

GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE

AN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME
FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



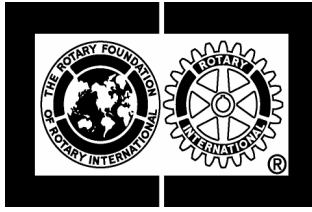
Preparing your GSE Applicant:

Team Leader & Team Member

Group Study Exchange is one of the most rewarding of the Rotary programmes. It gives young professionals the opportunity to study their vocation in another country, experience other cultures and build a strong, ongoing network of friends and business contacts. It also allows Rotarians to volunteer as a Team Leader – a wonderful experience in itself.

So why wouldn't you, as the sponsoring Club, do everything you can to ensure the success of your applicant, whether it be Team Leader or Team Member?

Sad to say, some Clubs seem to do little towards helping and preparing their applicants. This handbook has been prepared to assist them in this process.



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What is Group Study Exchange?

From its origin in 1965, this unique programme has been a success. It has provided meaningful vocational, educational, and cultural experiences for professional men and women around the world.

Rotary districts in different countries are paired to send and receive professional study groups for four non-Rotarian Team Members and one Rotarian Team Leader to travel for four weeks, staying in the homes of Rotarians when possible.

Source: Team Handbook, 2003/2004



Goals and Objectives

The Group Study Exchange (GSE) programme is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for young business and professional men and women in their initial years of professional life. The programme is designed to develop professional and leadership skills among young adults, so that they can address the needs of their communities and an increasingly global workplace.

Source: Team Handbook, 2003/2004

The Selection Process

Clubs should be pro-active in selecting their applicants – they should also be pro-active in seeing that only the most suitable applicants reach the district selection committee.

It does little for the confidence of an applicant; whether as Team Leader or Team Member, if the district selection committee has to interview an applicant who is clearly ill-prepared. And it doesn't do much for the reputation of the sponsoring Club either!



Go to RI's website – www.rotary.org – and download the current version of the Team Handbook and application forms. You may be surprised at just how much useful information they contain.

Team Member applicants *must* be Australian citizens, and must be employed full time for a minimum period of 30 hours per week. More than one permanent part-time job is acceptable provided the number of weekly hours worked exceeds 30, and the jobs are in related fields, like nursing or education for example.

The Team Leader

The Team Leader has been selected from a pool of candidates within the district and is presented with a challenge: building a team of individuals who will represent Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation with distinction and will gain personally and professionally from the GSE experience.

Source: Team Handbook, 2003/2004

Preparation

Most applicants fail because of poor preparation. What do I mean by this?

The selection process at District level looks at many things:

- personal presentation and neatness of dress,
- an awareness of Rotary and the demographics of this Rotary District,
- general knowledge,

- clarity of articulation,
- good eye contact, and
- the Essay of Intent (in the case of a Team Member)

But the factor which counts for over 50% of the selection process is the interview. It may seem intimidating to an applicant to sit down in front of a panel of about eight Rotarians. It's not meant to be and if applicants have been told to expect this it should make things easier for them.

The interview is nothing more or less than a series of questions, and you don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to work out what the questions will most likely cover.

The Team Member

Team Members have been chosen from a competitive pool of candidates in the district and are charged with representing Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation during the GSE experience. In selecting the GSE team, the sponsor district has to recognise each Team Member's ability to gain from an international experience, to be an effective international ambassador for Rotary and a worthy representative of the District Governor. A successful tour begins with meaningful preparation and continues through the completion of a variety of tasks.

Club Support

Support by the sponsoring Club doesn't just start and stop at coaching. It is very important for the Club to accompany their applicant to the interview. This has

a practical benefit in that it allows for last minute reviews of all that needs to be covered, but it also demonstrates to the selection panel that here is a Club that really wants its applicant to do well and is prepared to go out of its way to provide support.

The Interview Process

The applicants are likely to be asked things like:

- *Why should we pick you, and why do you think you will make a good Team Member (self-assessment).*

After all, if your applicant doesn't believe in him or herself, why should we?

- *Tell us what you know about Rotary and The Rotary Foundation.*

This is a Rotary programme and it's Rotary that's paying the bill. Your applicant owes it to Rotary to know something about Rotary and The Rotary Foundation. You would be embarrassed at how little many applicants know about Rotary!

- *Describe District 9790.*

What a no-brainer! Probably one of the first questions a leader or member will get when they arrive overseas. You would be surprised at how little many

applicants know about their own district! All you have to do is visit our Website on www.rotary9790.org.au It's all there for you.

- *What do you know about where you're going?*

Apart from the very basic fact that all successful Armies research the territory they want to traverse *before* they reach it, it's common sense and a courtesy to know something about where you're going.

- *I can't speak the language!*

Too bad, but it really doesn't matter too much; you're not expected to be fluent. But you are expected to show some courtesy to your hosts. Rotary will reimburse you for the costs you incur in learning the basics of a new language. All you really need to learn is enough to be polite, and probably enough to stop from staving!

- *What's happening in Australia at present?*

Probably not much if you read the international press, but the people you are visiting will be interested and have probably spent time reading up on Australia (it's called research!).

Impress them by knowing what's going on (and impress the selection panel as well!).

- *What's Australia's system of Government?*

Many people – particularly Rotarians who happen to be business people – are interested in how we govern ourselves and the similarity of our system to their own system.



None of the above is rocket science. All you have to do is put yourself in the position of a host club or Rotarian, work out what *you* would like to learn from a visiting team and coach your applicant accordingly.

- *We've never done this before. Where can we go for help?*

Talk to your District GSE Chairman and ask him or her for help. They are only too happy to help you be successful. Look up the Rotary web page, it's www.rotary.org, or our web site: www.rotary9790.org.au



Go and talk to a past GSE Team Member or leader. District can help with names, or perhaps you have a Rotary

colleague who can help. Past GSE members just love being able to help. Try them!

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are just a few of the frequently asked questions (FAQs):

Q: How do we find a candidate?

A: *Your Rotary colleagues are a good place to start. Then there are business associates, colleagues and contacts. Friends may be able to help and an advertisement in the local paper may well bring good results.*

Q: What is the Club's responsibility?

A: *The Club is responsible for preparing the candidate as well as possible. This goes for a Team Leader as well as a Team Member.*

It is hoped that Clubs will assist a successful Team Member candidate by paying for or contributing to the cost of their uniform or blazer.

It is appropriate for the Club to host a Team Member to as many Club meetings as possible before departure, and certainly on their return.

A member of the Club should ALWAYS escort a Team Member candidate to the interview with District.

Q: Does the Club have a financial responsibility?

A: *Apart from what is explained above, Clubs are expected to supply their Team Member or leader with a supply of Club banners for distribution to Clubs in the host district. There is usually no other financial commitment expected from a Club.*

In Conclusion

So, let's go back to the start. Why do many applicants fail? Because their sponsor Club does not prepare them well enough – if at all! Please don't embarrass yourselves, your applicant and the selection panel by leaving your applicant out to dry.

Your input, support and encouragement will go a long way to ensuring your applicant's success. Of course the selection panel can still only choose one Team Leader and four Team Members, but with good preparation by the sponsoring Club, at least every applicant has a chance.

Help your applicant be part of a happy team by providing; support, encouragement, coaching and training. But most of all, support the GSE experience. Your successful GSE applicant will never forget the experience and will always thank you for it. And who knows...you may also finish up with a new Club member!

Share the GSE experience!



Brochure prepared by P.P. Don Hamilton

District 9790

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