

THE COMMISSIONERS' INTERNET RESOURCES WORKSHOP

Version 2.0 - February 1996

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

Section 4: Statement of Purpose



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THE COMMISSIONER'S INTERNET RESOURCES WORKSHOP PART 1

Section 4 -- Building an Effective Commissioner Service - Challenges

How Do You Recruit People?



1. Determine what positions on the Commissioner staff you are needed and which need to be filled.

- a. Are the people already there doing the job? Are they effective?
- b. Write a job description for each job that includes both general expectations drawn from this training material and unique expectations based on particular neighborhoods, people and unit needs.
- c. For each position that you are going to recruit for write down a brief list of qualifications the person will have to have to do a good job.

2. Find the best prospects for the job.

- a. Consider many sources, ask people you trust for recommendations, spread the search wide.
- b. List possible prospects for each job.
- c. Match their qualities to the job.
- d. Prioritize prospects based on who has the qualities that best fit the job.

3. Research the prospects at the top of your list.

- a. Learn about their interests, abilities, and motivations.
- b. Shape your approach by these interests, abilities, and motivations.
- c. Figure out who can make the best approach with each prospect.
- d. Anticipate questions and objections. Decide in advance how you will answer them.
- e. Be ready to give the prospect specific information about the job. It wouldn't hurt to have a page or two of bullets to give the prospect with attention to items that match his/her interests. (Do not flood the prospect with everything you can find on the Commissioner service. He/she probably won't read more than

a couple of pages.)

4. Make an Appointment

- a. Do not recruit over the telephone. Call and invite the prospect to coffee or ask to stop by his/her home or office.
- b. Pick the best time and place for your prospect to be comfortable and not distracted by work pressures or home pressures. It may even be a good idea for the spouse to be present and to sell the spouse on being part of the commitment too.
- c. Never ever recruit alone. Make sure to take someone with you that the prospect knows and is comfortable with. One person should talk and the other should listen (this person will evaluate and help you do better in future recruiting efforts).

5. Make the Sale

- a. Introduce everyone and make sure to take some time to get settled in comfortably.
- b. Break the ice by talking about common interests, especially things that the prospect is most familiar with; e.g. hobby, job, Scouting background, family, etc. You should have an idea of areas based on your research.
- c. “Sell the Sizzle” Give the prospect an exciting, enthusiastic, and brief pitch on the Commissioner service and youth without getting bogged down in tedious details. Talk about the importance of serving units that will most interest the prospect.
- d. Describe the job you want the prospect to do. Be specific. Don’t be afraid to emphasize that the job is important to youth and the community.
- e. Remind the prospect that he/she is the best person for the job.
- f. Ask for questions. Be sure the prospect understands what is expected. Answer these questions briefly and positively. Be honest. Be prepared to overcome objections.
- g. Listen for comments from your prospect that can help you sell him/her on the job.
- h. Know when to close the sale. When the prospect is nodding yes and agreeing, close the sale. Don’t keep on selling, if it is clear that the prospect is ready to agree or obviously not interested.

- i. Recognize that people work for people. Stress the participation of people who are of interest to the prospect. Don't overlook the friendship and fellowship that will evolve.

6. Ask for a Commitment.

- a. You need this person or you wouldn't have bothered to go to so much trouble recruiting. Say so. Be patient and wait for an answer.
- b. Don't leave without an answer, if you can avoid it.
- c. If the person wants to think about it and call you later, that may be a clue that you are about to lose the sale. (About 75-90% of these answers lead to a no) This is an emergency. But don't panic. Tell them you'll be happy to hear back, but before you leave, you'd be happy to answer any questions or discuss things more. Go back to troublesome moments in the interview and look for ways to repair, if possible.
- d. Once you've done your best (whether you succeeded or not), don't over-prolong the appointment and abuse the privilege of the visit.
- e. Don't wait for the call, if the prospect wanted to think about things. Ask for another appointment the next day suggesting a time and place. Then follow through with a second visit.

For additional recruiting ideas see the pamphlet, *Selecting District People*, No. 34514, and the video tape, *Recruiting District Volunteers*, AV-06V002.

How Can You Get New Commissioners Ready to Succeed?

The keywords are "FOLLOW UP"



1. Give the new recruit the videotape The Unit Commissioner's Orientation: Helping Units Succeed.
2. Formally acknowledge the commitment with a letter and a copy of *The Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service and Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops and Posts*.

3. Invite and take the person to the next Commissioner meeting.
4. Prepare an appropriate news release or announcement for the District and/or Council newsletter.
5. Within a few weeks follow up with a specific assignment and orientation related to that assignment.
6. Schedule the recruit for Basic Commissioner Training.
7. Go with the recruit on his/her first unit visits to introduce him/her and show them the ropes or have them tag-team with an experienced Unit Commissioner for a month to get an idea of what works and what doesn't work.
8. Let them know what your expectations are at this point and give them room to grow.
9. Recognize their starting efforts with praise and encouragement. Listen when there are problems.
10. Within a year see that this new Commissioner has attended the College of Commissioner Science and has started working on the Commissioner's Key.

How Do You Guide or Manage Them?



Because you are working with a diverse group of volunteers supervising Commissioners demands more skills than that of merely guiding others or supervising people in a workplace environment. Many old hands may resent what they feel is interference and new hands may not understand why you have reacted or know what to think about it. For most experienced Commissioners the common wisdom is that the supervising commissioner needs to be more of a mentor and counselor than a boss.

Similarly, your Unit Commissioner will have to be a mentor/counselor to the unit leaders and cannot see his/her role as that of a unit supervisor. This requires a “friend and counselor” approach.

In either setting there are some common things that can be done to improve the working relationship:

1. Meet the people you are going to be working with and really get to know them.
2. Listen and learn.

3. Don't give the impression of snooping, judging, or directing. After all you are not there to do any of these things. You are a part of team dedicated to making Scouting a great program for the ultimate customer -- the Scouts!
4. Take time to work out a pattern of association that all concerned are comfortable with; e.g., ask when the next convenient time is that you can get together. Respect the other person(s) needs and time constraints.
5. Always take time to recognize the completion of a project, an achievement, or simply quality service.
6. Make sure that at the District's annual recognition dinner these individual are given appropriate recognition. And as time passes, don't forget to recognize significant accomplishments such as completion of degree work at the College of Commissioner Science, the Arrowhead Honor, the Commissioner's Key, and the Distinguished Commissioner's Award.
7. If the individual's employer recognizes community involvement, make sure that you let the individual's employer know of his/her outstanding community service. You will need to be careful to check this out in advance.
8. If an individual demonstrates excellence in a particular area, an exceptional talent or skill, or something similar, arrange for an opportunity for that individual to display this skill, talent or interest at a Roundtable or training course.
9. Should it become necessary to make a change in staffing because of a problem, face the problem head-on and honestly. The chances of a productive outcome are much higher than when you dance around the issues and engender suspicion and anxiety.
10. Look at the wreath on your position patch as a visible reminder two you that you are there to spread knowledge and information, but not there to do the job of another. Remember your role is that of mentor/counselor/friend. Share the wealth of opportunity. Enable others.



What Are Some Early Warning Signs of Trouble?

Okay ADCs, let's assume that you have successfully recruited and have started to manage people using some of the techniques above. How do you



know when there are problems and when trouble is just around the corner? What are some signs that a Unit Commissioner is having problems? Or that you may be about to run into trouble with a Unit Commissioner?

Here are some of early warning signs of potential trouble:

1. Communication with the UC is tapering off
2. The UC is becoming irregular in his/her attendance at meetings
3. UC reports are incomplete and irregular - no evidence of unit visits
4. Problems come to your attention from sources other than the UC who should have been on top of the situation.
5. The units served by the UC are not aware of what a Commissioner is or does.
6. The unit feels that the UC is not keeping promises.
7. The unit feels that the UC is never there when needed and/or is a disruption.
8. The units served by the UC are experiencing danger signals themselves:
 - a. Irregular meetings
 - b. No written programs or plans
 - c. Few in uniform
 - d. Seldom seen at Council or District events
 - e. Little outdoor program, no camping
 - f. No SME/FOS participation
 - g. Never attend roundtables
 - h. Membership falling or no new members for future growth
 - i. Unit leaders work alone not using committee for support
 - j. Charter lapses

- k. Unit leader is doing all of the leading, the Scouts are deprived of leadership exposure
- l. The chartering partner begins to mistrust the Scout unit
- m. Few active leaders
- n. Complaints about lack of discipline instead of Scouts having fun
- o. Unit leader hard to find
- p. Unit leadership not adequately trained



How Do You Respond to Challenges?



Before you get too excited because there is a single or even a couple of warning signals, take a minute to size up the big picture. How is the overall performance of the Unit Commissioner? What is the overall health of his/her units? What is the risk that the “warning signal” will expand to worse or develop into real problems? You will have to use a lot of judgment based on your experience, knowledge and wisdom. You may also want to use your personnel resources; e.g. your District Commissioner, your professional staff and other Commissioners to give you ideas before plunging ahead. But once you determine that you have a problem situation, you will need to act. Here are some considerations for plotting your course:

1. What is the nature of the problem - make sure you understand it thoroughly.
2. Do you need additional information - identify what else you need to know and where to get that information.
3. Who do you need to consult with? Your District Commissioner? The District Director? Others?
4. Make sure to listen to what the UC has to say about the problem and the unit, if the unit is expressing a concern.
5. Don't jump to quick conclusions.
6. Try to find positive solutions that are of a win/win nature. How can everyone concerned get a positive workable solution to the problem.

7. Are there ways out for a person who needs to change a position? Can you give them a way out that won't damage their ability to do other useful and valuable service in other areas where perhaps they are better suited?
8. Is there a problem of understanding where training, coaching or counseling would help?
9. Lay out the problem and match alternatives to each element of the problem with another Commissioner so that you are not going it alone. Bounce your ideas back and forth and test them for soundness before reacting in haste.
10. Formulate the best approach after you have tested the alternatives.
11. Make sure you have the support of your District Commissioner and District Director, this will also make sure that they understand what you are trying to do in the event that things get a little sticky.
12. Approach the problem head-on in a friendly and courteous manner.
13. Work with those concerned to initiate solutions you have selected. You may find at this point that your plans will need adjustment and that the value of consensus overrides following a set plan. Develop that consensus into action.
14. Evaluate what has taken place to make sure that the solutions that have been implemented have actually corrected the problem situation.
15. Check back periodically to see that things have continued to improve and have not ended up backsliding.
16. Be aware that there is always a danger that good leaders and Commissioners may simply be suffering from burn-out and may be thankful for you to intervene and suggest ways to redistribute workload and help manage situations.

How Do You Recognize Burnout?

You as a Scouter are an invaluable asset to your Council, District, and/or Unit, depending on where and how you serve youth. Without people like you many Scouts would never have the enriching experiences that they get in Scouting. But you are only human and have limits. If you exceed your limits, there is the danger that you may become unable or limited in your ability to help these Scouts. As a result it is important every once in awhile to take a little time just for yourself and assess how



you are doing and whether you should be making changes to retain all the wonderful qualities that you have, which make you such an asset to these young people. This posting is intended to help you avoid "Scouter Burnout" and to recognize when it may be a problem for your UCs.

"Scouter Burnout" is not a precise term, but a reference point for continued discussion. What follows is a questionnaire just for you, one that you won't share with anyone else. Take a look at the instructions and give it a try. Although it has points for you to fill in, there are no magic formulas, no wrong answers. Its purpose is to help you see areas where you might want to make adjustments.



Scouter Burnout Questionnaire

Instructions: Please read the following questions and in the space provided at the left, rate your truthful, personal experiences of how you feel the majority of the time when you are performing your duties as a Scouter. Rate yourself with a score of 1, 5, or 10 with 10 being the most frequent. See the example below:

- 1 Seldom or never a difficulty to me. (green)
- 5 Sometimes a difficulty to me. (yellow)
- 10 Frequently a difficulty to me. (red)

- My time is controlled by factors beyond my control.
- Interruptions.
- Chronic Overload - more to do than time is available.
- Occasional Overload
- Chronic Underload - too little to do in time available.
- Occasional Underload
- Alternating periods of overload and underload.
- Disorganization of my time.
- Procrastination on Scout Projects
- Separating home, work, and Scouts.
- Transition from home, to work, to Scouts.
- Finding time for regular exercise.
- Finding time for regular periods of relaxation.
- Finding time for Friendships.
- Finding time for family.
- Finding time for vacations.
- Easily bored with Scouts.
- Saying "yes" when I later wish I had said "no."
- Feeling overwhelmed by large tasks over an extended period of time.

- Avoiding important tasks by frittering away time on less important ones.
- Feel compelled to assume responsibilities in groups.
- Unable to delegate because of distrust of quality of other's performance.
- Unable to delegate because there is no one to delegate to.
- My perfectionism creates delays.
- I tend to leave tasks unfinished.
- I have difficulty living with unfinished tasks.
- Too many projects going on at one time.
- Get into time binds by trying to please others too often.
- I tend to hurry even when its not necessary.
- Lose concentration while thinking about other things I have to do.
- Not enough alone time.
- Feeling compelled to be punctual.
- Pressure related to deadlines.

- TOTAL



Now that you have completed this and started looking at the number of fives and tens you wrote, don't panic. Everyone of us is going to have a few here and there. I found a few areas here that surprised me too. Guess I'm not all in the green (ones) yet.

I don't have any magic answers as to what constitutes a safe score. What I can tell you is that the more of these that you rated 10 the more likely you are under stress and a candidate for burnout. The tens should be regarded as alarms (red). And if you have a large number of fives you should be looking at them as caution signals (yellow). Take a look at the ones you rated as a 10 and ask yourself what can be changed to make it a five or a one. Try to reduce as many as you can. In six months or a year do this evaluation again. If your score is the same or increasing, then you should be concerned. Its time to talk with your District Commissioner and your Unit Commissioners. It is also time to share some of the load, reduce the number of things you do, seek quality in what you do, and reorient. And if it is apparent that a large number are high and the number growing, you may want to consider talking with your physician about attending a stress management course to pick up information you can use to change for the better.

For those that you serve, if for no other reason, take care of yourself. You are important to the Scouts and their leaders!



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