

The Boys' Brigade

Business Plan 2003 to 2008

Executive Summary

The Boys' Brigade has many achievements to celebrate from the last three years. In our last Business Plan we took a decision to focus our energies and resources into raising the standards of our work with children and young people. The drive was towards improving quality; the quality of our training, our programme, our efficiency, our communications and most importantly of all, the quality of experience of young people who participate in the BB.

Some of our success stories were:

- ❑ The launch of Youth Leader Training, a fully resourced training course based on the National Occupational Standards for youth work.
- ❑ The appointment of a Director of Programme to review our current programme and to bring in fresh ideas and resources for leaders.
- ❑ The introduction of a new database at HQ to improve our efficiency and communications with our members.
- ❑ The setting up of a network of skilled advisers to help improve the access to the BB for young people and children with disabilities.
- ❑ The launch of the Company Development Scheme, to enable companies to plan ahead and set targets for development.
- ❑ The Raw Deal project, that raised awareness of leaders and young people of child labour, and the launch of the On the Edge project, which addresses youth marginalisation globally.

Over the lifetime of the last Business Plan, we listened to what our members were saying, and the messages were loud and clear. Leaders are asking for more support, more and better resources to work with and an improved service from Headquarters. There is also concern at falling numbers in some locations and the threat of closure of some companies because of an acute shortage of leaders.

Therefore, the 2003 to 2008 Business Plan is grounded in the following commitments:

- ❑ A sharper focus on the needs of companies, through improved communications, an attention to quality and provision of resources
- ❑ A renewed approach to retaining our teenage members by a range of staffing and training strategies
- ❑ Promoting our role to the Voluntary Youth sector and local communities.
- ❑ To improve our image and credibility with young people, parents/carers, funders and the churches by developing resources for local PR and publicity

These themes, and the strategies for achieving them are outlined in this document. Our mission values of **faith development, participation, empowerment, quality and social justice** will guide and inform everything we do as we maintain our role as an important contributor to the lives of children and young people.

MISSION STATEMENT

(Adopted by Brigade Council 4th September 1999)

The Boys' Brigade will care for and challenge young people for life through a programme of informal education underpinned by the Christian faith.

This will be achieved by;

- **delivering Christian teaching in partnership with the church in which the company is based and encouraging the development of a personal Christian faith;**
- **providing opportunities for leadership, decision making and skills training;**
- **empowering boys and young people by involving them in decision making at all levels of the organisation and giving responsibility appropriate to their age and aptitude;**
- **raising awareness of boys and young people to the needs of others (especially other young people) locally, nationally and globally and encouraging them to engage in activities and projects in which they can make a difference;**
- **being sensitive to the needs and aspirations of boys and young people of varying backgrounds, differing abilities and stages of development and providing appropriate support, advice and guidance;**
- **ensuring the safety of boys and young people through the implementation of suitable procedures for the selection, training and supervision of leaders;**
- **equipping leaders through the provision of high quality training and resources;**
- **providing a network of professional staff to support voluntary leaders; and**
- **creating opportunities to develop partnerships with other appropriate organisations and agencies.**

Summary Review

As The Boys' Brigade goes forward into this planning cycle it is right that we face the future with an honest insight into our strengths and weaknesses as an organisation. Through a clear appraisal of current challenges and successes we can make informed plans to secure our future.

The main strengths in the BB at this point in time are:

- ❑ The diversity of the way The Boys' Brigade is interpreted and delivered at local level. We have found that although companies may vary in their style and programme content, we have evolved an approach that is flexible enough to meet the needs of local communities, whether rural or urban, affluent or disadvantaged and in a range of denominational contexts.
- ❑ The commitment and loyalty of our leaders, and the fact that our volunteers stay with our organisation up to three times as long as the national average in the voluntary youth sector. Our leadership continues to prove itself to be enthusiastic and innovative in the way it works with children and young people.
- ❑ Our work with the under 11's, where membership levels are more stable than in other age groups. We have developed skills for leaders in Children's Work, while providing the flexibility within our training for leaders to cross over into Youth Work.
- ❑ Related to the above, another particular strength of the BB is the *quality* of the relationships formed in BB companies. Constantly, there are examples of BB officers becoming mentors to young people, and young people telling us about how the BB has had an impact on their lives.

We need to be clear too, about our weaknesses in order to plan ways to minimise them. The main areas for improvement in the BB are:

- ❑ A number of companies are on the brink of closure owing to an acute shortage of leaders.
- ❑ The public perception, and the perception of some churches of what we do are misleading. Our image and PR need enhancing to reflect the excellent work we do in many areas. The BB would benefit from better PR and communications (both internally and externally) but has yet to find the resources and expertise to do this effectively.
- ❑ As we have traditionally formed companies where the churches are located, we tend to experience a falling off in numbers where the church itself is in decline. We have not yet developed a means to start groups wherever there is a demonstrable need, and then find a church to link up with, although our constitution allows for this.

It is often pointed out that the BB has a very strong structure of Districts and Battalions, which can be both a strength and a weakness depending on your experience of these! Clearly one of the challenges over the lifetime of this Business Plan is to harness all the potential for communication that our infrastructure holds, while not allowing these structures to become rigid and resistant to change.

Strategic Aims

Over the next five years, the BB will channel its energies and resources into achieving the following aims:

- ❑ **To achieve an absolute focus on the needs of local companies and the needs of members. The BB will work towards the satisfaction of our membership through a careful diagnosis of the specific needs of companies and an attention to quality in all areas.**
- ❑ **To retain and grow our teenage membership by ensuring the highest standards of youth work practice and delivering interesting, varied and challenging company programmes while retaining the core BB mission of Christian faith development. The BB will also continue to build on the programme and leader training that supports the work with the under 11's.**
- ❑ **To achieve a parallel growth in numbers of young people and in the quality of youth work delivered. The initial emphasis for recruitment will be in the 8 to 11 age range and the emphasis for retention strategies will be in the 11 to 18 age range.**
- ❑ **To have a direct impact on the work of the local company to enable them to operate best practice within the local context with regard to equal opportunities and accessibility**
- ❑ **To promote the participation and empowerment of young people by developing the decision making infrastructure of the BB**
- ❑ **To improve our credibility with young people, parents, the churches, the youth sector and funders by developing resources for local and national PR. We will also promote our role as bridge-builders between churches and the local community.**
- ❑ **To achieve a managed approach to mixed gender work (outside of Amicus groups) where there is a need while still retaining the ability to deliver single-sex youth work to boys and young men.**
- ❑ **To achieve financial stability within the five year period of the plan.**

These aims determine the priorities for our work over the next five years. They will be broken down into achievable objectives and targets, some of which will be short term and relatively low cost. Other objectives will take longer to achieve and will require periods of research, consultation and some resource. The following section gives details on how we will achieve the aims, what resources we will need and how we will know when we have achieved them.

Strategic Aim	Targets
<p>Aim 1. To achieve an absolute focus on the needs of local companies and the needs of members. The BB will work towards satisfaction of our membership through a careful diagnosis of the specific needs of companies and an attention to quality in all areas.</p>	<p>1.1 To conduct an analysis of the needs of companies, including what support they need from battalions, districts and regional and national headquarters in order to give value for money. Timescale: Action Plan to deliver these needs reported to Council 2004</p> <p>1.2 To establish a customer service culture at regional and national headquarters using service standards and training. Timescale: 2004/5 session</p> <p>1.3 To review the roles and remits of battalions in the light of the findings under 1.1. Timescale: 2005/6 session.</p>
<p>Aim 2. To retain and grow our teenage membership by ensuring the highest standards of youth work practice and delivering interesting, varied and challenging company programmes while retaining the core BB mission of Christian faith development. The BB will also continue to build on the programme and leader training that supports the work with the under 11's.</p>	<p>2.1 To review the entire BB programme in consultation with leaders and young people and to develop new and relevant materials. Timescale: 2004/5 session</p> <p>2.2 To introduce youth work standards using self-assessment tools and to fill any skills gaps with high quality training. Timescale: Ongoing, with a self-assessment tool launched May 2004</p> <p>2.3 To recruit and train a network of BB Development Officers (one per battalion) who will support companies and battalions in the delivery of best youth work practice. Timescale: Ongoing with first recruits trained and operational by 2004/5 session</p>
<p>Aim 3. To achieve a parallel growth in numbers of young people and in the quality of youth work delivered. The initial emphasis for recruitment will be in the 8 to 11 age range and the emphasis for retention strategies will be in the 11 to 18 age range.</p>	<p>3.1 To launch the recruitment guidelines developed by the Volunteer Development Working Group in 2000. To supplement these with downloadable PR and recruitment material that can be customised for local use. Timescale: 2003/4 session</p> <p>3.2 To implement recruitment, induction and retention strategies in the new Captain's training module. Timescale: May 2003</p> <p>3.3 To use the Brigade Development Officers (see 2.3 above) to rejuvenate local work with a focus on fun and development for leaders and young people. Timescale: 2004/5 session</p>
<p>Aim 4. To have a direct impact on the work of the local company to enable them to operate best practice within the local context with regards to equal opportunities and accessibility</p>	<p>4.1 To continue with the work already started on Equal Opportunities (Policy and strategies already in place, and strategy on disability currently in motion.) To continue in 2003/2004 with strategy on anti-racism. To strengthen links with appropriate partnership agencies (Christian Aid and The Centre for Black and White Christian Partnership).</p>
<p>Aim 5. To promote the participation and empowerment of young people by developing the decision making infrastructure of the BB</p>	<p>5.1 To review the structure and processes of governance and decision making during the period of the Business Plan. To keep the concept of the participation of children and young people at the heart of the review. Timescale: to show a year on year improvement in the numbers of young people on committees at all levels throughout the BB.</p> <p>5.2 To introduce standards (competencies) for Executive, Regional committees, District and Battalion committees and professional staff in the BB. Timescale 2004/5 session</p> <p>5.3 To review our Brigade Leadership training (including KGV1) to develop young people in a way that enables them to have a say in the running of their organisation at all levels. Timescale 2003/4 session</p> <p>5.4 To introduce a system to stay in contact with 18 year olds leaving companies and provide opportunities for them to participate in the BB. Timescale 2004/5 session</p>
<p>Aim 6. To improve our credibility with young people, parents, the churches, the youth sector and funders by developing resources for local and national PR. We will also promote our role as bridge-builders between churches and the local community.</p>	<p>6.1 To build our relationship with the churches to enable us to market ourselves as a contemporary and high quality youth work organisation that is flexible enough to adapt to a range of local circumstances and needs. Timescale: Ongoing for the period of the Business Plan</p> <p>6.2 To develop local and national PR strategies with resources that can be customised and downloaded from the web. Timescale: 2004/5 session</p> <p>6.3 To identify where we demonstrate innovative BB work and communicate this firstly to our own membership and secondly to young people, parents, churches and the voluntary youth sector. Timescale: Ongoing for the period of the Business Plan.</p>
<p>Aim 7. To achieve a managed approach to mixed gender work (outside of Amicus groups) where there is a need while still retaining the ability to deliver single-sex youth work to boys and young men.</p>	<p>7.1 To conduct a full analysis of the extent of existing mixed gender work. Timescale: 2003/4 session</p> <p>7.2 To identify ways and means to ease the situation for the companies whose churches would not choose the BB if mixed gender work were not an option. Timescale: 2003/4 session</p>
<p>Aim 8. To achieve financial stability within the five year period of the plan.</p>	<p>To produce a financial strategy that identifies income generation and cost savings in order to fully resource the Business Plan aims and targets above.</p>

Immediate Action Plan

The Aims and targets outlined above will be the criteria for deciding how the BB uses its staff and volunteer resources.

Professional Staff

The Business Plan targets will be delegated to individuals on the staff of the BB nationally. This will be done by commencing the appraisal cycle with the Directorate and then outwards through the line management structure. Line managers will be responsible for agreeing work plans with staff that reflect the targets in the Business Plan. Staff work plans will specify what tasks are to be done, by when and to what standard.

There will also be an opportunity throughout the appraisal period to identify what skills we will need, both collectively and individually, in order to meet our targets. The BB will then provide appropriate training and development opportunities for staff. These opportunities can be low-cost and in-house in the majority of cases.

Volunteers

The BB will continue to recruit and develop its volunteers in the recognition that the success of our organisation and the achievement of our mission is dependant on the skills and abilities of our volunteers to work effectively and appropriately with children and young people.

The immediate need to recruit and train more trainers and to provide high quality training materials will continue to be a priority.

**BB Headquarters
Felden Lodge
28th January 2003**