

A Professional Workshop On Good Volunteer- Professional Relationships

Background

Since the early days of Scouting in the United States, the volunteer-professional relationship has been one of the special hallmarks of the Boy Scouts of America. Over the years, many professionals have helped perfect the skills of good relationships and have modeled their performance for the entire Scouting profession.

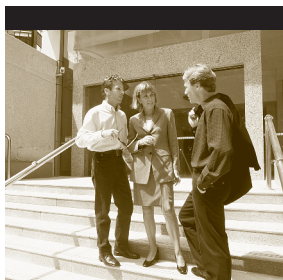
Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships: A Strategic Issue for Professionals, No. 14-145, captures much of the essence of these important professional skills as they relate to district and council volunteers. This workshop has been designed to help local council staff leaders and regional staff teach these skills to local professionals.

This workshop can be used in several different ways:

- Half-day workshop as part of a council's staff planning conference
- Half-day stand-alone workshop at some interesting location away from the office
- Three shorter one-hour sessions as part of three successive council staff meetings

A staff leader should direct the workshop but may well want to involve several other staff members as presenters and leaders for short sections of the workshop experience.

A workshop of fewer than six persons can be conducted on a far more informal basis, but participants should still be assigned topics to present.





Materials Needed

1. Copies of *Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships: A Strategic Issue for Professionals*, No. 14-145, for all participants
2. Poster or flip chart with the key quote from the end of I.C. in the workshop outline
3. File card or attractive computer printout with the key quote from III.C. in the workshop outline
4. “Tips for Better Relationships” exercise sheet for each participant
5. “Tips for Better Relationships” exercise instructor’s answer sheet
6. “Six Major Tasks” flip chart sheet for session 3
7. *Six Major Tasks for Volunteer Success* (Reference *Selecting District People*, No. 34512, page 2) for sessions 2 and 3

A Note to the Instructor

Good volunteer relationships must be well-integrated at all levels and in all parts of the Scouting organization. Top council leaders are role models in setting the underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs. Also keep in mind that professional staff will tend to treat volunteers in the same way that staff leaders, including the instructor of this workshop, treat staff.



Session 1

I. Introduction

(Presentation by staff leader drawn from the introduction of *Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships: A Strategic Issue for Professionals* and from your local council experience)

- A.** **Scouting's special partnership between volunteers and professionals is the core of its success.**
When the partnership thrives, the movement thrives. If the partnership does not work well, nothing works well.
- B.** **Our lives are marked by amazing technological innovations, yet our future is still based on the quality of our human relationships.**
- C.** **Scout professionals succeed because they have great ability and work exceedingly hard at good working relationships with volunteers.**
(Place the following statement on a poster or flip chart and prominently display it for the remainder of the session.)
“Your greatest single professional achievement is the effective involvement of volunteers in carrying out the mission of the district and council.”
- D.** **High tech/high touch.** The more people's lives are influenced by new technology, the more they crave meaningful human interaction. New technology brings new power and efficiency to Scouting operation, yet at the same time fuels an increased demand for enhanced face-to-face encounters that humanize and personalize district and council operation.



II. Professional Responsibility

A. (Lead a short discussion.)

Who is responsible for consciously developing good volunteer-professional relationships?

Elicit:

- Professionals accept responsibility for developing good relationships with volunteers.
- Developing good relationships with volunteers is part of the specialized knowledge and standards expected of Scouting professionals.

III. Qualities of a Good Relationship

A. (Lead discussion.)

What evidence would suggest that a good relationship exists between a volunteer and a professional?

Elicit:

- Each understands what the other “brings to the table.”
- They seek each other’s counsel.
- They enjoy each other’s company.

B. As a professional, think of yourself as a coach, not a boss. It’s a partnership, not a hierarchy. Avoid saying you “use” (or even “utilize”) volunteers. We use tools and things, but not people. Get in the habit of saying that you “involve” volunteers, “rely” on volunteers, or “empower” volunteers.

C. Good volunteer-professional relationships are characterized by mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual recognition of each other’s role and competency.

(Have the previous sentence printed on large file cards or copy paper. Ask each participant to display it over his/her desk and/or attach it to the inside cover of his/her field book or daily planner.)

These qualities are a final result of our efforts. The remainder of the workshop will help us achieve the result.

D. Assign individuals to make three- to five-minute presentations during session 2.

Assign the following topics from the “Tips for Better Relationships” section of *Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships*, No. 14-145: No. 2, Nos. 3 and 15 together; and Nos. 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 17.









Session 2

(Briefly review two or three key statements from session 1.)

IV. Tips for Better Relationships

This session includes 17 how-to-do-it guidelines.

A. Group Projects




-  Divide the total group into six smaller groups or small teams.
-  Assign one of the following “tips” from *Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships* to each of the six teams: Nos. 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12.
-  Each group discusses and prepares a two-minute presentation on its assigned tip (allow 15 minutes).
-  Encourage teams to use flip charts, oral presentations, personal anecdotes, or other methods in their presentations.
-  Each group makes its presentation.
-  The instructor adds additional thoughts as needed.

B. Individual Three- to Five-Minute Presentations

Topic	Person Assigned
No. 2	<hr/>
Nos. 3 and 15	<hr/>
No. 5	<hr/>
No. 7	<hr/>
No. 9	<hr/>
No. 11	<hr/>
No. 13	<hr/>
No. 14	<hr/>
No. 16	<hr/>
No. 17	<hr/>



C. Summary Exercise

-  Distribute “Tips for Better Relationships” exercise sheet.
-  Have each participant use his or her copy of *Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships* to fill in the exercise sheet (allow about 10 minutes).
-  Quickly elicit from the group or provide the correct answers.

D. Assign six individuals to make eight-minute presentations during session 3.

Assign topics on the volunteer relationships aspects of each of the six major tasks for volunteer success.

Distribute copies of *Six Major Tasks for Volunteer Success*, available in *Selecting District People*, No. 34512, page 2.



Session 3

V. Good Relationships and Six Major Tasks for Volunteer Success

- A.** The Boy Scouts of America has defined *Six Major Tasks for Volunteer Success*—six major tasks to make a volunteer system work at the district or council level: 1. Define Responsibilities. 2. Select and Recruit. 3. Orient and Train. 4. Coach Volunteers. 5. Recognize Achievement. 6. Evaluate Performance.

**Prepare a flip chart with the
six major tasks.**

- B.** The six major tasks are important, but each task must be carried out with good volunteer-professional relationships.

Both the task and good relationships interact for success. Let's see how:

For each task:

1. Call on the assigned presenter for an eight-minute presentation.
2. Presentations should focus on the relationship aspect of carrying out the task, not just the mechanics of the task.
3. The instructor may add a few relationships comments after each presenter.

- C.** Good Relationships Related to “Defining Volunteer Responsibilities”

1. Presenter _____
2. Instructor comments

- D.** Good Relationships Related to “Selecting and Recruiting Volunteers”

1. Presenter _____
2. Instructor comments



E. Good Relationships Related to “Coaching Volunteers”

1. Presenter _____
2. Instructor comments

F. Good Relationships Related to “Recognizing Volunteer Achievement”

1. Presenter _____
2. Instructor comments

G. Good Relationships Related to “Evaluating Volunteer Performance”

1. Presenter _____
2. Instructor comments

VI. Some Things You Do

Here are 18 things we do as we relate to volunteers—not all at once with every volunteer, but almost!

Go around the group and, in turn, have each person read an item and add his or her own insights on the item.

VII. A Closing Note

Historically, Scouting’s great success has been a result of volunteer talent and the professionals who guide and support volunteers.

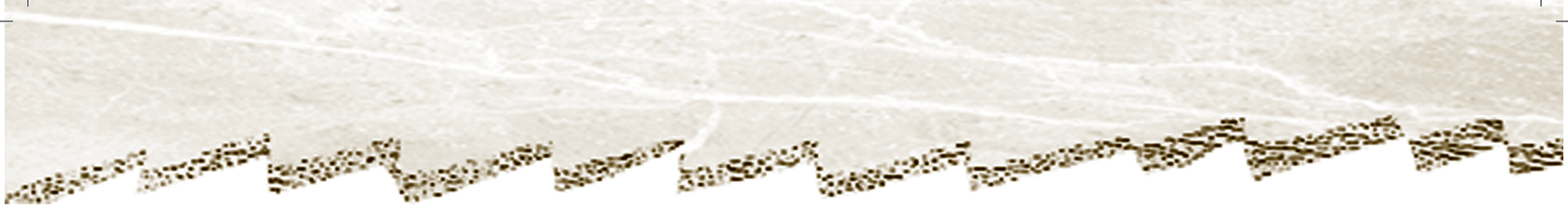
Your next promotion may well depend upon your effective recruitment of a quality volunteer team and your excellent relationships with those volunteers.

**The continuing greatness of Scouting as a volunteer movement
is in your professional hands. The BSA trusts you
with that sacred obligation.**



Tips for Better Relationships Exercise Sheet

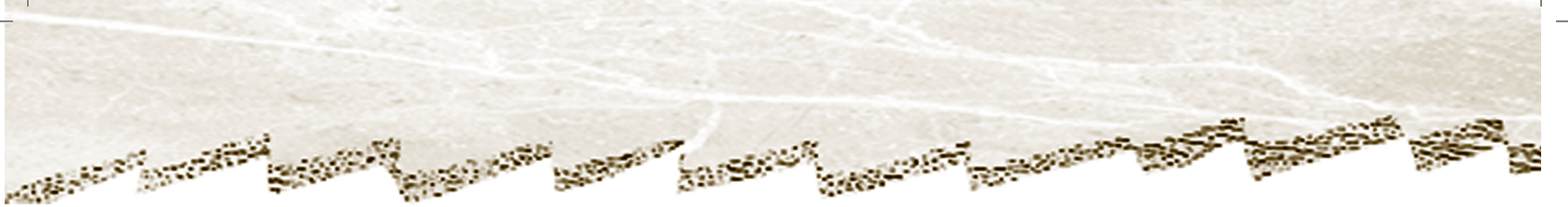
1. Intentionally begin to build your relationship with each volunteer from your very _____.
2. Set up regularly _____ and/or phone dates with key volunteers.
3. Know volunteers' _____, pronounce them _____ and, if in doubt, check the proper spellings.
4. Create a welcome environment for _____ Scouters and plan ways to incorporate them into the team.
5. Make efficient use of volunteers' _____. Don't waste it.
6. Your district and council Scouters should know that they can turn to you for _____. You, however, must create the kind of non-judgmental relationship in which they are comfortable to _____.
7. The more volunteer management layers that are superimposed on top of each other, the more the professional needs to help facilitate good _____ and _____ between people in the different layers.
8. There will inevitably be some volunteers that you don't _____ as much as others. That's human nature. However, part of being a professional is being objective and being impartial.
9. Most volunteers will feel more comfortable working with a professional who is interested in _____ as well as their Scouting responsibilities.

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10. Convey a cordial and positive attitude to a volunteer's _____, _____, work associate, or anyone else who answers their phone.
 11. Be sure your _____ and/or other _____ in the council office are alert and sensitive to volunteer needs.
 12. The further up the corporate ladder a volunteer is, the _____ they may expect from you as a professional and the _____ the energy you may need to give to meet that volunteer's comfort level.
 13. Then there is "PLT." You know what PLT is? It stands for "_____."
 14. In some instances, the function of guiding volunteers is shared. The professional is careful to avoid confusion for volunteers and tries to ensure that they receive _____ messages and have a compatible relationship with both their volunteer leader and the professional.
 15. Be sensitive to the individual _____ of each of your key people. The ability to adapt Scouting methods and their own professional style to the uniqueness of each individual and situation is what often distinguishes a _____ professional from a _____ professional.



Answers to the Tips for Better Relationships Exercise Sheet

1. Intentionally begin to build your relationship with each volunteer from your very first visit.
2. Set up regularly scheduled visits and/or phone dates with key volunteers.
3. Know volunteers' names, pronounce them correctly, and, if in doubt, check the proper spellings.
4. Create a welcome environment for new Scouters and plan ways to incorporate them into the team.
5. Make efficient use of volunteers' time. Don't waste it.
6. Your district and council Scouters should know that they can turn to you for advice or troubleshooting. You, however, must create the kind of non-judgmental relationship in which they are comfortable to ask for help.
7. The more volunteer management layers that are superimposed on top of each other, the more the professional needs to help facilitate good communication and working relationships between people in the different layers.
8. There will inevitably be some volunteers that you don't like as much as others. That's human nature. However, part of being a professional is being objective and impartial.
9. Most volunteers will feel more comfortable working with a professional who is interested in the rest of their lives as well as their Scouting responsibilities.
10. Convey a cordial and positive attitude to a volunteer's secretary, family member, work associate, or anyone else who answers their phone.

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11. Be sure your secretary and/or other staff employees in the council office are alert and sensitive to volunteer needs.
 12. The further up the corporate ladder a volunteer is, the more they may expect from you as a professional and the greater the energy you may need to give to meet that volunteer's comfort level.
 13. Then there is "PLT." You know what PLT is? It stands for "piddly little things."
 14. In some instances, the function of guiding volunteers is shared. The professional is careful to avoid confusion for volunteers and tries to ensure that they receive consistent messages and have a compatible relationship with both their volunteer leader and the professional.
 15. Be sensitive to the individual differences of each of your key people. The ability to adapt Scouting methods and their own professional style to the uniqueness of each individual and situation is what often distinguishes a great professional from a mediocre professional.