

## **MARCH: CULTIVATION EVENTS**

### **MUSIC FULL THEN UNDER**

GARFIELD: Hello listeners and welcome to the March ExploringCast. I'm Garfield Murden, Senior Boy Scouting Specialist, along with Senior Exploring Program Specialist, Kristen Falatko.

KRISTEN: All right. Let's talk cultivation event. A cultivation event is designed to identify and sell businesses, schools, industries, professions, institutions, and community groups on the great Exploring program.

GARFIELD: Don't worry if you don't know exactly what that means because we're going to explain everything you need to know about planning and conducting a cultivation event.

### **Music Fades**

GARFIELD: And joining us for this discussion is special position professional with the Pathway to Adventure Council in Chicago, Illinois, Cedric Bodley. Welcome to ExploringCast, Cedric.

CEDRIC: And thank you, Garfield. Appreciate it.

GARFIELD: So Cedric, why don't you share with our listeners a little bit about yourself?

CEDRIC: I started my professional career at the great New York Councils as a Camping Executive. I did a couple years as a District Executive. Then

Assistant Director of Camping. After that moved up to the Baden-Powell Council in Binghamton, New York, as their Program Director. Went back to New York City to be a Development Officer then started here about two years ago at the Pathway to Adventure Council helping to grow the Exploring and STEM Scouts program here.

GARFIELD: Sounds like a very well-rounded career. Now, Cedric, Kristen said in the beginning: it's selling the Exploring program to businesses, schools and community groups. What does that mean and what's the objective?

CEDRIC: It's to get the groups in the room, whether it be the businesses, the professionals, the institutions, the community groups, get them in the room and sell the idea of Exploring and how it can benefit them in the long run. It's all about making them understand what Exploring is all about; being able to provide positive career experience and character-building development for all teenagers - young men and women - in their chosen field of interest.

KRISTEN: So, Cedric, what would you say is the purpose of the cultivation event?

CEDRIC: In the case of businesses, they get a chance to take an early look at maybe some of the young people who might be future employees for them. It especially works well in skilled trades, in health and law enforcement. For the schools, it gives them an idea for their young people to kind of point them in the direction about where their career is going and then it helps them do better in school because they get an opportunity to see where these classes that they've been taking kind of fit into their world

now. And, for our communities, it's a great chance to build a sense of goodwill especially when they get a chance to help you move towards a productive adult life.

KRISTEN: Who gets invited to this type of event?

CEDRIC: It depends what your focus is on. In most cases, you put together a prospect list and you definitely want to be able to invite the key person who is the decision-maker of that organization or business because you definitely want them - before they walk out the door - to be able to say that they've made a decision whether they're going to do this or not. So, you may want the head of a union local if you're going to do skilled trades to be involved. If it's a law firm you want whoever the chief partner is to be involved. If it's a police district or a police department in a small town, you definitely want the chief or whoever his community liaison would be, to be able to make that decision before they walk out the door.

KRISTEN: So, logistics just popped into my head after you explained the invitees. So with that, who actually plans a cultivation event?

CEDRIC: Oh, that's interesting. You definitely want to recruit a Cultivation Event Chairman because you want someone who's very respected in the community or in the business world; he'll know the right people to go to. This person can also help you find a venue. You want the group or the Cultivation Chairman to be able to pay for the venue or get the venue for free in some cases. And if there's a meal included you want to be able to have them serve as the host for that meeting. I truly believe you'll offer

food, you get more people to come, whether it's a breakfast or lunch or even a dinner. It gets you a chance to sell your program to whoever is walking in the door and get them a better understanding about it.

KRISTEN: Recruiting a Cultivation Event Chair; I think that's genius. Would they work closely with you being the professional, would it just be you two or would that kind of grow into more like a Cultivation Event Committee?

CEDRIC: Definitely a Cultivation Event Committee because there's so many different parts of the event that has to happen. It is working closely with the Exploring professional. Once you have the venue set you want to be able to get a bunch of people who can get that cultivation list together of who is going to be invited. And that basically starts earlier than that as an Exploring Executive trying to get as many high schools involved in our Career Interest Survey Program. Once we get all the surveys back, we can figure out what the need is in the community. So that's how we build our list. That's how we know who we're going to invite and who is going to be involved at that end.

Once that happens, you definitely want someone to write the letter. Hopefully it will be your Cultivation Chairman. You're going to have to have a service team because you're going to want people to be able to put packets together about the Exploring program. You want to be able to have that commitment form at the end of the event. You want to be able to make sure that people are talking up the program. So, it's a lot for just one person to do. Definitely there needs to be a committee involved.

GARFIELD: When and where is a cultivation event held?

CEDRIC: It depends on your venue and how large the council is. If you're lucky enough to be in a large metro council like in New York City or Philadelphia or Chicago, you can have those in a company boardroom, where your Cultivation Chairman can even give some greater insight about the program and how well it runs. If that doesn't happen, even a restaurant, as long as you know you have the ability to set up audiovisual and microphones and tables. When the time to have it? The perfect time to do a cultivation event if you're spending the first quarter of your year, that January, February, March doing those Career Interest Surveys, you want to have your cultivation event in the second part of the year. So that way, that gives you an opportunity to get everything planned and you know who to invite and all that. Then once you had the cultivation event you know who's committed and who's going to be doing what, you can get a chance to recruit the leaders, train them, get 'em happening, so when the students get back into high school in the fall, that's when you can start having the young people to be part of the program.

KRISTEN: So we talked a lot about the process of the cultivation event, where it's held, who's invited, who plans it; Can you go into a little bit more detail on what's involved in planning an actual cultivation event, maybe a few of the first steps in the process?

CEDRIC: Sure. Once you have your Career Interest Surveys done and you can figure out what the bulk of students want to do, then you build that list. So from that list, the Cultivation Chair writes a letter, so that's the date and the time that the event is going to happen, and then he makes sure that those letters are sent to the top people in all those organizations. At some point your Cultivation Team and your Event Chair will follow up on the

invitations to make sure that they get a commitment from that top person, that they're gonna show up.

And this is where some of the team members come in, because then they were gonna be scripts for the speakers, making sure that name tags are there, making sure that there's a correct count of how many people are going to show up, especially if there's going to be food involved. That audiovisual equipment are in place, that they know where to park, that there's a coat check and, that there's enough restrooms to handle the amount of people that are going to show up, that the number of seats, and necessary to have a head table, and make sure that there's going to be enough handouts for everybody.

Then finally the Cultivation Chair at some point should probably reach out to everybody just to make sure that they're gonna show up, make a last-minute phone call to say "Hey, I just want to make sure you're going to be at our lunch tomorrow afternoon, so we can tell you about our Exploring program."

GARFIELD: Now, Cedric, what would you say is the takeaway of the event? What happens next?

CEDRIC: You make sure that before everybody walks out the door you get that commitment form. You want them to commit to being part of the program, to say that they're gonna at least do something. You want to make sure that whoever you invite, especially when you're inviting the head person, you haven't wasted their time and that they know that they're making an investment in somebody's future and could help their own company along the way as well.

After that, you definitely want to have your Cultivation Chair send out thank-you notes and say to everybody, “Thank you for coming, someone will be in contact with you soon.” This is a good chance for him to follow up with them to make sure that they get an appointment in. Then after that, comes the two-week follow-up, where the appointments happen. And if you have some of those procrastinators that are out there, you want to make sure that your Cultivation Chairman, he or she contacts them directly to just make sure that they can get that. And if they can’t, have them say no to the Cultivation Chair rather than try to string along so you know that you’re able to move on to the next step.

KRISTEN: Right. You’ve really provided a lot of great insight, Cedric, and with your years of experience, this sounds like it just comes natural, so thank you for all of these great tips and tricks. But, I do have to ask for our listeners’ sake, are there any resources, like hard resources, for Exploring, available to help in the planning and conducting of this Exploring cultivation event?

CEDRIC: There are great resources on the Learning for Life site. It has all the information that I talked about today. There are each of the 12 careers that we focus on, and there have been some great folders that have all the information and all kind of testimonials and great things that they can share. And it has a pocket inside where not only you can put as much information as you want in there but you can also put the business card to make sure that they can get in contact with you. And I also recommend that whoever you invite, collect as many business cards as you can.

KRISTEN: I will add to that, Cedric, I don’t know if you are aware of this because this is really hot off the press, but we actually just updated and revised the

Cultivation Event Guidebook. So that's for our Exploring folks that they can find on the website, on top of everything that you just said. So it sounds like we've got some good resources out there if you haven't even done a cultivation event yet.

GARFIELD: So, Ced, is there anything else about the cultivation event that we haven't talked about that you think we need to share with our listeners?

CEDRIC: Garfield and Kristen, it's all about getting the right people in the room; people who can see the future of what Exploring is all about. The tagline I use and have my guys using all the time is that it's all about giving youth hands-on experience. They need that hands-on experience, they crave that hands-on experience.

GARFIELD: So planning is important for the event to be successful but a real key takeaway here is determining success in a cultivation event is what happens after the event. Cedric, thanks for joining us on ExploringCast for this discussion. It's been very informative and very helpful.

CEDRIC: Appreciate it and thank you for having me.

KRISTEN: Thank you, Cedric. Okay, listeners, have you considered getting your Explorers involved in the Exploring Officers' Association? With chapters in the local, area, regional and national levels, the EOA is a great way for your Explorers to develop leadership skills and character building.

GARFIELD: To get started, check out the Exploring Adult and Youth Guidebook and the EOA Standard Operating Procedures at Exploring.org. EOA members and Exploring professionals will also be invited to participate in an Exploring Leadership Academy at the Summit in the summer 2018.

KRISTEN: The Leadership Academy will be a unique, three- to five-day training experience for Explorers by Explorers, as well as specialized training for Exploring Executives. You won't want to miss this. Stayed tuned for more details.

GARFIELD: Have your Explorers signed up for the 2017 Jamboree yet? No? Then check out the January ExploringCast to find out how the BSA National Jamboree will be a great addition to your Exploring program.

KRISTEN: Now, let's talk MOU or, as we like to call it, Memorandum of Understanding. The Exploring program has a brand new MOU with the National U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Be sure to take advantage of this great opportunity by visiting with your local chamber and discuss ways to start Exploring programs in your community.

GARFIELD: If you have questions on how to access the MOU, or to discuss strategies on approaching your local Chamber, you can contact your regional Exploring Director for more information.

**Begin Music Under**

GARFIELD: So that's it for the March ExploringCast. Thanks to Cedric Bodley for joining us for and thank you for listening.

KRISTEN: Send us your ideas for future ExploringCast episodes or just drop us line to let us know how we're doing. You can always send us an email to [Exploringcast@scouting.org](mailto:Exploringcast@scouting.org), or a tweet to @Exploringcast. With that y'all, I'm Kristen Falatko.

GARFIELD: And I'm Garfield Murden. Don't forget to visit our website, Exploring.org, for all things Exploring. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. Join us next month for an intriguing episode entitled One Big Happy Family.

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