondary School?**

**Is there someone who would go into a school to promote BB?**

Whilst many Companies go into local Primary Schools and promote BB at an assembly, distributing leaflets, or putting on a taster session you may be more reluctant to do it with this age group. However there are still lots of possibilities that shouldn't be ignored. Many of the principles are the same, but the content will need to reflect the age group.

- **Assemblies** – Have a look at our resources online for ideas about what you could do in a school assembly. A large part of this would include showing our new video.
- **RS lesson** – The Boys' Brigade & The Girls' Brigade actually appear on some RS/RE syllabuses. Schools may be interested in a leader coming in and talking about the activities provided for young people in a faith setting, why churches have special activities for young people, and what activities are undertaken with a special interest in how they are linked to Christianity.
- **Posters & leaflets** – Put leaflets and posters around in prominent positions.

## REFERRALS

**Do other organisations know you exist?**

You will be amazed by the doors that open up to you by talking to other organisations and people. Tell them about what you do and the vision you have for the future. Start by talking to one person and then ask them who else they think you should be meeting with. Some groups have had great success getting other organisations to signpost and refer young people to them.

**Some ideas to get you going . . .**

- Local authorities and those involved in statutory provision for over-11s.
- The Police and those responsible for safer neighbourhood initiatives.
- Any other organisation that works with young people.

**Key tip!** The Duke of Edinburgh's award can be a big attraction to young people, especially where schools do not offer the scheme. Have a look at their promotional leaflets available from [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org).

## REFERRALS

**“W**e are working with an organisation that helps refugee children find their feet and make friends. The project supports young refugees who are 14-18 years old and who have had to come to the UK alone without their parents. They really want to work with us and give the young refugees a chance to meet with other local young people in a positive environment. Where better to do that than BB!”

**Key tip!** As part of our survey we asked young people what they thought about the idea of leaders going in and delivering school assemblies. This received a very mixed response. It would be good to discuss any ideas with the young people before hand to understand what they think will work, and their reasons behind why something might not. Is it that they don't think it's effective or don't they want others to find out they go to BB.

Engaging with different types of media is a great way to improve communications both within and outside your Company. Take a look at these ideas and see where you can take them.

## > RESOURCES!

- Promotional Video (*available online*)
- Website banner (*available online*)

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

If your Company does not have a Facebook page (or other social networking sites), why not set one up. These are used by most young people as a way of communicating with each other, so having a presence could help you in your recruitment. If your existing young people become 'fans' of your Company page they will be promoting the Company to their friends. Make sure that you post and share the new promotional video.

### Social Networking sites:

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

[www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com)

**Key tip!** You should be aware of the Brigade Regulations and advice on use of the internet and social networking sites. Additional guidance available from BB HQ.

## WEBSITES

Websites are often the first port of contact with someone wanting to find out about you. So having a website which tells people what you offer and gives them information on how they can get involved is very important.

## VISIBILITY

**What exciting activities do you do that will engage young people?**

**What can turn these activities into stories that your local community wants to hear about?**

Shout about the things your Company gets up to! You need to be telling the world (. . . but begin with your local community) about what your Company gets up to, whether it's a fundraising event, helping in the community, taking part in a competition or going on a weekend away. It's important to let the local community know about positive activities young people are getting involved in.

There is often a lot of negative publicity around young people in the press, and you're in a key position to add something positive.

Speak to your local newspapers, radio station and magazines to see how you could work together.

**Key tip!** Get in touch with your neighbourhood policing team as they will often be open to supporting your work in the local community and may have contacts with the local press.

**Key tip!** Why not get your young people to setup a website for the Company. Check out the Discover Programme pack for how to get started on creating your first website!

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Check out the resources online at:  
[www.boys-brigade.org.uk/recruitment/](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/recruitment/)

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