

THE COMMISSIONERS' INTERNET RESOURCES WORKSHOP

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Part 1: LET'S STRENGTHEN OUR ABILITY TO SERVE UNITS AS COMMISSIONERS -- DELIVERING THE PROMISE

Section 2: Identifying the Basic Building Blocks



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THE COMMISSIONER'S INTERNET RESOURCES WORKSHOP PART 1

Section 2 -- Identifying the Basic Building Blocks

What Is the Commissioner Service? How Is It Organized?



Youth experience Scouting in Packs, Troops, Crews, Teams, and Posts. The healthier the unit, the more wonderful things will happen for these youth involved in Scouting. To help make this occur, the Boys Scouts of America provides a program of unit service through adult Scouters specifically commissioned to help chartered organizations and unit leaders to achieve the aims of Scouting by using the methods of Scouting. These commissioned Scouters wear a shoulder patch with a wreath surrounding the Scout symbol.

The Commissioner Service is the organization within Scouting that provides a program of unit service. Because of the importance of unit service to the successful delivery of the Scouting program, you will find Commissioners at every level of Scouting. And all of these Commissioners are there as a team to help assure that individual Scouts get the best possible program.

At the national level, BSA has a National Commissioner. Similarly, each Council has a Council Commissioner and Assistant Council Commissioners. However, it is at the District level that you will find more than 95% of BSA's Commissioners serving as District, Assistant District, Roundtable, and Unit Commissioners.

In each District you will find three types of commissioners:

Administrative/Management Commissioners: This includes the District Commissioner and the Assistant District Commissioners. Their primary responsibilities are recruiting, training, guiding, and evaluating the Commissioner staff. In larger Districts you may find that there are line managers and specialty advisors within the Commissioner staff. For example you may have Assistant District Commissioners that manage several Unit Commissioners in a Service Area and others that specialize in rechartering, training, or the administration of the Commissioner service.

Unit Commissioners: Unit Commissioners are assigned to one or more units, which they serve and counsel. In some Councils and Districts, Exploring units are served by Unit Commissioners and in others by Exploring service team members.

Roundtable Commissioners: Roundtable Commissioners provide unit leaders with resources and training in program skills through regularly scheduled roundtable meetings.

To help you understand the organization of the Commissioner service and how it works, you will find on the following pages a discussion of Commissioner goals, sample job

descriptions, a summary of how the Commissioner ties in with the chartered organizations, and information on the Unit Service Plan used at the Council level to assure that all of this works to help units deliver a quality Scouting program to youth members.

What Are It's Purposes and Goals?



The Commissioner Service exists to help units provide the best possible Scouting program, which ultimately helps assure that individual Scouts have the best opportunity of developing good character traits, participating citizenship skills, and personal fitness.

Broadly stated the goals of the Commissioner Service through the execution of a successful unit service plan are to:

1. Help see that the objectives of Scouting are being carried out.
2. Assure that each unit has strong, competent unit leadership.
3. Promote regular meetings of unit committees.
4. Encourage growth in youth membership.
5. Help assure that Scouts and units take an active part in District and Council activities.
6. Foster a positive relationship between the chartered organization and its unit leaders.

This unit service program is invaluable to both the chartered organizations and the local Council when it is thoroughly understood and wisely administered. This means a commitment to EXCEPTIONAL customer service!

Consider the following which was published in *The Commissioner: A Publication for Council Commissioners and Scout Executives*, Summer 1995,

Exceptional Customer Service

● LESSONS FOR COMMISSIONERS FROM CORPORATE AMERICA

Companies have determined **that customer retention is only about 20% of the cost of developing a new customer.** *Commissioners might note that the time to help a major unit problem is only a fraction of the time of organizing a new unit.* A profound finding is that simply meeting the customer's expectations is no longer good enough in our increasingly competitive environment. Customers have been taught to demand more than

traditional service that is “just good enough.” **You must exceed the customer’s expectations.** *Commissioners might think about ways to exceed the expectations of unit adults.*

Good service managers believe that **customer perception is the only important reality.** The reality of the service provider doesn’t really matter. The excellent reasons we have for a mistake or failure do not interest the customer. The customer just knows what he or she didn’t get what he or she was promised. *The perceptions of unit adults is what’s really important to Scouting success.*

This suggests a formula for successful commissioners:

EXCEPTIONAL COMMISSIONER SERVICE = UNIT LEADER’S PERCEPTION OF HELP RECEIVED MINUS HELP THE UNIT LEADER EXPECTED!

Exceptional commissioner service results in successful units.

Exceptional customer service has three important qualities:

1. Exceed expectations rather than just barely satisfying expectations.
2. Provide caring service, not just competent service. *Commissioners must truly care about units. They must believe in unit people. They must have a solid relationship with their assigned units.*
3. Customers want service now, not when we get around to it. *Commissioners respond promptly to unit needs. If they don’t, they may not get a second chance to help - or worse, there may not be a unit left to help.*

What Do They Do? -- Job Descriptions for District Commissioner, Assistant District Commissioner, and Unit Commissioner



The following are some sample job descriptions for what might be expected of Commissioners. Eventhough these are not official statements of job responsibilities, they may serve as starting points for developing local guidelines.

District Commissioner (DC) Expectations: DCs are appointed to help the Council Commissioner and Scout Executive in providing support to the Assistant District Commissioners, Unit Commissioners serving in the District. The DC should keep

informed on policy, programs, delivery systems and procedures necessary for a successful Scouting program. Major responsibilities include:

1. Supervise the activities of the commissioner staff, preside at Districtwide meetings of Assistant District Commissioners, and conduct Commissioner conferences.
2. Be concerned with proper recognition of unit-leaders. Maintain their morale, periodically reporting unit conditions to the Council Commissioner.
3. Help the Assistant District Commissioners and Unit Commissioners to maintain a good working relationship with related District Directors and District Executives.
4. Maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America, uphold national policies, promote good uniforming, and lead effort to hold regular roundtable programs in the District.
5. Recruiting Assistant District Commissioners (ADC) to serve each as managers in each of the District's Service areas and supervising the recruitment of Unit Commissioners for each unit in the District.
6. Conduct personal coaching and orientation sessions for ADCs. Each ADC should have completed Commissioner Basic Training and be participating in advanced training. The DC is responsible for maintaining a record of the training completed by each all members of the Commissioner staff. Attendance at the College of Commissioner Science is expected of all ADCs and Ucs who have not completed their doctorate. Wood Badge attendance is encouraged.
7. Maintain regular contact with Assistant District Commissioners and Unit Commissioners to know unit needs. Telephone communication with each ADC is expected every two weeks. Meetings of the Commissioner staff should take place at least once a month.
8. Report to the Council Commissioner on the needs and status of units in the District monthly. Significant happenings in District units should be reported by telephone as they happen.
9. Assure that all units in the District recharter on time and that all appropriate recognitions are applied for. These recognitions include Quality Unit, National Camping Award, Outstanding Unit and other awards.
10. Communicate information concerning the Scouting program and its changes to the units in the District. Help the units in the District to receive help in correcting problems that they may confront.

11. Be familiar with the community in the District. Suggest areas that would benefit from the establishment of a new Pack, Troop, Team, or Post. Inform the District Committee of this need. Assist the District Membership Committee in establishing new units by appointing persons to serve on New Unit Organizing Teams. Ideally, these persons will serve as their units' first Unit Commissioner.

12. Be a voice and presence for Scouting in the District while seeking ways to involve the Council Commissioner and other Council and District leaders in the District.

13. Attend Council Commissioner meetings monthly. On those occasions when it is impossible to attend, designate a representative to attend the meeting in your place.

Assistant District Commissioner (ADC) Expectations: ADCs are appointed to help the District Commissioner and District Director (the professional) in providing support to the Unit Commissioners serving in his/her service area. The ADC should keep informed on policy, programs, delivery systems and procedures necessary for a successful Scouting program. Major responsibilities include:

1. Recruiting Unit Commissioners (UC) to serve each unit operating in the ADC's Service Area. No unit should be without a UC for more than a month. No UC should serve more than three units. Units not served by a UC are served by the ADC during the vacancy.

2. Conduct personal coaching and orientation sessions for each UC. Each UC should receive Commissioner Basic Training within two months of appointment. The ADC is responsible for maintaining a record of the training completed by each UC. Attendance at the College of Commissioner Science is expected of all ADCs and UCs who have not completed their doctorate. Wood Badge attendance is encouraged.

3. Maintain regular contact with Unit Commissioners to know unit needs. Telephone communication with each UC is expected every two weeks. Meetings of the Service Area staff should take place at least once every two months.

4. Report to the District Commissioner on the needs and status of units in the Service Area monthly. Significant happenings in Service Area units should be reported by telephone as they happen.

5. Assure that all units in the ADC's Service Area recharter on time and that all appropriate recognitions are applied for. These recognitions include Quality Unit, National Camping Award, Outstanding Unit and other awards.

6. Communicate information concerning the Scouting program and its changes to the units in the Service Area. Help the units in the Service Area to receive help in correcting problems that they may confront.
7. Be familiar with the community in the Service Area. Suggest areas that would benefit from the establishment of a new Pack, Troop, Team, or Post. Inform the District Committee of this need. Assist the District Membership Committee in establishing new units by appointing persons to serve on New Unit Organizing Teams. Ideally, these persons will serve as their units' first Unit Commissioner.
8. Be a voice and presence for Scouting in the Service Area while seeking ways to involve the District Commissioner and other District leaders in the service area.
9. Attend District Commissioner meetings monthly. On those occasions when it is impossible to attend, designate a representative to attend the meeting in your place.

Unit Commissioner Expectations: The UC is expected to cooperate with other Scouting personnel related to specific programs but should not be responsible for them. The UC is an advisor/mentor whose primary duties include:

1. Maintain a close liaison with the chartered organizations of the served units. This requires a working relationship with the Chartered Organization Representative (COR). Unit activities and Chartered Partner Expectations should be discussed with the COR at least once a quarter. The Institutional Head should be visited once a year.
2. Work to assure effective and active unit committees. Encourage each unit committee member to review appropriate Fast Start training videos and attend any relevant and available training including Roundtable.
3. Make efforts to involve unit personnel in Roundtables. Check Roundtable attendance sheets to learn whether the unit was present. If a unit has not attended make sure to deliver any materials passed out at Roundtable to the unit leaders.
4. Establish good lines of communication between unit personnel and other District and Council leaders. Visit each unit at least once a month and maintain regular telephone contact with the unit leader, committee chair, and the COR. Visits should not be limited to either the unit meeting or committee meeting, but should include both in turn. Participate or help in some regular activities of the unit. Know the resources of the Council and District. Involve these resources in the life of the unit. Encourage unit participation in Council and District program events and training opportunities. Report monthly to the ADC on the status of each unit.

5. Help select and recruit unit leaders. Though the actual appointment is approved by the chartered partner, with help and action by the COR and the unit committee, the UC plays a key role in the selection process, making sure that proper techniques are used to locate and enlist the best possible leaders. Often you will be looked to suggest candidates for these positions.
6. Continue to grow in experience and knowledge. Attend the Basic Commissioner Training Course. Attend the College of Commissioner Science each year until the Doctorate has been completed. Attend the District Commissioner and Service Area Commissioner meetings. Attend Roundtable meetings.
7. See that all units are rechartered on time and help each unit to conduct programs and submit paperwork that will earn the unit the Quality Unit Award, National Camping Award, and Summertime Pack Award among others.
8. Know the neighborhood in which your units are located. Learn about the resources and characteristics of the neighborhood that may affect a unit. Help graduating members of one program join the next level of Scouting. Identify potential sources of new youth members. Identify locations for new units and potential chartered partners. Relay this information to the District Membership Committee.
9. Set a good example for others. Have a positive attitude and keep the interest of our youth uppermost in decision making.

What Methods Are Used? -- Keys to Success include Communications, Resources and Training



Since its earliest days, Scouting has offered its programs on a cooperative basis with chartered organizations. The chartered organization concept can extend Scouting to every youth who wants to join. To make this work local Councils provide both volunteer and professional help dedicated to providing the chartered organization and the leaders they appoint with training, skills, organization, information resources, and communications.

The key person on Scouting's side of the relationship is the Commissioner. It is the Commissioner that can help a chartered organization succeed in having a great Scouting program for its youth. The Commissioner and chartered organization work together to select, train, support and encourage unit leaders.

To make this relationship succeed each Commissioner must constantly communicate information, share and develop resources, and help assure that unit leaders are trained.



What Is A Unit Service Plan?



Each local Council is vitally concerned with the success of its Commissioners in helping the chartered organizations to deliver a quality Scouting program. For this reason each local Council is constantly in the process of evaluating the success of its Commissioner service and looking for ways to make improvements. This is done each year by developing a Unit Service Plan. There are two phase in the development:

1. Inventory - Getting the Facts
 - a. Take an accurate inventory of active Commissioner personnel in each District to determine the effectiveness of those serving.
 - b. Determine the actual number of units being served by Unit Commissioners.
 - c. Determine which units are being served by Commissioner personnel other than a UC.
 - d. List any units not being served by any commissioner.
2. Planning Improvement
 - a. Facts are presented to key Commissioner and Professional leaders.
 - b. A working group prepares a program of action for improvement based on the facts and suggestions presented in the meeting of key personnel.
 - c. This program of action is presented at special meetings with each District Commissioner and District Director.
 - d. The Council Commissioner and Scout Executive make a statement in support of the plan at this meeting.
 - e. Each District Commissioner keeps track of progress and reports monthly on progress to the Council Commissioner. The Council Commissioner in turn keeps the Council Executive Board advised of progress.

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