

SCOUTS-L

**BSA SUPPLY
SERVICE**

Date: Fri, 8 Dec 1995 04:32:51 -0500
From: Ed Henderson <BigEdBSA@AOL.COM>
Subject: Re: ROCKET DERBY KITS (And Supply Division) A DISASTER

Regarding the cheap styrofoam rockets
The problem here is quite simple.....

BSA Supply Division - Headquarters Charlotte North Carolina!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Supply division rarely has the best interest of programming or the scout in mind when they do their selections of merchandise. Their prices are not competative at all, and their ranks are filled with former D.E.'s who know nothing of retailing, purchasing, or programming - just one more step on the career ladder to becoming a Scout Executive somewhere.

I know, as a Business Manager of a Boy Scout Summer Camp, we took the bold step last summer of not marching to the National Supply Division Representatives Drum Beat. The result was a 40% increase in gross revenues and a more profitable operation that met the needs and expectations of our camp community. I can't tell you how many staffers, leaders, and scouts raived and lauded our operation all summer. That, and the huge volumes of revenue we were generating, were more than enough to reassure our Scout Executive that we were making the right choices.

There is NO INCENTIVE for BSA Supply Division to worry about meeting the needs of customers. They don't have to offer the best value! You see, every time a Council Executive or Camp Director orders from Supply Division, they know they are getting a portion of the profits being placed in the BSA Professional's Retirement Fund. BSA guards few things as closely as their council addresses. They don't want their councils and camps to know about anything but them. Thus lower cost wholesale vendors have made few enrodes into most BSA summer camps.

Consider the fact that I was able to purchase DOZENS of items with the Boy Scout Packaging from the original sources last year at a substantial savings from supply division. (Just one example, there is a Individual Baseball Coin Purse Kit that S&S Arts & Crafts makes for the BSA. It retails for around \$7.99 and I can purchase them for my council from Supply Division for around \$5.70. I can get the same kit directly from the manufacturer with the same Yellow & Black "BSA Quality" Packaging for \$3.90!!!.

Sometimes, as in the case of those cheap Rocket Derby Kits, BSA Supply Division just looses it all together. A few years ago they changed the BSA Basketry Kits they sold councils to a new wood shaved type. They even revised the Merit Badge Books (and changed two words in the Badge's Requirements) to accomodate the new overpriced Basketry Kits they were going to push off on councils. Those kits are the worst things I have even seen. Overpriced, they cost me (if I was crazy enough to purchase any) \$3.68 at my cost with a suggested retail of \$5.99! I was able to purchase my old, reed kits with the better (and easier to put together) wooden bottems for only \$1.68 and SELL THEM TO MY CAMP COMMUNITY FOR LESS THAT THE COUNCILS AROUND ME WERE ABLE TO BUY THOSE OTHER POOR QUALITY KITS FROM BSA SUPPLY DIVISION!

Let me say now, BSA Supply Division is, and will always be, a very important supplier for my camp. Badges, Books, and a few hot sellers like those Hot Spark Kits I will always buy from them. They bring to the table one enormous advantage to cash strapped summer camp operations....and that is a very liberal credit policy which allows camps to order in the Spring, and not have to pay until the fall for their orders, as well as an adequate return policy.

This forum and others on the internet are filled with what boils down to complaints in Supply Division. Look at the outcry over elastic pants, cargo popckets, and pant cuts that don't fit. The see through Yellow Cub Leader shirts, etc. etc. If a camp were only to go with supply division, they would

not be able to retail Ponchos for under \$7.50. So what happens to the poor camper in a down pour who only brought \$10 for the week at camp? At our camp

I use another source to sell a range of inexpensive options like emergency ponchos for under \$1.00. (I still stock BSA's Grey Poncho but only sold one all summer, I sold over 130 of the cheaper \$1.00 and the more durable \$3.50 ones I got from other sources).

Camp Directors! Trading Post Business Managers! You have to decide for 1996, will you sit down and just let BSA Supply Division spoon feed you their

entire line, will your camp be a mindless Supply Division-Chips-Sodas & T-Shirt operation? If enough camps demonstrate that they demand not only

quality but also value, then National Supply Division will HAVE TO GET WITH

THE PROGRAM!!!!!! When one of their supply reps started giving me the line

that we should want to support the BSA by purchasing all of their stuff I pulled out the same unit fundraising application that I have to fill out and sign as a volunteer Scoutmaster of a Troop whenever I want to sell something.

The applications states that whenever my scouts sell something, it should stand on its own Merits. It should be of value. I should not rely on the good name and reputation of the BSA to pressure people into buying it from my

troop. Sounds like good advise to me, I shall therefore apply that same standard whenever I place my orders for our camp operation.

I will be happy to swap ideas & sources with any camp director that wants to

improve their camp retail operations, and better meet their programming needs

for the campers next summer.

YIS,

Ed Henderson

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