



Want Ads: Transitioning Leadership Activity

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

BWBR Description: *Bonner Curriculum workshop teaches participants how to envision leadership transitions by helping to create a strategy for identifying a replacement for their sites.*

Overview: This workshop is designed to be part of a leadership transition process. It works either as a preliminary meeting between outgoing and incoming leaders or as an initial step in a retreat geared to acquaint old and new leaders and to ensure effective transition of knowledge. Outgoing and incoming leaders of a campus or community organization write “want ads” to describe the qualities a leader should possess to effectively run the organization. The want ads give the outgoing leaders a good idea of what information they need to pass on to the new leaders to ensure they are prepared to take on new roles and that the leadership transition is smooth.

This workshop works well in conjunction with the *Planning a Leadership Transition* workshop, which provides more thorough transition guidance.

Category: Project planning and management; transitional leadership; reflection skills

Level: Outgoing leaders in campus organizations (incoming can also be involved if you want to connect this with a recruitment fair)



**suitable for
all levels;
geared for
upperclass**

Learning Outcomes:

- Provide a structure for the handoff of information and discussion between outgoing and incoming leaders.
- Provide outgoing leaders with the opportunity to document important information and to identify key leadership traits needed to be successful in the role
- Make a leadership transition more fun and less stressful for those involved by providing a creative activity for leaders to express their needs, wants, fears, etc.

Materials:

- Markers
- Flip charts or construction paper (enough for 2 pieces per person of construction paper or one chart sheet per person)

How to Prepare:

This training will guide you through an activity using Want Ads (like those placed in newspapers) where leaders create ads for leadership and management characteristics and information necessary for a successful leadership transition.

It may be important to note that tension may arise between incoming and outgoing leaders, stemming in part from the anxiety both groups are experiencing about the upcoming transition. There is no right or wrong way for these leaders to feel about the process of transition, but this exercise is designed to facilitate necessary communication between the two groups and ensure that the organization and the community's well-being is foremost in the leaders' minds. This may relieve some of that anxiety by giving voice to many of those unstated wants of these leaders.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

This training consists of two main steps. The first is an individual process for each student to generate his or her appropriate want ad. The second is the discussion of those ads with their respective partner and the group as a whole.

The outline has the following parts:

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| 1) Ice-breaker (optional) | 10 minutes |
| 2) Want Ads production | 15 minutes |

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| 3) Discussion with Partners | 20 minutes |
| 4) Discussion with Group | 15 minutes |

Part 1) Icebreaker

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Any icebreaker that will set a fun, relaxed tone is useful for participants at the beginning. If this training is one of many incorporated into a retreat, and the icebreaker is unnecessary, then omit this step.

You may want to invent an amusing icebreaker incorporating real want ads from the newspaper, in order to set context for the activity.

Part 2) Want Ads and Lists Production

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Have all participants get two pieces of construction paper, or one flip chart and divide it into two halves and distribute markers.

- Have the new leaders write one want-ad and one list. The first ad should describe the qualities they believe a new leader should possess and demonstrate to be effective in the work and/or organization. The second list (or ad) should describe what information they want from the outgoing leaders in order to assume the position.
- Have the outgoing leaders write one want-ad and one list. The first ad should describe the qualities they feel the new leader should possess to effectively manage/lead the initiative or organization. The second list (or ad) should describe what the outgoing leaders want the new leaders to ask so they know the new leaders are prepared for the job.

Both groups should write the first ad about leadership qualifications in the style of a newspaper classified. They should include the name of the organization, and the leadership position available (this would be their current position if outgoing, or the position incoming leaders will be assuming). The ad should be very specific in qualifications for the position, not indicating generalities like: "Wanted: smart, funny person to fill position as organizational leader."

Here are two examples of want ads: (read these aloud or write up on chart), one more as a mad lib.

<p>Wanted: Project Coordinator</p> <p>The Campus Habitat for Humanity chapter is looking for a new Student Director of Projects.</p> <p>Applicants should be upperclassmen with minimum of one-year experience with Habitat, as well as a working knowledge of public service infrastructure. Applicants should have knowledge of construction basics, be proficient in PC computing, have a gpa of 3.25 or better.</p> <p>Experience in other leadership position is a plus—particularly large group leadership.</p> <p>Driver's license with good driving record.</p> <p>Expectations of Student Director of Projects: will be responsible for the planning of alternative spring break habitat trips. Will lead team of students in locating sites, contacting necessary suppliers and community groups, getting professional volunteers for construction efforts, and all logistics surrounding the travel, stay, security, etc. of the volunteers.</p>	<p>Desperately Seeking:</p> <p>Applicants for _____ position.</p> <p>_____ (position) is responsible for</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>Applicants should possess the following skills and aptitudes:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p> <p>Sell this position! Why would someone want it?</p> <p>What makes the person a great fit?</p>
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The second list should be equally specific in its description, however, its focus is on information and not personal qualifications essentially for the leader.

Here are some samples of the type of information that should be indicated:

- Outgoing leaders might want new leaders to ask for: "A new leader should ask for vendor information for the tutoring program, because we get our after-school supplies at a discount rate from Allison's School Stop."
- A new leader might indicate in the second ad they want the old leader to explain to them the process of reserving rooms because they have never been through that procedure before.

Lastly, ask participants to indicate on each ad what they feel are the three most important ideas. This is important to the discussion part of this training.

Give the participants twenty minutes or so to complete these ads. Tell them to be as creative as they wish. If they want to draw a picture for their ad or write it up as a classified for a newspaper, they should. They will be sharing these ads with other students so creativity is encouraged.

Part 3) Discussion Part One

Suggested time: 20-25 minutes

In the first part of the discussion and sharing of these want ads, students or participants should be paired or in small groups. Ideally, if this training is used for outgoing leaders and their respective replacements, the incoming (new) leader should be paired with their outgoing (old) leader. If these exact matches aren't available however, it is most important that a new leader is paired with an old leader.

Have the pairs find a spot in the room where they can share their respective want ads, highlighting what those three most important ideas are from each. Give each student five minutes to present their "leadership qualities" and "information wanted" ads. Then have the partners discuss the following questions (it might be good to have these written up on a chart or chalkboard)

- Was it easy to summarize needs, wants and hopes?*
- Where do our want ads overlap and where are our differences?*
- Why do the ads differ?*
- Are the priorities the same, if not why?*
- What steps can we make to ensure we follow-up on our want ads?*

Partners should also make notes on their ads about these questions for future use and knowledge. Give the partners 10-15 minutes of discussion time for these questions.

Part 4) Discussion with Group

Gather the participants into a circle. Ask for a volunteer pair to share their ads to the group, and the insights they might have gained (through answering the above questions). Then have the group discuss as a whole the questions and their findings.

Again the questions are:

- *Was it easy to summarize needs, wants and hopes?*
- *Where do our want ads overlap and where are our differences?*

- *Why do the ads differ?*
- *Are the priorities the same, if not why?*
- *What next steps can we make to ensure we follow-up on our want ads?*

In particular, have the groups focus on their follow-up steps. Specifically, how are the new leaders going to insure their want ads are met, and how are the outgoing leaders going to ensure they honor their commitment to leadership and leave the new leaders with a legacy rather than an office filled with files?