



Dan Beard Council ~ BSA

# Delivering the Promise: Bringing Training to the Unit

Doctoral Thesis – College of Commissioner Science

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## Introduction

One of the challenges in getting volunteers to prioritize training is in making it convenient. This “Push” method of delivering training to the Unit both connects District resources to the Unit and provides the necessary skills development and training in order to maintain proper Unit health.

## Roles the Commissioner Plays

As reflected in the *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service*, “A commissioner plays several roles, including being a friend, a representative, a unit “doctor” or paramedic, a teacher, and a coach.” (10), and as such the responsibility to connecting leaders to training is played out in the service we provide.

For instance, as a **friend**: showing a caring attitude in fostering individual development through training helps to build trust and aids in forming a healthy relationship with Unit leaders. As a **representative**: the Commissioner leads by example in prioritizing their own involvement not only in promoting training opportunities, but in connecting Unit leaders with those resources at both the District and Council levels. Similar to the way a **doctor** engages through their bedside manner, as one becomes more closely connected with the Unit, the symptomatic needs of each volunteer become more evident and the Commissioner further develops the ability to “diagnose” specific prescribed training appropriately. The balance between being a **teacher** and recognizing the need to **coach** can be difficult to maintain, but as the relationship grows, a successful Commissioner should be able to more skillfully ascertain the difference in what each

situation requires and “Be Prepared” to deliver the tools, training and resources that will best serve each Unit, based on their individual need.

By employing a more deliverable approach to providing Units with training, a Commissioner will not only be the conduit for improved Unit health, but also be an active representative of District resources by involving themselves in the teams represented therein. The end result is ideally a culture that supports and promotes the idea that, as *The Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops and Crews* summarizes, “A trained unit leader will get more satisfaction, give better service, and stay longer.” (13)



## Background

As Scouting began to take roots in England, in 1908, the Boy Scouts of America soon followed suit and was established in 1910. It quickly grew to become the largest youth organization in the United State of America. The BSA was granted a congressional charter that President Woodrow Wilson signed on June 15, 1916.

It reads: ‘That the purpose of this corporation shall be to promote, through organization and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scoutcraft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which are now in common use by Boy Scouts’ (Patriotic).

## Commissioner Origins

As the BSA grew, the local council was developed and was established as a method of administration. With the adaptation of the local council came the beginning of the Commissioner Service. Commissioners at the local level formed the first councils and began the tradition of direct support to the Scoutmaster.

## A History of the Purpose of Training

Soon after founding the Scout movement, Robert Baden-Powell saw the need for leader training. Early Scoutmaster training camps were held in London and Yorkshire. Baden-Powell wanted his training to be practical, and that meant in camp. He once observed, upon reviewing one of the early camps in 1913, writing:

“I think we want to arrive, first, at what are the essential points for a Scoutmaster to know, and to set out to teach these – all others must be subsidiary. Now, I take it the essentials are what we find laid down in Scouting for Boys. Therefore my idea would be to take that book as the programme of work, dividing it off into the number of days available, and then going through it as practically as circumstances will allow. The book is arranged on that idea. The second point about the training camp would be I think to give Scoutmasters practical instruction as to how a camp should be run. For this purpose I should be inclined to pitch the camp as it should be done for a Scout camp – Patrol tent on its own ground in a wide circle round the central (Scoutmaster’s) tent. The Scoutmasters should of course be in Patrols for the course, under their own Patrol Leaders and so learn Patrol discipline.

As far as possible they should run the camp -taking it in roster and be camp commandant for the day, quartermaster, and so on, so as to learn practically the work and requirements of those offices.

The whole principle of the Scout Movement should be impressed in the training, viz. Backwoodsmanship. with life-saving as an important adjunct.” (Block).

## Wood Badge

The development of leader training was delayed by World War I, which meant the first formal Wood Badge course was not offered until 1919. Located just outside of London, Gilwell Park was purchased with its primary purpose to provide a venue for the course. The Opening Ceremonies were held on July 26, 1919.

Francis Gidney, the first Camp Chief at Gilwell Park, conducted the first Wood Badge course there from September 8–19, 1919. Percy Everett, the Commissioner of Training, produced the event and lectures were given by Baden-Powell himself. There were 18 participants, and other additional lecturers provided instructions. Wood Badge training continued, at Gilwell Park, and it became the home of leadership training in the Scout movement.

It wasn't until 1948 that the BSA did fully adopt this training within the United States. At that time, it was delivered by the National council, until 1958, when increased demand made it necessary for councils to begin delivering the training locally (Block).

### **National Youth Leadership Training**

Scouts in 16 states from 24 councils formed, in 1949, a Junior Leader Training Troop. They conducted a forty day training program in leadership and Scoutcraft, at Philmont Scout Ranch. The "Junior Leaders" training course was formed in 1950 in order to provide select Explorers with intensive training in Scouting skills and techniques. The end purpose being that each would in turn train other junior leaders.

Each course has four parts. The first focuses on studying leadership methods, organization, patrol method, Explorer crews, troop meetings, and camping skills. The second targets participants teaching the same skills. The third establishes an environment where the trainees can actually experience living out the patrol method, using the Scouting skills. The fourth and

final part see participants modeling a junior leaders' conference, and projects in nature lore, special Scoutcraft skills, emergency service, and personal and group service. In 1952, camps at both Philmont Scout Ranch and at Schiff Scout Reservation, hosted a combined participant total of 706 youth who successfully completed junior leader training.

National Youth Leadership Training, commonly referred to as NYLT, is the part of the BSA's current youth leadership development training program. NYLT, along with its precursor, Introduction to Troop Leadership Skills, is progressively followed by the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) to round out that continuum. The program NYLT program is conducted by councils over a week long course for Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts and Venturers (NYLT).

## **The Purpose of Adult Training**

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law (Mission).

Adults lead the implementation of several methods to reach the aims of scouting;

Advancement, Personal Growth and Leadership Development. Adult leaders foster an environment whereby youth can actively and positively work toward rank advancement.

As such, the BSA offers the same opportunities in the form of Adult Training Leader Specific and Supplemental.



## Current Training Climate

In today's technology based learning environment, training resources are made more easily available through Scouting's on-line service center, [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org).

If you're a new leader, the first step to getting trained is by completing Youth Protection training. This interactive, video based "vignette" provides an overview of Scouting's focus for providing a safe and productive environment, free from harassment or abuse.

The next step is to choose how you, the student, would like to complete your training. Everyone has their own learning style. Some thrive on learning in a group setting. These "In-person" trainings are provided through both Council and District training opportunities, ranging from the annual University of Scouting to Merit Badge Challenge to weekly trainings held at Summer Camp.

Many Districts hold sessions throughout the year for classes covering: Cub Scout, Scouting, Venturing & Varsity Leader Specific Training, Range Master and NRA Instructor certification trainings, BALOO (Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation), IOLS (Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills), OWLS (Outdoor Leader Skills for Webelos Leaders), Wood Badge, NYLT and more.

Sign up for the next available face-to-face leader training. This type of training will always hold a value and will continue to be made available. A leader position-specific training session typically takes two to three hours, often on a weekend (5-6 days for Wood Badge or NYLT).

This approach gives its students a chance to learn from and interact with an experienced instructor and other volunteers.

“If you prefer completing this work on your own time (and in your pajamas), then the training courses available at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) from your home computer or tablet might be better suited for you.”, writes Gretchen Spalding of Scouting Magazine, in her September, 2015 article.

Web-based courses are not new to the BSA, with the exception of Wood Badge and NYLT. Leaders have been completing Youth Protection training, leader position-specific training and much more online for years. But these courses were delivered in one all-encompassing session, taking about 30 to 40 minutes to complete. These modules seemed void of some of the specifics and although they provided a glimpse of what to expect, most repeated themselves and provided little guidance for new leaders.

In conjunction with the release of the new Cub Scouting program in 2015, Scouting U revised new leader training on [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) to be even more convenient without sacrificing the knowledge you need (Fig. A).

“The experts at Scouting U found that today’s adult learner prefers to consume smaller chunks of knowledge versus a “one and done” class, says Steve Yackel, team leader of Instructional Design at Scouting U” (Spalding).

(Fig. A)



### CUB SCOUT POSITION TRAINED REQUIREMENTS

CUBMASTER & ASSISTANT CUBMASTER		
<b>BEFORE 1ST MEETING</b>		
SCD_225	THE CUBMASTER	11:36
SCD_226	LEADING PACK MEETINGS	13:15
SCD_210	HOW DENS & PACKS WORK	11:28
SCD_209	EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	7:21
		TOTAL TIME: 33 MIN
<b>FIRST 30 DAYS</b>		
SCD_200	CUB SCOUTING PURPOSES	6:08
SCD_202	CUB SCOUTING IDEALS	13:35
SCD_204	THE METHODS OF CUB SCOUTING	4:13
SCD_214	CUB SCOUT ADVANCEMENT	3:46
SCD_216	ADVANCEMENT RECOGNITION & RECORDING	9:41
SCD_219	THE PACK COMMITTEE	16:59
SCD_205	WORKING WITH PARENTS & FAMILIES	5:34
SCD_218	SELECTING LEADERS	7:57
SCD_217	CORE RESOURCES FOR LEADERS	6:30
		TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 14 MIN
<b>POSITION TRAINED</b>		
SCD_222	NINE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PLANNING	1:57
SCD_227	ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING	14:35
SCD_223	MONTHLY PLANNING	4:24
SCD_201	YEAR ROUND FUN	12:38
SCD_224	WORKING WITH BOYS - OVERVIEW	6:01
SCD_230	DEN CHIEF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	3:07
SCD_228	PACK FUNDING	11:17
SCD_211	CUB SCOUT UNIFORM	13:39
SCD_213	CUB SCOUT INSIGNIA	4:43
SCD_212	LEADER UNIFORM	3:39
SCD_206	SUPPLEMENTAL LEADER RESOURCES	9:10
SCD_220	SCOUTINGS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	7:02
SCD_215	OTHER AWARDS CUB SCOUTS CAN EARN	4:41
		TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 45 MIN

DEN LEADER		
<b>BEFORE 1ST MEETING</b>		
SCD_202	CUB SCOUTING IDEALS	13:35
SCD_214	CUB SCOUT ADVANCEMENT	3:46
SCD_208	LEADING DEN MEETINGS	13:08
SCD_203	DEN DISCIPLINE	15:15
		TOTAL TIME: 45 MIN
<b>FIRST 30 DAYS</b>		
SCD_200	CUB SCOUTING PURPOSES	6:08
SCD_204	THE METHODS OF CUB SCOUTING	4:13
SCD_216	ADVANCEMENT RECOGNITION & RECORDING	9:41
SCD_210	HOW DENS & PACKS WORK	11:28
SCD_209	EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	7:21
SCD_217	CORE RESOURCES FOR LEADERS	6:30
SCD_224	WORKING WITH BOYS - OVERVIEW	6:01
		TOTAL TIME: 56 MIN
<b>POSITION TRAINED</b>		
SCD_205	WORKING WITH PARENTS & FAMILIES	5:34
SCD_211	CUB SCOUT UNIFORM	13:39
SCD_213	CUB SCOUT INSIGNIA	4:43
SCD_212	LEADER UNIFORM	3:39
SCD_215	OTHER AWARDS CUB SCOUTS CAN EARN	4:41
SCD_227	ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING	14:35
SCD_201	YEAR ROUND FUN	12:38
SCD_221	YOUTH LEADERSHIP POSITIONS	4:57
SCD_230	DEN CHIEF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	3:07
SCD_206	SUPPLEMENTAL LEADER RESOURCES	9:10
SCD_220	SCOUTINGS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	7:02
		TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 23 MIN

COMMITTEE CHAIR & PACK COMMITTEE		
<b>BEFORE 1ST MEETING</b>		
SCD_219	THE PACK COMMITTEE	16:59
SCD_210	HOW DENS & PACKS WORK	11:28
SCD_200	CUB SCOUTING PURPOSES	6:08
SCD_204	THE METHODS OF CUB SCOUTING	4:13
SCD_202	CUB SCOUTING IDEALS	13:35
		TOTAL TIME: 52 MIN
<b>FIRST 30 DAYS</b>		
SCD_222	NINE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PLANNING	1:57
SCD_227	ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING	14:35
SCD_223	MONTHLY PLANNING	4:24
SCD_229	BUILDING THE PACKS BUDGET	5:40
SCD_228	PACK FUNDING	11:17
SCD_225	THE CUBMASTER	11:36
SCD_218	SELECTING LEADERS	7:57
SCD_209	EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	7:21
		TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 4 MIN
<b>POSITION TRAINED</b>		
SCD_214	CUB SCOUT ADVANCEMENT	1:57
SCD_216	ADVANCEMENT RECOGNITION & RECORDING	14:35
SCD_215	OTHER AWARDS CUB SCOUTS CAN EARN	4:24
SCD_201	YEAR ROUND FUN	5:40
SCD_224	WORKING WITH BOYS - OVERVIEW	11:17
SCD_205	WORKING WITH PARENTS & FAMILIES	11:36
SCD_217	CORE RESOURCES FOR LEADERS	7:57
SCD_206	SUPPLEMENTAL LEADER RESOURCES	7:21
SCD_220	SCOUTINGS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	7:02
SCD_530	JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE	12:46
		TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 25 MIN

\*In addition to the learning plans above, Youth Protection training is required for all BSA registered volunteers.

(Photo Courtesy of Scouting.org)

In early 2017, Scouting U released a new library of on-line training for Boy Scout and Varsity leaders that included training module for Merit Badge Counselors (Fig. B). Very soon after, other program specific training was included for: Commissioners, COR (Chartered Organization Representatives) Sea Scouts, Exploring and Chaplain (Fig. C).

(Fig. B)

BOY SCOUT/VARSITY POSITION TRAINED REQUIREMENTS		
<b>SCOUTMASTER &amp; ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER</b>		
<b>BEFORE 1ST MEETING</b>		
SCO_400	SCOUTING ORGANIZATION FOR BOY SCOUTING	12:20
SCO_401	ROLE OF THE UNIT KEY 3 FOR BOY SCOUTING	6:44
SCO_402	AIMS & METHODS OF BOY SCOUTING	7:41
SCO_403	IDEALS & BELIEFS OF BOY SCOUTING	8:29
SCO_404	SCOUTMASTER & PATROL LEADERS	12:10
SCO_411	TROOP MEETINGS FOR BOY SCOUTING	13:28
TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 1 MIN		
<b>FIRST 30 DAYS</b>		
SCO_410	PATROL LEADERS COUNCIL MEETING	11:29
SCO_405	PATROL METHOD FOR BOY SCOUTING	7:59
SCO_406	OUTDOOR PROGRAMS FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:02
SCO_407	ADVANCEMENT FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:46
SCO_412	TROOP COMMITTEE FOR BOY SCOUTING	13:09
SCO_413	TROOP COMMITTEE MEETINGS	5:33
TOTAL TIME: 57 MIN		
<b>POSITION TRAINED</b>		
SCO_408	UNIFORMS FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:52
SCO_409	LEADER UNIFORMS FOR BOY SCOUTING	6:17
SCO_414	ANNUAL PLANNING FOR BOY SCOUTING	14:52
SCO_415	INTRO TO MERIT BADGES FOR BOY SCOUTING	11:36
SCO_418	OUTDOOR ETHICS FOR BOY SCOUTING	8:06
TOTAL TIME: 51 MIN		
<b>MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS</b>		
<b>BEFORE 1ST MEETING</b>		
SCO_402	AIMS & METHODS OF SCOUTING	7:41
SCO_403	IDEALS & BELIEFS OF BOY SCOUTING	8:29
SCO_416	MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:45
SCO_415	INTRO TO MERIT BADGES FOR BOY SCOUTING	11:36
SCO_417	MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS SIGN UP	5:05
TOTAL TIME: 43 MIN		
<b>POSITION TRAINED</b>		
SCO_407	ADVANCEMENT FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:46
TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN		
<b>TROOP/TEAM COMMITTEE CHAIR &amp; COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>BEFORE 1ST MEETING</b>		
SCO_400	SCOUTING ORGANIZATION FOR BOY SCOUTING	12:20
SCO_401	ROLE OF THE UNIT KEY 3 FOR BOY SCOUTING	6:44
SCO_402	AIMS & METHODS OF BOY SCOUTING	7:41
SCO_403	IDEALS & BELIEFS OF BOY SCOUTING	8:29
SCO_404	SCOUTMASTER & PATROL LEADERS	12:30
TOTAL TIME: 47 MIN		
<b>FIRST 30 DAYS</b>		
SCO_405	PATROL METHOD FOR BOY SCOUTING	7:59
SCO_410	PATROL LEADERS COUNCIL MEETING	11:29
SCO_411	TROOP MEETINGS FOR BOY SCOUTING	13:28
SCO_412	TROOP COMMITTEE FOR BOY SCOUTING	13:09
SCO_413	TROOP COMMITTEE MEETINGS	5:33
TOTAL TIME: 52 MIN		
<b>POSITION TRAINED</b>		
SCO_406	OUTDOOR PROGRAMS FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:02
SCO_407	ADVANCEMENT FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:46
SCO_408	UNIFORMS FOR BOY SCOUTING	9:52
SCO_409	LEADER UNIFORMS FOR BOY SCOUTING	6:17
SCO_414	ANNUAL PLANNING FOR BOY SCOUTING	14:52
SCO_415	INTRO TO MERIT BADGES FOR BOY SCOUTING	11:36
SCO_530	JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE	12:46
TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 2 MIN		

\*In addition to the learning plans above, Youth Protection training is required for all BSA registered volunteers. IDLS training and the appropriate learning plan above is required for Scoutmasters and coaches to be classified as position trained.

(Photo Courtesy of Scouting.org)

The most helpful aspect of these modules is that these, as Yackel observed, “smaller chunks of knowledge”, can be hand selected to allow the volunteer to focus on a specific helps targeted at providing more exacting guidance related to their individual situation or need. Commissions will find this library more effective as a coaching tool as they guide leaders through the development of a Unit Service Plan.

The most valued learning experience tends to come from a balanced approach to training which involves attending an in-person session that speaks to the on-line modules and provides real

life examples through shared experience and best practices. This promotes to the student that the on-line library is available and provides an on-going reference that can allow for a more in-depth personal study on specific subjects as needed.

(Fig. C)



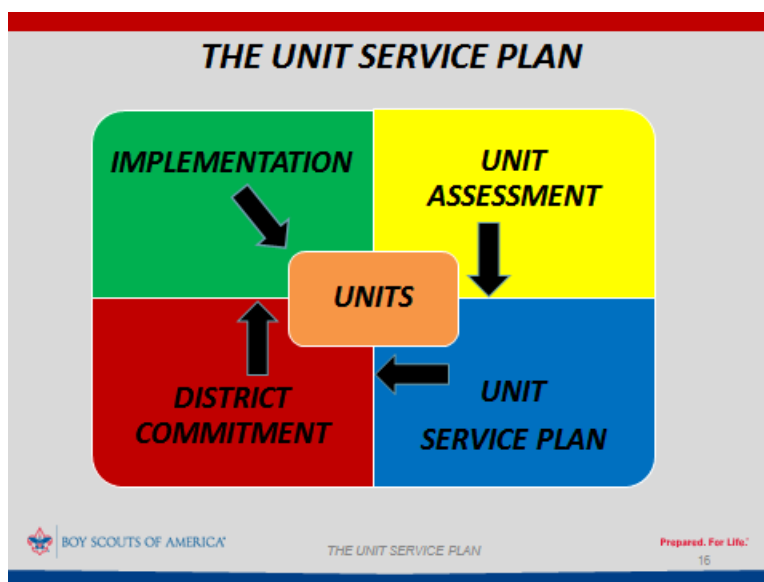
(Photo Courtesy of Scouting.org)

With the addition of the expanded learning section, Scouters may now tackle additional, supplemental topics and training requirements on subjects like, JTE (Journey to Excellence) and traditional Program Safety modules like: Climb on safely, Safe Swim Defense and more!

## Delivering the Promise: Identify the Need through the Unit Service Plan

As a friend of the unit, a Commissioner should invite unit leadership to review and discuss opportunities for improved unit health. This can be achieved through the implementation of the Unit Service Plan (Fig E). The Unit Service Plan provides a format that includes a Unit Self-Assessment and helps leadership to identify areas to develop.

(Fig E)



## Journey to Excellence

“Scouting’s Journey to Excellence is the BSA’s planning, performance, and recognition program designed to encourage and reward the success of our units, districts and councils. It is meant to encourage excellence in providing a quality program at all levels of the BSA” (Scouting.org).

By reviewing elements of the *Journey to Excellence* Scorecard, which covers the four elements (Planning & Budgeting, Membership, Program and Leadership) of a successful Scouting unit, leaders will identify areas for improvement. Together, each of the Key 3 leaders can discuss varying perspectives and allow for the creation of a specific set of goals for improvement, under the guidance of the Commissioner.

## Importance of Training

Most Scouters have heard the quote ‘Every boy (or youth) deserves a trained leader’ attributed to the Scouting Movement’s iconic leader, Lord Robert Baden-Powell of Gilwell. Although this quote’s origin may not have historical validity, one BP quote that does stand to support the importance of proper training is, “There is no teaching to compare with example.”. As reflected in the *Commissioner Fieldbook*, “You teach not just in an academic environment, but where it counts most—as an immediate response to a need to know. That is the best adult learning situation since the lesson is instantly reinforced by practical application of the new knowledge” (Fieldbook).

## Commissioner Function

There are several tools a Commissioner can use to help provide guidance in setting goals and in providing quality unit service. The *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service* provides, “a resource of practical, usable information, simply stated and readily adaptable.” (Fieldbook).

In it lists the following:

Commissioners are involved with carrying programs to the unit, and their main concern is to develop strength within the unit operation. As stated in the *Commissioner Fieldbook*, “Help unit

leaders get additional training as needed. See that all direct-contact unit leadership completes basic leader training, including Youth Protection training.”

“Through the District Commissioner, request specialized training as needed. Topics might include recruiting youth members, information on Friends of Scouting, advancement, etc. While it is the responsibility of the District Committee, it may be necessary to conduct sections of this yourself at a unit committee meeting.”

*Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops, and Crews* also provides many more ideas for commissioner action to help units with a wide range of unit needs.

In any event, it is important to identify the unit need and work with District resources to provide training on a more local level or in delivering the sessions to the Unit “On-location” as a Commissioner or preferable as part of the District Training Team(s).

### **District Team Approach**

Commissioners working with District sub-committees, in creating a network of familiar presenters, help build trust and value to units. Familiarity builds teams and reproduces more leaders through exposure to shared best practices and provides a more positive experience.

As an example, Commissioners teaming with the Membership Committee on Join Scout Night (JSN) builds at large members to the District Subcommittees and opens opportunity to promote training to new leaders as an on-boarding process. Being there, live and in-person, helps Commissioners identify unit needs based on membership growth and leadership inventory.



Similarly, teaming with Training Committees in delivering programming provides an opportunity for Commissioners to speak to the District Structure and helps new leaders connect with the actual people who lead those efforts. This “Push” method tends to capture more participation and ensures that units are better connected with the knowledge they need to meet the needs of the youth and families they serve.

### **Roundtable**

To round off the experience, District Training Team members, Merit Badge Counselors and Commissioner alike can participate in Roundtable teams to deliver smaller “snippets” of training related to specialized areas (i.e.-Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity and Venturing) that continue to build recognition of those District leaders involved.

This more “personalized approach”, aims to further expose Units to District leaders and training opportunities in a way that focuses on fellowship and builds comradery.

The more our Commissioners participate in these “cross-disciplinary ventures”, they expose themselves to greater understanding of knowledge and information that they can pass along to unit leaders which will in-turn benefit the programs they provide.

### **Recognition: Adult Training Awards**

Upon the completion of position training, a new leader is ‘Trained’ in position they will be authorized to wear the ‘Trained’ patch on their uniform showing their accomplishment.

There are additional ways to show levels of accomplishment and that is with the Adult Training & Recognition program, more commonly known as 'Leader Knots'. This is another way to measure leader progression.

There are a number of other ways to measure the success of training, one being more trained leaders. This could also be measured by membership growth & youth retention. Another possible measure will be leader recognition program already in place.

Through 'education' and awareness we could easily be recognizing more adults for their accomplishments, commitments, and successes in the units.

Adam Clinkenbeard, Assistant Council Commissioner with the Dan Beard Council and recipient of the Doctorate Degree from the College of Commissioner Science, offers this explanation in his Doctoral Thesis on Adult Recognition:

"By meeting a volunteer's need for self-fulfillment through recognition and appreciation, retention will improve. GuideStar USA Inc., an information service specializing in reporting on U.S. nonprofit organizations/companies, offers these details:

Another integral part of volunteer retention is recognizing and appreciating the time and effort volunteers bring to your organization. Emphasize to your volunteers the importance of their contributions; volunteers who stay are ones who feel they are making a significant impact. Of course, there are many ways to say "thank you." Informally, something as simple as "You're doing a great job!" can be a big morale booster. Making snacks available during projects or meetings is another way to show

your appreciation. More formally, consider a once-a-year volunteer appreciation night to award certificates, etc. Although this latter idea seems obvious, a recent study by the Urban Institute found that just 30 percent of charities actually follow this practice. It is important not only to recognize volunteers within an organization but also to promote their accomplishments within the community. Consider using the same methods your group already uses to publicize its programs to acknowledge your volunteers' important work and accomplishments as well. In addition, you may want to ask volunteers if they would like their employers to be made aware of their contributions to your organization.

Even though volunteers are not compensated monetarily, your organization should definitely consider rewarding them in other ways. Effective rewards can include such simple, no-cost things as reserving parking spaces for volunteers or giving them their own desks or workspaces. As far as actual tasks are concerned, volunteer jobs can be designed in hierarchical levels, allowing a volunteer to advance over time and acquire a higher "status." With each level, an organization can allow for increases in self-direction and decision making. Not only will the added responsibilities make the volunteer feel "promoted" but he or she will also feel more engaged. Volunteer coordinators may also want to reward well-proven volunteers by allowing them to train or mentor new recruits or by assigning them special projects.

Thankfully, Scouting boasts a wide-ranging formal recognition program and provides ample

opportunities for praise and appreciation. Units must be aware of the available resources and then encouraged to utilize the programs. In addition, units should challenge leaders with new roles and positions to feed the need for personal achievement and perceived advancement. Adults want to be working toward something and by ‘advancing in rank’ that intrinsic need can be fulfilled.”

There are Four Steps of Boy Scout Advancement, according to the *Guide to Advancement*:

The Scout Learns, The Scout is Tested, The Scout is Reviewed, The Scout is Recognized (4.2.1.0).

The Scout fulfills a requirement and then is placed in a situation where he has to put it to work. If he has forgotten what he learned, he may have to seek out a friend, leader, or other resource to help refresh his memory. As he does so, we are able to watch him grow (4.2.1.5).

In this model lies the foundation of one of the methods of Scouting and provides for a higher sense of learning through fellowship and personal growth. Current Training recognition awards available through the BSA are: Official BSA Trained Patch, Scout Leader’s Training Award, Den Leader Training Award, Scouter’s Key, Unit Leader Award of Merit and Wood Badge Beads top the list.

Whether it’s a huge celebration or event, such as a Pack Meeting, District Recognition Banquet, Court of Honor or something smaller, like a Committee or Den meeting, make it count!

Volunteers take time to make a difference in the youth they serve, by prioritizing training.

Taking the time to recognize that service, Commissioners and Unit leaders will not only promote the individual accomplishment but the value the program brings to everyone involved.

## Conclusion

As Commissioners, “linking unit needs to district operating committee resources” is only the beginning. Helping leaders to on-board new volunteers, prioritize training, and model recognition through servant leadership, we show what opportunities are available through the training we provide. Tailoring that approach to meet the varying needs of our leaders and encouraging other Scouters and Commissioners to get involved, in a cross-disciplinarian approach, allows us to ensure improved unit health by *Delivering the Promise* of the Scout Oath.

*By Being Prepared, you Do Your Best to Help other People at All Times, because Every Youth Deserves a Trained Leader!*

## Works Cited

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