

“SCRITS” NETWORKING WITH BUSINESS PROJECT—This event is sponsored by the Illinois FBLA Business Advisory Council. The SCRITS competition, initially developed by Don Jirak who is a member of the Illinois FBLA Advisory Council, will award first, second, and third place monetary awards. The late Evelyn Scritsmier, a former FBLA Adviser at Mather High School in Chicago, donated the funds for the awards. “SCRITS” was also a former Mary E. Webb Award winner. This project provides an easy opportunity for members to interact with the business community and establish future contacts.

BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

- Members will gain knowledge of various occupations and industries in their own and neighboring communities by conducting informational interviews with business professionals.
- Members will learn the procedures and courtesies associated with informational interviewing and networking which are effective tools when seeking career opportunities or marketing a product or service.
- Members will have an opportunity to inform business people in the community about the purpose and activities of FBLA. In some cases this may lead to the support of activities sponsored by the local chapter.
- Members will have the opportunity to submit a report and enter the competition for monetary awards. Monetary awards will be given to first, second and third place recipients to use as they choose.

PROCEDURES

Members, individually or working as a team of two, will identify a business person they would like to contact to set up an informational interview. The objective is to learn about the person’s occupation (What are their duties and responsibilities? What qualifications are required to do the job? What are the opportunities for growth?) or to learn about their company or industry (What does the company make or sell? What challenges does the company face? What are the opportunities for growth?).

The member will send a letter to the business person, briefly explaining the goals and objectives of FBLA and the purpose of this project. The member should explain that he or she will be calling shortly to set up a meeting. It should be made clear that the member is not looking for employment, nor selling a product or service.

The member will then follow-up the letter with a telephone call asking for a 20 minute meeting to discuss the person’s professional duties and responsibilities or to learn about the person’s company or industry. The contact should be assured that the member does not expect the meeting to exceed 20 minutes.

The member will meet with the contact, interviewing him or her by asking questions prepared in advance and designed to obtain the desired information. The member may want to take notes. At the end of 20 minutes, the meeting will be terminated unless the contact gives approval to continue.

The member may ask the person being interviewed if they can suggest another person who will be able to provide additional information giving insight into the topics discussed in this meeting. This procedure is the basis for establishing a networking system. The member can ask the person being interviewed if their name may be used in setting up a meeting with the new contact.

The contact may become interested in FBLA. The member should be prepared to talk about the purpose and activities of FBLA and may even want to provide some handout information.

Immediately following the interview, a thank you letter will be sent to the person interviewed.

Based on the information gathered during the interview, the member will complete an interview summary report addressing the specific topics applicable to the interview.

The interview reports will be submitted to a committee of the Advisory Council who will review the content with respect to the objectives of the project. (Were procedures carefully followed? Was pertinent information obtained and recorded during the interview? Does the interview report reflect a high professional standard?)

Award determinations will be based on the established guidelines, including factors such as the number of interviews conducted and the quality of the information obtained and recorded.

GUIDELINES FOR THE “SCRITS” NETWORKING WITH BUSINESS PROJECT

1. Limited to three project entries per chapter.
2. The member or team of two will submit a written report describing each of the following:
 - Who you interviewed, company position, describe his/her responsibilities.
 - Describe what you learned during the interview.
 - What benefits do you believe you derived from the interview?
 - Describe any additional contacts, interviews, or follow-up as a result of the interview.
3. The written project report submitted should be limited to three typed pages describing one or more interviews.
4. A copy of the member’s initial Letter of Introduction and Thank You Letter must be submitted with the report.