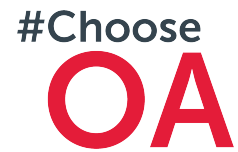




#ChooseOA: Induction Rate & Best Practices



Session Objectives

- Explain the significance and importance of communicating with and making an impact on newly elected candidates the importance of going through their ordeal and the steps to registration.
- Demonstrate effective methods and techniques of communication with candidates
- Guide participants in a reflection of their lodge's current actions, what their lodge can do in the future, and the best practices of all lodges in attendance
- Enable participants to innovate and improve their lodge's process of getting candidate's to their induction.

Session Length: 50 minutes

Appendix Resources

- Order of the Arrow *Guide to Inductions*
- Sample post-call-out meeting agenda
- Sample letter to candidates
- Sample letter to parents
- #ChooseOA: Induction Rate & Best Practices presentation

Required Materials

- Projector and screen
- Flip chart and markers
- Sticky notes

Trainer Preparation

Review the resources that you are sharing with participants so that you can be prepared to answer questions that may arise. Many of these topics are recommendations so be prepared to tailor your content and have recommendations based on the size of lodges that participate. Have a general understanding of the election process, and be able to give examples of how lodges successfully get candidates from election to induction. Have a personal story about why you #ChooseOA that you can use to connect with participants. Be well versed in the new 2019 membership standards, Guide to Safe Scouting, and Order of the Arrow Guide to Inductions. Ensure that you are familiar with the full session, and have in-depth explanations ready for each point made in the session if questions should arise.





Session Narrative

Introduction

3 minutes

Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining me today as we discuss a topic that is critical to the continued health and future success of the Order of the Arrow: inductions. Did you know that over the course of the last five years, youth OA membership has declined by more than 10,000 Arrowmen? What's causing this? Well, we're not exactly sure right now, but we're trying to find out. One thing that we do know: we can't keep doing things in the same old way, because the same old way obviously isn't working. Now, what can we work to change to make a positive impact on the OA's future? Today, we'll be talking about how to make changes to our induction processes in the goal of increasing induction rates, which will in turn can have a positive result on the future of the OA.

We've Finished Our Unit Elections; Now What?

3 minutes

Each and every one of us sitting here today who became members of the Order of the Arrow as youth had to do so in the same way: we were elected by the members of our troop. However, electing candidates doesn't do our lodges or the OA as a whole much good if we don't actually induct those candidates! One of the three benchmarks that indicates a High Performing Lodge is its induction rate; that is, the percentage of youth elected in any given year who complete their Ordeal and are inducted as members of the OA. As an organization, we don't do the best job of this. In fact, about 11,000 potential members go un-inducted each year! If we were able to figure out a way to induct every candidate that is elected each year, the OA's membership decline would be reversed almost immediately; within two years, we would see a great rate of membership growth. Our goal in this session — and our goal as an organization — is to decrease the number of elected candidates that go un-inducted each year. Why? Because every Scout, Venturer, and Sea Scout deserves the experience of OA membership.

Call-out/Public Recognition

5 minutes

One of the first instances in which we have the opportunity as an organization to recognize those who have been elected as candidates for membership (and to potentially persuade them to complete their Ordeal) is through a call-out. How many of you remember your call-out? Was it a good experience? Can anyone guess what



percentage of OA general members found their call-out to be a more impactful part of their membership journey than either their election or the Pre-Ordeal Ceremony?

Trainer Instructions: Have participants write their guessed percentage down on a sticky note. Have 94% written on a page of the flip chart, but covered so that the participants can't see it.

Ninety-four percent! Ninety-four percent of general members surveyed said that they valued their call-out more than their election or their Pre-Ordeal experience. The call-out is not simply an excellent opportunity to provide recognition of an individual's selection by their unit as a candidate for Order of the Arrow membership. It is also an important step in every Arrowman's membership journey. So, how can we go about making this a memorable moment?

If possible, call each individual out at a district or council-wide event, like a camporee or a Klondike Derby, or at summer camp. This is a moment of recognition and honor for candidates, and the public aspect can help candidates to build pride in themselves and excitement for their induction. If units don't participate in these events, be sure to supply them with the proper resources to perform a meaningful callout at a unit-level event such as a Court of Honor.

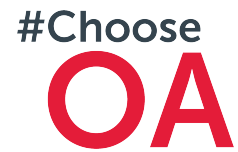
The ceremonies at the center of the call-out should be solemn, memorable, and make an impact. It is the first impression of the OA for many program participants, and it is always important to both make a good first impression and communicate what the OA stands for in this moment. Ensure that you follow all guidelines for ceremonies as specified in the Order of the Arrow *Guide to Inductions*. These guidelines and best practices have been developed and approved by the national Order of the Arrow committee in order to present the best ceremony possible. Carefully decide on your attire in order to present the best call-out — and best image of the Order of the Arrow — possible. If uniforms are chosen, be sure that they are clean, look professional, and meet the standards set forward in the BSA's *Uniform and Insignia Guide*. If you choose to wear American Indian costume, ensure that it is accurate, formal, and respectful of native culture.

Following the call-out, hold a brief meeting with the candidates to congratulate them personally on their achievement and discuss the next steps, such as the opportunities to go through the Ordeal that your lodge is offering that year and how to register. Be





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sure to also communicate where the candidates can go to learn more about the OA and your lodge. A handout with the URL for your lodge website, your lodge's social media usernames/handles, and key email contacts (such as for the lodge chief and lodge adviser and Ordeal Committee chairperson and adviser) is beneficial to have as well.

Optimal Communication

12 minutes

Communication between a lodge and elected candidates should occur regularly, and take a variety of forms. It is important to ensure that candidates are reminded of the importance of attending their Ordeal, and are informed of the details for registration. Beyond this, though, we want to communicate the excitement, sense of belonging, and adventure that comes with being a member of the OA. Be sure to talk to candidates about the why of the OA, not just the what. The lodge leadership and whoever is sending these communications should think about why they personally chose to get active. Additionally, they should consider what some of the best parts of the OA and your lodge are and highlight them to the elected candidates. If you tell candidates why you #ChooseOA, they'll be more likely to relate to the reasons that OA membership is beneficial.

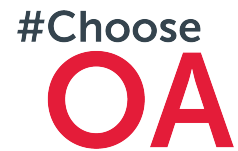
Trainer Instructions: Take some time at this point in the session to discuss why you, the trainer, #ChooseOA. This isn't just something that we do once, but that happens over and over along the membership journey. Invite the participants to share the reasons why they #ChooseOA as well.

One of the first opportunities for the lodge to engage elected candidates and communicate with them is after the call-out. The candidates have likely been captivated by the ceremony of the call-out, and they are all there for you to deliver the message. It is important to give them the beneficial information they need to go forward while also increasing their excitement. If there isn't time for an in-depth meeting after the call-out, have a letter and information sheet prepared to communicate the key points that you would portray in the meeting. This is a quick and easy way to get the message across. Giving out this printed material can also help ensure that candidates won't forget or overlook details learned while in the post-call-out excitement.





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After the call-out, follow your initial communication with your candidate with a personalized letter sent to the candidate reviewing the details they have already learned, as well as a letter sent to the candidate's parent(s)/guardian(s). This is your opportunity to touch base not just with the elected candidate, but also with the individuals who largely control the candidate's schedule and provide them transportation and funding: the candidate's parent(s)/guardian(s). The letter should be formal, informational, and professional, which will help it to leave a lasting impact on the parent(s)/guardian(s). It is also important to stress the honor of election and the leadership opportunities brought about by OA membership. Personalization additionally builds trust, rapport, and connection between the lodge and its potential members, and helps them to feel like part of the lodge community pre-induction. The primary focus of this letter should be the Order of the Arrow as a whole and the value of being a member.

Depending on when a candidate is elected and called out in comparison to when Ordeal opportunities are offered, a personalized email to candidate and/or candidate's parent(s)/guardian(s) can be beneficial. This email is an opportunity to have all necessary information regarding the induction process available for candidates to see, review, and go back to when they needed. This email should be specific, detailed, as well as stress the most important items that candidates need to know, which will vary by lodge. Though informational, this email should still maintain energy and personability. Include links with more information, and which allow candidates to register for the Ordeal. It is important to also send a similar email to the parents of the candidates since the parents have influence over the decision of if and when a candidate will participate in the Ordeal.

Other potential means of communication include a phone call to each candidate (either personal or automated), texting services, and social media posts. A phone call is a way of having a personal conversation with a candidate to communicate to why you #ChooseOA and the opportunities they have in the OA once they join. Many times all someone is waiting for is to be asked to join, and a phone call serve as that call to action. Automated calling services can also be a great tool to have a pre-recorded message call all candidates. This can work well as a final push before an Ordeal opportunity. In the 21st Century, texting is the quickest and most commonly used form of communication. It is a great way to send quick reminders and small bits





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of information that are beneficial in the near future. It is important to remember, though, that not everyone automatically wants this. Be sure to get the candidate and their parent(s)/guardian(s) permission to add them to these services. Finally, social media is where we all go for information, especially youth. It's a great way for people to get quick snapshots of what's happening in your lodge.

Utilize Your Unit Representatives

3 minutes

After the election, ensure that the names of the elected youth are communicated to each unit representative and unit leader. These are the people who have a real knowledge of every candidate. They also will be able to make the most personal connection with the candidates; because of this, they should be well informed about what to tell the candidates regarding the OA, your local lodge, and the induction opportunities that it offers. Unit representatives can make it much easier for candidates to receive information, understand what's happening, and get to the actual Ordeal. Another way to make that personal connection to have their own unit's unit representative invite and encourage candidates to attend an Ordeal with them.

Communicating with a Candidate's Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

3 minutes

Though we mentioned it earlier, it bears going over again: a Scout, Venturer, or Sea Scout's parent(s)/guardian(s) is a key player in the decisions that the candidate makes. To that end, be sure to engage them, as well as the candidate. Send a letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the candidate congratulating them on the candidate's accomplishment and explaining more about the OA and your local chapter/lodge. In this letter you can also take the time to highlight the benefits that OA membership and involvement offer to their child.

Another way to ensure that parents feel involved and invested in their child's membership and participation in the OA is to host a parent information session. This session, which should just be for the parents of elected candidates, can easily be held at camp on the Friday night that the Ordeal starts. For those parents who cannot attend an information session at camp, offering a session held electronically (via Zoom meeting, Google Hangout, or another medium) can provide the same benefit of helping to demystify the OA, to discuss leadership opportunities and training within





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the lodge, programs like the National Leadership Seminar, and conclaves and National Order of the Arrow Conferences.

Involve Your District & Council Leadership

3 minutes

In addition to reaching out to candidates, parents, and unit representatives, it can be beneficial to send information to unit, district, and council-level leadership as well. Members of the commissioner corps can remind their unit(s) about dates, locations, and general information about lodge program during their contacts with units. It may also be possible to make a presentation about Ordeal opportunities at your district or council roundtable, which would be an effective way to convey information about these opportunities to a large number of stakeholders at once. Roundtable attendees (such as Scoutmasters, Skippers, Crew Advisors, and Committee Chairpersons) have a vital role in their units' planning and what is highlighted at unit meetings and in unit communications. Use opportunities in front of these audiences to reiterate the positive impact the local lodge has on the program of the district and council, along with service provided to camp properties, events, and via financial assistance.

Where are you now?

3 minutes

Before we continue, take a moment to evaluate the induction program offered by your own lodge. How efficient is your lodge at inducting its candidates? What does your lodge do now in order to bring the highest number of candidates possible to its Ordeals? How effective have you been? Where can you make improvement? Look at what steps you can take to improve your induction process.

Best Practices

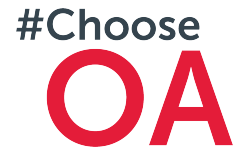
15 minutes

Trainer Instructions: Have each participant write what they think the best thing their lodge does to induct candidates on a sticky note and place it on the wall. As a group, go through each method and put them into categories of similar ideas. Ask participants to identify two ideas shared by other lodges that they believe could be beneficial for their own lodge.





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Questions?

1 minutes

Remember: you are the key to initiating and inspiring change! What your lodge does will help make the difference in increasing the number of elected candidates that the OA inducts each year.

