Title: Roundtable Commissioner Basic

Time allotted	180 minutes
Teaching format	Instructor led discussion with PowerPoint

Resources

Handouts	• Unit level JTE Scorecards • Onboarding Progress Record
Equipment and materials	• Computer and projector • Roundtable Commissioner Basic PowerPoint presentation • Roundtable Commissioner Basic Course plan • Whiteboard or flipchart
Resources for additional participant learning	• National Commissioner Website (https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/)

Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 5 minutes

Welcome to training for the Roundtable Commissioner.
Over the course of this introductory training, you will learn the foundations of commissioner service and contextualize where unit service fits within the functioning of the district. We will pay particular attention to the role of the roundtable commissioner and emphasize how roundtables strengthen units through the give and take of information, networking, and informal training.

Introduce the learning objectives, noting that by the end of this session, each participant should…

- Understand the Role Roundtable Plays in Unit Service
- Identify the elements of a successful Roundtable
- Recognize the Roundtable Support Structure

Mission and Vision

Commissioners share the mission of the Boy Scouts of America: To prepare youth to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. The vision of unit service is to assist units in ensuring every member of the BSA has a great Scouting Experience. To this end, commissioners have five objectives.

Objectives of commissioner service

All Commissioners Share these objectives which are to:

Supporting unit growth and retention through the *Journey to Excellence*

JTE measures performance characteristics that unlock the door to a successful unit. We should analyze the unit's program and identify JTE areas where help is needed to move the unit to a higher level of JTE success. A new and revised *Annual Service Plan* will help support this task.

Making meaningful unit contacts that capture in commissioner tools their strengths, needs, and a unit service plan that enables continuing improvement. Our core task remains making significant contacts with units over the course of a year. *Commissioner Tools* enables commissioners to develop a customized *Unit Service Plan* to address identified needs.

Linking unit needs to district operating committee resources

The concept of linkage is critical to our execution mission. The unit commissioner is a link to the subject matter experts and resources who reside at the district committee level. The *Unit Service Plan* is used to capture the specifics of the linkages that need to be established.

Supporting timely charter renewal

Commissioners own unit retention. A quality program attracts youth and adults to Scouting and is a key factor in retaining them. To fulfill our mission in helping units better serve more youth through Scouting, we should support the district operating committee's efforts to build membership and meet our responsibility to increase unit retention. Effective and timely charter renewal is a key part of retaining units.

Supporting unit leaders by collecting and distributing information, enabling program training and providing networking opportunities. One of the methods commissioners provide these opportunities is through monthly roundtables.

Commissioner goals and methods

These goals and methods are universal to all commissioners but how each commissioner achieves these goals and employs the methods is determined by the type of commissioner they are.

The goals of unit service are to facilitate an increased number of units, and the retention of units. Implementation of unit service plans through collaborative detailed assessments and an increased number of unit contacts enables commissioners to meet these goals.
The methods we employ include the steps that are laid out in the *Unit Roadmap*, assisting the units we serve in recruiting and training key unit leaders and new member coordinators, collaborating with the unit Key 3 to develop and implement a unit service plan. We also encourage the use of the Journey to Excellence to guide continuous improvement and use the suite of MyScouting tools to stay abreast of the status of the units we serve. We never have enough commissioners, so we continuously recruit more, and we assign the resources we have to units with the greatest need for support.

District Level Unit Service – 20 minutes

Unit service

A district's commissioner corps is the link between the district and the local units.
It is important to understand how commissioners are organized at the district level. Understanding the structure allows for better service to the units, and when necessary, the organization can be changed at any time to meet the needs of the district.

Types and levels of commissioner support

Commissioners come in all shapes, sizes, and experiences and they can be organized in many ways but there are just three types of commissioners:

- Unit commissioners
- Roundtable commissioners
- Administrative commissioners

Those that are not unit commissioners or roundtable commissioners are *administrative* commissioners.

Role of the unit commissioner

A commissioner plays several roles. To include being a friend, a representative, a unit "doctor" or paramedic, a teacher, and a coach.

The commissioner is a **friend** of the unit. Of all the roles, this one is the most important. Building a great relationship with the unit leadership is key to success. It springs from the attitude, "I care, I am here to help you, what can I do for you?" Caring is the ingredient that makes commissioner service successful. Be an advocate of the unit needs. Commissioners who makes themself known and accepted with the unit leadership will be called on to help in times of trouble.

The commissioner is a **representative**. The average unit leader is totally occupied in working with the scouts. Some scouts have little if any contact with the Boy Scouts of America other

than your visits to their meeting. To them, you may be the Boy Scouts of America. Be a good example. Show that you believe in the ideals, the principles, and the policies of the Scouting movement. Represent it well!

The commissioner is a unit "**doctor**". As "doctor" you know that prevention is better than a cure, so you try to see that your units make good "health practices" a way of life. Sometimes being a doctor and performing triage on a unit to keep its program going or providing support to their leadership is critical. When problems arise, and they will even in the best unit, act quickly. Observe symptoms, diagnose the real ailment, prescribe a remedy, and follow up with the "patient."

The commissioner is a **teacher**. As a commissioner, you will have a wonderful opportunity to participate in the growth of unit leaders by sharing your knowledge with them. 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.

The commissioner is a **coach**. As a Scouting coach, you will help guide units in solving their own problems. Coaching is the best role for you when unit leaders don't recognize a problem and where solutions are not clear-cut. Everyone needs coaching or assistance from time to time, even experienced leaders. You provide them with different "plays" that might be the right one for them to move ahead or succeed at solving a problem.

Council Commissioner structure

The Council Commissioner leads all Commissioner personnel in the Council. Their duties are set forth in the Bylaws of the local Council.
The Council Commissioner is selected by the Council nominating committee and is elected at the annual meeting of the local Council and serves as a member of the Council Key 3.
The Council Commissioner also serves as an officer of the local Council, a member of the Executive Board, a member of the Council Executive Committee, and a National Council Representative.

Assistant Council Commissioners

Coordination of all Roundtables held in the Council is under the guidance of the **Assistant Council Commissioner for Roundtable**.
This person reports to the Council Commissioner and conducts an annual Council-wide Roundtable planning meeting followed by a midyear review.
This process brings a level of standardization to District Roundtables in terms of content by promoting the use of ***Roundtable Support Pages*** on the National website and other resources while allowing local flexibility for the Districts.

In some larger Councils, there may be multiple Assistant Council Commissioners for Roundtable depending on the local needs.

District Commissioners

The District Commissioner is recommended by the District Nominating Committee for approval and appointment by the Council Executive Board with the concurrence of the Scout Executive. The District Commissioner works directly with the District Chair and the District professional as part of the District Key 3. District Commissioners take ownership of the District team of Commissioners to ensure that all units are well cared for throughout the year, paying special attention to new units as these units are the most vulnerable to not renew their Charters.
The District Commissioner leads the Commissioner staff of the District, guiding and measuring the District's unit service function.

Assistant district commissioner

Assistant district commissioners can make or break a district's ability to see that every unit receives competent commissioner service.
Even the best district commissioner in the council cannot personally train and guide all unit commissioners in the district. So, assistant district commissioners are assigned certain units in the district, and they supervise the unit commissioners who serve those units. Assistant district commissioners are appointed by the district commissioners.
Assistant district commissioners work closely with the district commissioner and district executive. This team must have a vision of effective Scouting, and they must communicate that vision—through unit commissioners—to every unit leader in the district.

Roundtable Commissioners

District Commissioners and ADC's for Roundtable provide direct support for the Roundtable Program within their District.
The District Commissioner is overall responsible for all district roundtables. They must be involved with supporting roundtable if they expect their Roundtable Commissioner's to be successful.
The Assistant District Commissioner for roundtable reports to the District Commissioner and is responsible for ensuring that quality roundtables are conducted within the district for all programs.
In this position they work with the program specific Roundtable Commissioners (Cub Scout, Scouts BSA, Venturing,) who have been recruited by the District Commissioner or ADC for Roundtables. The promotion of roundtable at district events is an important facet of this position.

He or she should also work in cooperation with the **Assistant Council Commissioner for Roundtable** to see that annual planning and midyear review programs are well-attended by the District's program specific unit Roundtable Commissioners.

In addition, the Assistant District Commissioner should make sure the ***Roundtable Support*** resources are used so that the units will be getting proper program materials.

District Roundtable

Roundtable programs are implemented by the roundtable commissioners for Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturing crews.
These individuals are responsible for coordinating and conducting the various parts of the roundtable meetings. They make their contributions with guidance and help from the assistant council and district commissioners.
Assistant roundtable commissioners conduct tasks directly to benefit the program-specific unit commissioners, assisting in the development and delivery of the monthly meeting agendas and program items.
Each roundtable commissioner may have as many assistants as needed. For example, Cub Scout roundtables may need several Assistants for their program breakouts while Scouts BSA roundtables may not need as many.

District Commissioner Staff Organization

This is a typical organizational structure for a district commissioner staff.
Administrative commissioners are represented in yellow
Unit service commissioners are displayed in green
Roundtable commissioners are displayed in orange

Remember, this is just one possible way that a district commissioner can organize the district commissioner staff. A district commissioner has the latitude to organize unit service to meet the needs of their district.

Break – 5 Minutes

Roundtable Fundamentals – 20 minutes

Roundtable Objectives and Purpose

The objectives of roundtable are to support unit leaders by:

- collecting and distributing information
- enabling program training,
- providing networking opportunities.

In addition, there are two main purposes of Roundtable:
First. To provide the ***skill to do***—skills, techniques, information, program ideas—the know-how that makes for successful unit operation.
Second. To provide unit leadership with the ***will to do***—the morale, enthusiasm, inspiration, and vision that periodically renew the desire to serve youth.

The Six "W"'s

Let's look at the "Six W's" of roundtables.
They are:

What
Why
Who
When
Where
Wise

The First "W"

What is a roundtable?

- The roundtable is an important function of the district that provides important supplemental training to leaders.
- It is the upcoming monthly program theme in action.
- The purpose of the roundtable is to help units succeed by providing useful program ideas, information on policy, and current information on council and district events and training opportunities.
- It is the most effective medium for getting the Scouting program to the units.

The Second "W"

Why do we have roundtables?

- To provide unit leaders with the skills, techniques, district/council information, usable program ideas, and the know-how to make the unit operation successful.
- To provide unit leaders with the morale, enthusiasm, inspiration, and motivation that renews their desire to continue serving youth through Scouting.
- To keep leaders up to date on the program of the BSA.
- To network with other leaders.

The Third "W"

Who is the Assistant District commissioner for Roundtable?
This person is the program team leader selected by and accountable to the district commissioner. The ADC for Roundtable must be capable of and responsible for recruiting, training, and guiding program specific roundtable commissioners and assistants as they plan and conduct monthly roundtables that achieve the roundtable objectives.

Who is the roundtable team?
It is the responsibility of the ADC for Roundtable to recruit, train, and motivate volunteers with special abilities and knowledge of the BSA programs to help conduct monthly roundtables that achieve the roundtable objectives. The number of volunteers serving as roundtable commissioners will vary depending on the needs of the district.
The roundtable commissioner team is responsible to the roundtable commissioner.

The Fourth "W"

When are roundtables held?
The roundtable should be held on the same day every month. Scouters like to count on a regular meeting pattern and appreciate that the meeting will start on time and dismiss on time.

Dates of the roundtable need to be established early enough to be included in unit, district, and council calendars.

The Fifth "W"

Where are roundtables held? Are you hosting in-person roundtables or virtual roundtables? Maybe a hybrid approach?
For in-person roundtables, a regular meeting place at a central location to all units is usually the most effective. In areas where distance can be a factor, some districts use a "floating" roundtable that meets in a different community each month. Likewise, a virtual roundtable might be a better fit for geographically challenged districts and/or councils. Weather conditions could also be a factor in promoting the use of virtual roundtables to accommodate for the safety of roundtable attendees.
For virtual roundtables, it will be important to ensure a stable platform (such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.) and reliable internet for the host and co-host(s).
Consider the following when selecting an in-person roundtable location:

- Year-round availability of the facility
- Access for those with disabilities
- Rest rooms, drinking fountains
- Parking space
- Heating, lighting, ventilation
- Chalkboards or Whiteboards
- Space for activities, including rooms for split sessions
- Opening and closing the facility

The Sixth "W"

Like everything in Scouting we must have a Wise use of funds.
Some of the expenses involved in conducting a roundtable include name tags, handouts, rental fees, craft materials, refreshments.

Large budgets are not required for successful roundtables and should not become a stumbling block.
Important points:

- Funds may be available through the council operating budget. NOTE: Districts are a part of the council and do not maintain bank accounts.
- Refreshments (and materials) may be donated by packs or outside sources.
- A major expense can be avoided if the meeting place is made available at no cost.

Who Attends Roundtable?

So, Who Attends Roundtables? Who do you know that SHOULD be attending roundtable?
Roundtables are designed for all unit leaders and committee members.

- Cub Scout leader roundtables are for Cubmasters, den leaders, Webelos den leaders, all assistants, and pack committee members.
- Scouts BSA leader roundtables are for Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, and troop committee members.
- Venturing forums are for adult crew leaders. It is also a great opportunity for youth officers to attend when appropriate.
- All Commissioners can also benefit from attending roundtable. It is especially beneficial to attend the program area for which they are responsible.

In the busy world today, it is understood with everyone's full schedules that all unit leaders might not be able to attend EVERY monthly roundtable. But it is almost ALWAYS possible that at least one leader from each unit is available to attend the monthly roundtable. Some unit's schedule rotations for which leaders attend roundtable to make sure there is always someone there each month. Unit representation is important to make sure that none of the valuable information passed at roundtable is missed.

Roundtable is Unit Service

Roundtable has also been called "Group Unit Service" as Roundtable Commissioners also may consult individually with unit leaders before and after the formal meetings.
This is unit service.
Roundtable Commissioners provide Unit Service Too…They are a:
Friend of every unit
Representative of the BSA
Unit "doctor"
Teacher
Counselor
So, let's discuss the roundtable's role in unit service.
Roundtable is a critical piece for success in our districts. It serves as the front line of unit service.

Roundtable Commissioners learn about problems in group and individual discussions that occur at roundtable.
They know who is attending and who isn't…. or who isn't anymore.
Units, especially newer units, and newer leaders emulate what they get from being at roundtable.
Roundtable commissioners are also active participants in the monthly district commissioner staff meetings. Here you can learn, in more detail common issues that units in the district are struggling with and design roundtable programs to assist units in resolving their issues.
Roundtables are full of energy and information that will help units put on a successful program back at home.
The District Commissioner should fully utilize and document all the unit service opportunities provided by the roundtable team.

Monthly Commissioner Staff Meeting

These meetings are significant to motivate commissioners to do their job, to support them and provide feedback, to hold commissioners accountable for a high level of quality service and to plan, train and report on the status of units. The meeting occurs monthly and is run by the District Commissioner.
You as a Roundtable commissioner should come prepared to discuss with your Assistant District Commissioner, observations you have made from recent roundtables along with your plans for future roundtables. Come prepared with a current roundtable attendance report to share with unit commissioners. Let them know which of their units are or are not attending roundtable.
Share a copy of your district's roundtable analysis report with Unit commissioners and Assistant district commissioners.
Listen to ADC reports concerning unit service plans. Try and determine if there are common issues that units are experiencing so that roundtable can be planned to help address those issues. It would be helpful to run a copy of the units with service plans report to see for yourselves what issues there might be.

This meeting sets the stage for how you interact with Unit Commissioners so that they can perform their duties in service to units.

Roundtable Administration - 15 Minutes

Position Elements

In addition to the regular responsibilities of the ADC and ACC there are also six position elements associated with each position.

Recruiting

No roundtable program is successful without enough trained commissioners to staff all the roundtable team positions.

It is never too early to cross train one or more volunteers for roundtable staff positions. You should always be planning for replacement roundtable staff.
One of the most important roles of an ADC is to assist the District Commissioner with identifying and recruiting Roundtable Commissioners and Assistant Roundtable Commissioners.
Having multiple people recruiting Roundtable and Assistant Roundtable Commissioners in your district makes the work of achieving an adequate number of trained roundtable staff easier.
The ADC should also make sure that the new commissioners are properly registered with the Boy Scouts of America and they complete the appropriate required training.
The ACC should assist the Council Commissioner in recruiting additional ACCs for roundtable as required by the council structure.
The ACC should also assist the District Commissioner's in recruiting necessary Roundtable Commissioners as required by their district structure.
ACC's should always encourage and assist District Roundtable Commissioners to recruit as many Assistant Roundtable Commissioners as needed to effectively accomplish roundtable functions.

Talent Management

No roundtable program is successful without retaining enough trained commissioners to fill the required roundtable team positions.
Everyone likes recognition and no one is more deserving than a volunteer Scouter.
Use every opportunity to recognize the roundtable staff.
The ADC for roundtable must become personally acquainted with and maintain regular contact with District Roundtable Commissioners and Assistant Roundtable Commissioners, including locations, dates, and times for roundtable meetings.
The ADC should make occasional in-person visits and evaluations of programs presented.
Make sure the roundtable staff get both informal and formal recognition. They do not have an easy job and they deserve recognition.
The ADC should also provide updated district roundtable information to the District Commissioner and Assistant Council Commissioner as appropriate.
Just like the District ADCs, the ACC for Roundtable must become personally acquainted with and maintain regular contact with other ACCs and the District Roundtable Commissioners and Assistant Roundtable Commissioners, including locations, dates, and times for roundtable meetings.
The ACC should make occasional in-person visits and evaluations of all their district programs.
The ACC should also provide updated roundtable information to the Council Commissioner when appropriate.

Training Support

Training is an essential requirement for program specific Roundtable Commissioners and their Assistant Roundtable Commissioners.
In order to provide appropriate training to the local units, the roundtable staff must be current with their own training and should have a working knowledge of new information that applies to their program area as it becomes available.
The ADC is responsible to ensure that district Roundtable Commissioners and their Assistant Commissioners take training for their positions and encourage them to participate in other training opportunities as may be recommended by the district or council.
The monthly commissioner meeting is a great place to provide new program updates for the roundtable staff.
The ACC should provide and promote training, using national materials, for all roundtable related commissioners at both the council and district levels on a regular basis.

Program Planning and Content

Roundtable program content should be planned and executed using the National Roundtable support materials that have been tailored to meet the needs of the local districts and councils.
The ADC should work with the District Commissioner and other key volunteers to design a district roundtable that meets the unique needs of the council and district, while taking advantage of national support materials and programs of emphasis.
The ADC should also ensure that Roundtable Commissioners and Assistant Roundtable Commissioners in the district actively participate in the council annual planning, follow-up, and training functions.
The ACC is responsible to work with the Council Commissioner and other key volunteers to design a council roundtable that meets the unique needs of the council, while taking advantage of national support materials and programs of emphasis.
It is also important for the ACC to conduct an annual planning/training gathering for all roundtable-related commissioners and conduct quarterly or semi-annual follow-up meetings to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.

Technology Utilization

The more that technology improves the more opportunities there are to harness technology to support the Roundtable program.
Technology supported Roundtable information is especially important for use in remote districts and for Scout Leaders that need to access Roundtable information when they cannot participate in a traditional Roundtable event.

The ADC should promote the use of technology to ensure that Roundtable meetings are adequately promoted and that the meetings engage and empower the volunteers.
The ADC should also explore the use of technology to support those who are not able to attend the meetings in person or to otherwise distribute materials and resources to assist the volunteers.
Just like the District ADCs, the Council ACC should promote the use of technology to ensure that Roundtable meetings are adequately promoted and that the meetings engage and empower the volunteers.
Additionally, the ACC should also explore the use of technology to support those who are not able to attend the meetings in person or to otherwise distribute materials and resources to assist the volunteers. This could include hosting important Roundtable materials on the Council Website.

Information Dissemination and Promotion

If you do not promote roundtable you guarantee less participation. If your roundtable does not provide valuable information for those Scouters attending, they are less likely to return the next month.
There are several places within the components of roundtable to achieve effective give and take of information: pre-meeting networking, hot topics, safety moments, program-specific breakouts, and post-meeting networking.
The ADC is responsible for disseminating current BSA news and points of interest, including new merit badges, program changes, upcoming literature, etc., so the district roundtable provides valuable and timely information for the local volunteers.
The ADC should assist the program specific Roundtable Commissioners in creating a presence at district events by promoting Scout Leaders' Roundtable as ***THE*** place to go for leaders who want to be in the know, share Scouting fellowship, and have FUN!
The Council ACC should support the District ADCs in information dissemination and promoting roundtable.
Council level resources may be greater than those of a District and can be an excellent asset for promoting Roundtables for all of the Districts within the Council.
An unexecuted plan is of no value. Once a *Unit Service Plan* is developed, the unit commissioner follows up on the progress of the plan through monthly simple assessments that record the achievement of the goals identified in the unit service plan.
The unit commissioner is an essential element of the *Unit Service Plan's* success. An engaged unit commissioner works closely with the unit Key 3 to continually assess progress and help the unit *and* the district operating committee maintain accountability and make course corrections when necessary.
Updating the *Detailed Unit Assessment* at six-month intervals or when unit leadership changes will help ensure the unit continues to grow and provide the best possible program to the youth it serves.

Break – 5 Minutes

Roundtable Organization – 25 minutes

The District Roundtable Organization

The District Commissioner has the overall responsibility for the District Roundtable program. However, most of the responsibility for Roundtable falls on the shoulders of the individual Roundtable Commissioner's.

The District Commissioner usually has several Service Areas and Specialized functions for which they are responsible.

So, to break up the "span of control," or the number of people directly supervised, the District Commissioner usually appoints several Assistant District Commissioners or (ADCs) to directly supervise each of the assigned areas of responsibility.

It is recommended that each District appoint an ADC over Roundtable to help share the administrative responsibilities of coordinating the program specific Roundtables.

Each of the program specific Roundtable Commissioners would report to the District Commissioner through their ADC for Roundtable. Each of the Respective Program specific Roundtable Commissioners would appoint as many assistants as they need to perform their duties.

The exact structure of the District Commissioner's Team varies from District to District based on their individual circumstances.

Program Specific Roundtable Commissioners

It is certainly understandable why there are separate Roundtable Commissioners for each program. The programs all have significant differences, but the duties and responsibilities for each Roundtable Commissioner are essentially the same.

Program Specific Roundtable Commissioners are normally responsible for their entire roundtable program; from planning, to executing, to evaluating the effectiveness, to implementing positive changes and then starting the process all over all again, but they are never left alone without a support structure.

To be successful, it is highly recommended that Roundtable Commissioners should have an annual planning session, quarterly or semi-annual update meetings and monthly staff meetings. This helps to develop a coordinated effort with other program specific Roundtable Commissioners within their district and other districts within the council to share resources when possible.

There are usually too many moving parts for one person to reasonably handle so that is why recruiting a great team of Assistant Roundtable Commissioners is essential.

The Roundtable Support Structure was created to support our unit leaders.

But the most important function of roundtable is providing the framework for a great program for our youth!

Assistant Roundtable Commissioners

Every Roundtable Commissioner should have a team of support staff to help them provide the best roundtable possible. Assistant Roundtable Commissioners are your Support Team!

It is the responsibility of the Roundtable Commissioner to recruit enough individuals to meet the specific needs for the size and program type of their roundtable. There are no limits to the number of Assistant Roundtable Commissioners that can be on your Team. There should never be less than one Assistant Roundtable Commissioner for each program to serve as a back-up for each of the program specific Roundtable Commissioners.

The unit leaders expect roundtable to happen as scheduled. The show must go on every month, even if the Roundtable Commissioner has a conflict and cannot attend.

So now let's talk about each of the specific program roundtables.

Cub Scout Roundtable

So now let's talk about each of the specific program roundtables.

These breakout sessions provide the opportunity to give ideas to Pack-level volunteers: den leaders, cubmasters, and committee members.

If using the nationally produced video content, the Roundtable Commissioner will act as a facilitator or guide for discussion related to the topic at hand. On the other hand, if the Roundtable Commissioner wishes to provide some other content related to Cub Scouting, s/he should feel free to do so. The idea is to be flexible and work with the ADC of roundtable to provide the best possible content to district Cub Scouters.

Scouts BSA Roundtable Program

The Scouts BSA Roundtable Program helps troop leaders prepare to teach a skill or present a program feature material on a *youth level* by presenting it on that level at the roundtable.

Please consider using the Scouts BSA program resources webpage:
https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/resources/

While fun is an important ingredient, a roundtable is more effective when conducted as a workshop rather than an evening of entertainment. (For example, don't just show a movie.)

Always involve the group actively in the presentation. Showing someone how to do something is not enough.

Lord Baden-Powell said that teaching is done mainly by means of games, practices, and competitions.

Prepare, practice, and personalize your presentation.

Venturing Forum Program

Venturing Forums should be conducted as part of the district roundtables.
Venturing forums are designed for all adult crew leaders and crew committee members.
On occasion, youth officers should attend also.
Promote youth officer leadership by having them give skill presentations.

Elements of a Successful Roundtable

People will want to come when:
They get specific helps they can use during the coming month.
There is a separate, helpful session for each program phase. Cub Scouting people are not much interested in discussing Scouts BSA nor do Venturing leaders want to spend the evening watching Cub Scout demonstrations.
There is a genuine sense of fellowship. They need to feel that they are wanted, that they are important, that they belong.

Learning is largely by doing or watching instead of just listening. The ideal is to let the individual watch and then practice. In a virtual roundtable setting, you will want to give the attendees time to practice their new skill at home and perhaps share back with the group how they have done.
A dependable schedule is maintained. This means both a regular night and a regular hour for opening and closing.
Roundtables early in the month allow time for other steps in unit program planning before the end of the month.

Making Roundtable Fun

In addition to providing great ideas and information; every Roundtable should have a portion of the time dedicated to having fun!
How to have fun with each program will differ based on the capacity and the maturity of the youth.
It may seem that the ages of the youth are close, but even the age differences within the Cub Scout program vary as they progress from den to den within the pack.
Some Venturing Crews also have different areas of focus. So you must take everything into consideration when planning for fun.
Every youth enjoys having fun, and every leader needs to learn to have fun themselves.
Lord Baden-Powell once said,
“The spirit is in there in every boy; it has to be discovered and brought to light.”
One of the easiest ways to get to see the spirit in every Scout is having fun with them.

Roundtables should be a model for a unit and should include teaching adult leaders how to have fun!

Roundtable Promotion

Promotion is a key ingredient to increasing your roundtable attendance

You can promote your roundtable via:
Council and district newsletter or website
Social media
News releases and local media
Monthly fliers
Telephone or personal contact plan
Inventive, simple gimmicks, etc.
Trading post or service center posters
Presentation of recognitions—national and local
"Unit spotlight"—a different unit is featured each month
Phone chains
Agendas—the best way to get them back
Mail announcements
Email messages
Personal invitations!

The important thing to remember is you are competing for the valuable and limited time of the Scouters.
The more ways you promote roundtable, the greater your success.
The more leaders that attend roundtable, the greater the benefit will be for the youth programs.

More About Roundtable Promotion

Roundtable promotion is more than just letting leaders know when and where the roundtable is happening.
You should include the following information in any of your roundtable promotional materials:
• Who? Which leaders would you like to see at roundtables? Be specific with job titles.
• What? In-person roundtable is an interactive, hands-on meeting in which leaders are actively involved. Virtual roundtable adds a certain complexity to an hands-on approach, but with creativity a Roundtable Commissioner can keep attendees engaged from home.
• When and where? Give the date, day of week, time and place, virtual or in-person.

• Why? Explain the purpose—Let leaders know how the roundtable will help them in their leadership positions.
• Contact person - Include the name and/or phone number of a contact person to answer leaders' questions about roundtables

Attendance and Retaining Attendance

Consider the following points for attendance:
• What is your current attendance—units and leaders?
• What is the potential in your district—units and leaders?
• What percentage of units and leaders are attending?
• What is your goal as roundtable commissioner?
A well-planned roundtable program will inspire leaders to try the program ideas they see, and they will want to come back for more ideas, fun, and fellowship.
Try the following ideas to help retain attendance:
Attendance awards
Traveling attendance trophy
Door prizes or special drawings
Refreshments
The secret to better attendance is not in making people come to your roundtable meetings but in making them WANT to come!
Tracking attendance provides you one of the metrics to measure the benefits of Roundtable.

Roundtable Features in Commissioner Tools

Roundtables are such a key part of Scouting's on-going training opportunities that we've long seen the need to track what is offered and what units attend Roundtable.
The Commissioner Task force has updated the Roundtable program and brought focus upon the Roundtable Commissioner positions.
As Commissioner Tools was developed, the Task Force created a section within the system specifically for tracking Roundtables.
Roundtable Commissioners can create a new Roundtable Event for each program and then add the number of attendees from each unit.
This tool allows tracking of Roundtable attendance by Percent of units attending, leaders per unit and the total leaders by program.
With the approval of the District Commissioner, Unit contacts (visits) can also be made in Commissioner Tools by Roundtable Commissioners that provide direct service to a unit.
For consistency, all Commissioners should follow the district's criteria for entering unit visits.

For more information, please review the Commissioner Tools training module on Roundtable Entries.

Reflection Period – Start, Stop, Continue

Take time for a Reflection Period after each monthly roundtable.
It is the responsibility of the Roundtable Commissioner to reflect on the success of each Roundtable and continuously make improvements to their program.
An effective tool is the Start, Stop, and Continue Method.
Start (What should we start doing that will make things better?)
Stop (What should we stop doing because it is not helping?)
Continue (What is our strength, and what is working well that we want to continue doing?)
After using the Start, Stop, and Continue Method, try to implement your improvements for future Roundtables.

Planning Roundtable: Using the Roundtable support webpage

Planning ahead is the easiest road to a successful roundtable!

There is almost no limit to the number of printed and electronic books and manuals available to support your roundtable planning.
There are also many internet resources available too such as the frequently updated Roundtable Support Webpage:
https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support/

Quality Roundtables

If you want to be successful, quality roundtables require significant planning.
Roundtables should be planned on both a long-range and a short-range basis.
Planning for the next year starts at the end of the Scouting year. This is called the Annual Planning Conference.
Regular planning updates on a semi-annual or quarterly basis are also recommended to discuss any major program updates to the roundtable plan; such as discussing a new advancement policy that has been recently released.
Short-term planning is essential to make sure all roundtable assignments and logistic issues are confirmed.
The Monthly planning meeting is extremely important for roundtables to be effective. This meeting is held during the monthly District Commissioner Staff meeting to verify everything is ready to go for the next roundtable.

Who Plans Roundtable?

The roundtable commissioner and roundtable team plan and conduct regular quality roundtables that meet the objectives of Scouting.
The roundtable commissioner is responsible for scheduling and presiding over the district's annual roundtable planning conference, which is attended by the roundtable team.
The district commissioner and the district executive are invited to take part in the long-term planning process.

5 Step Planning Process

Accomplishing anything requires planning. Before we get specific about how to plan a roundtable, we need to understand planning in general terms.
The roundtable planning process is done in five steps:
1. Understand what you want to accomplish by setting goals or learning objectives.
2. Think of ways to achieve these goals.
3. Write them down in a step-by-step process.
4. Do it!
5. Evaluate it.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Unfortunately, many people jump directly to step 2 and omit steps 3 and 5 altogether.
Roundtables will be successful only if you plan in advance and follow through by using all five of these important steps.

Annual Roundtable Planning

Some of the things to include in your annual roundtable planning conference are:

- What are your main program features going to be?
- Are roundtables coordinated with your council and district calendars?
- Are you going to have indoor roundtables or outdoor roundtables, or both?
- Will there be any special events?

Complete the annual roundtable planning form and distribute to all roundtable team members so everyone knows the plan.

Planning Considerations

Discuss the physical arrangements for your roundtable, whether virtual or in-person events:
Time
Location
Parking
Restrooms
Meeting rooms for breakouts

Tables/chairs
Electrical outlets

In the case of a virtual roundtable format, you might consider opening up to 15 minutes early to encourage networking and closing the platform 15 mintues after the meeting to allow for "parking lot" conversations. Also, you should consider having a co-host to assist with the technical side of hosting a virtual meeting.
How will you build?
A worthwhile program
Enthusiasm
Unity
Keep it Simple-Make it Fun – (KISMIF)!
What kind of displays do you need?
District banner—this could list all of the district units by number or name
Posters (*Boys' Life,* program themes, events/activities, etc.)

Semi-annual or Quarterly Planning Updates

Meetings to discuss updates can be done on a semi-annual basis or on a quarterly basis as determined by the district.

Each quarter the roundtable commissioners and district executives should meet to appraise progress, learn up-to-date information on coming activities, and exchange information from each other's recent roundtable experiences.

Monthly Roundtable Planning

Planning begins this month for next month's roundtable. Monthly planning also includes reminding units of assignments for the following month at the roundtable.
At a monthly roundtable planning session, you should review and evaluate quarterly and annual plans.
Review current unit, district, and council needs that will be addressed at the next roundtable.
Review the ingredients of a roundtable program: (Note that most of the ingredients are used each time; however, at certain times of the year, the roundtable commissioner may conduct a special program - such as a roundtable cookout - and decide not to use all of the ingredients.

If you utilize a roundtable team, then team planning meetings should be held on the same night and at the same place each month.

Items to Accomplish

The following should be done at these team meetings:

- Evaluate the last roundtable. Use the Start, Stop, Continue method mentioned earlier.
- Review the Roundtable Support webpage (https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support/)
- For in-person roundtables, you should account for any pre-meeting activities or networking opportunities.
- Make telephone assignments to the team for all units contacted.
- If you have one, discuss newsletter topics.
- Prepare roundtable agenda.

Planning Resources

Roundtable Commissioners should be aware of the resources available to you as you plan your monthly program.

Such as:

- Roundtable Support webpage
- BSA literature
- Material available locally from the council/district, and/or community.

The Roundtable Support webpage is designed to help you plan successful roundtable programs for your district. This website is updated frequently and includes the key elements for presentation of the roundtable with recommended times for each activity to help you maintain a reliable schedule.

Also included are Hot Topic plans that can be used flexibly to meet the needs of combined roundtable group as needed.

Additional Resources

There are some great resources available from the BSA on the Program Support Resources page. It provides information and guidance on the latest changes in specific programs whether it be Cub Scouts to Sea Scouts. Change is a constant throughout the national level programs and flowing down this information is an important part of ensuring quality programs for all youth participants of the BSA. This is a major role of Roundtable.

The BSA Commissioner Webpage for Roundtable Support is an outstanding place to find out about new things going on in the Roundtable world.

There are also numerous private and public web pages and social media pages related to all Scouting programs, including ones specific for Roundtable.

Components of Roundtable - 30 Minutes

Roundtable Components

The Roundtable Planning Team needs to understand the major components of a roundtable. It is useful to note that there is a high degree of flexibility in how a roundtable meeting can be managed. Today, many councils and districts usually run roundtables in either 60 or 90 minutes. Most would agree that there are many inefficiencies in the way our meetings are run today. With those factors in mind, these two flexible formats were developed. Additionally, if a roundtable team were to decide to not use one of the topics, or to take more time than is suggested for another topic, that is completely acceptable.

The overall intent of these two formats is to reinforce that roundtables can be tailored to meet the local district and council needs. It has also been developed to provide a suggested outline to help provide some structure and uniformity for your meetings, yet at the same time allow as much flexibility as needed so that each council can meet their own local needs. Encourage your roundtable teams to take advantage of how these new formats can be more time efficient and provide all the meaningful benefits to your volunteers.

In a recent survey of commissioners, over 90% of respondents agreed that the new formats would work well for distributing and collecting information. Also, 75% of those respondents agreed the new format would work for program training and networking.

In another survey of unit leaders, the majority agreed that the new formats will enable achieving the four core functions of roundtables.

WRAP-UP: In summary, the new RT approach and virtual meeting tool is simple, flexible, utilizes a common approach, and meets all the needs that our volunteers expect from a RT, and it saves us all a most valuable resource – Time! Given the experience that many of you acquired during our shut-down time periods, this new approach will be an easy and welcomed transition for use going forward.

Opening

The roundtable commissioners can start all roundtables as they wish. If they want to start the meetings with the pledge, oath, and law they will be able to. For in person meetings a roundtable commissioner can use local units and leaders to complete the program. As part of the “Virtual Roundtable,” Roundtable Commissioners will have access to video-based openings from the Roundtable Support Webpage that they can use to open the meeting. If the opening does not include those pieces the roundtable commissioner can add it themselves or use a video from a previous month. The opening videos will be brief leaving ample time for the roundtable commissioner to incorporate other programs as desired.

The opening gives several opportunities to tailor the opening time to meet the needs of the council and district such as:

- Setting the stage for that month's roundtable.
- Being a "champion" for the program and highlight council, district, and unit accomplishments.
- Networking is another great opportunity in the opening time
- Engaging in-person icebreakers or virtual icebreakers.

Not all the examples above are necessary for a good opening. The Roundtable Commissioner should decide what is best for their roundtable and what will fit the suggested timeframe. For the 50-minute version, the opening would last 8 minutes and for the 75-minute version, the opening would last 10 minutes.

Hot Topics

Scouting volunteers will have access to exciting new topics of interest each month.
These hot topics will run 5-20 minutes depending on the topic and the length of the roundtable program (50 minute or 75 minutes)
Hot Topics will be National or council information that significantly impacts local Scouting or requires immediate volunteer actions (such as program changes, new membership recruitment tools, fee changes, new opportunities, etc.). These hot topics will be supported either by videos from the National Service Center or other National Service Center Resources announced during roundtables and later distributed via handouts, website postings, emails, etc.
It will be up to the Roundtable Commissioner with the support of their local District and Council Professionals to ensure these hot topics are clearly presented.
In essence, the hot topics component of roundtable provides Cub Scout, Scouts BSA, and Venturing leaders with significant information they will need to lead their units to be successful and to grow and improve their programs.

Safety Moments

Roundtable Commissioners are encouraged to provide a safety moment that pertains to all levels of Scouting.
The safety of all scouting participants is a top priority. The introduction of a safety moment to scout meetings is timely and relevant in order mitigate risks and hazards and remind youth and adults about youth protection policies.

2-3-minute safety moment videos, produced by the National Council and available on the Roundtable Support webpage, will be provided for monthly roundtables which you can view and discuss. You can also choose a safety topic that is appropriate to your activity such as: evacuation routes, hydration, knife safety, the buddy system, and youth protection.

Hold a safety moment at the beginning of all scouting meetings and activities to educate scouts and leaders on possible risks and hazards, then have a fun and safe activity.

Program Specific Breakouts

The goal of the program-specific breakout portion of roundtable is to provide scouters with information they can take back with them to their home units, ultimately to bring a better program to the youth they serve. Fortunately, many online virtual meeting platforms, such as Zoom, provide a very convenient function for breakout rooms that will be helpful for both the Cub Scout and Scouts BSA breakout training and discussion portions of virtual roundtable. Suggested program-specific topics will be available on the Roundtable Support webpage, with frequent updates to provide Roundtable Commissioners with fresh, new content.
The Roundtable Commissioner will play an important role in these program-specific breakouts—a guide or facilitator of discussion. After the short introductory video by a subject matter expert, the Roundtable Commissioner will then lead the breakout session and drive home the topic at hand while engaging the attendees.

In essence, the program-specific breakout session provides Cub Scout and Scouts BSA leaders with the information they need to be successful in their units. After all, every Scout deserves a trained leader. Equipped with a new skill, Scouters will be better able to act!

Closing

It's easy to rush through—or even skip—a meeting's closing when you happen to notice the clock. But there are some great reasons to make sure you safeguard time for a thoughtful closing before your participants start to log off or head home.
The roundtable closing is a time to bring everyone back together and tie together the *themes* from your program.
this is also a time to share an inspirational moment or final reflection that sends your Scouters out on a high not and reinforces their ***will to do***.
You can do this with a video from the National Service Center, so your Scouters hear reflections from local volunteers around the country.
Suggested closings are on the Roundtable Planning Resources webpage, and more content is being developed all the time.
You can choose to develop your own closing or continue any closing traditions you may have, too, of course.
Finally, a satisfying closing is an important part of motivating Scouters to attend roundtable again next time.
A good closing doesn't have to be long. Both the 50- and 75-minute Virtual Roundtable formats allot 5 minutes for this final, brief, motivating thought.
In short, wrap up your roundtable with a motivating Closing and you'll send your volunteers back to their units with both the *skill* and the *will* to deliver a great program.

Roundtable Tools – 15 Minutes

Networking Time

In many cases, before and after the monthly roundtable is a time when Scouters enjoy sharing information with each other and starting and/or continuing conversations related to Scouting or one of the topics discussed during the roundtable.

With this in mind, it is recommended to open the virtual roundtable room 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting and then to leave the room open up to 15 minutes after the scheduled roundtable has ended. This will allow for the back-and-forth discussion many Scouters find useful AND it fulfills one of the four purposes of roundtable.

In the case of an in-person event, the roundtable team should arrange to open the meeting space 15 minutes early and leave the space open after the meeting has ended. Likely this will happen organically since set-up and take-down of the meeting space will happen in advance and after the meeting has ended.

Audience Characteristics

It important to know the needs and characteristics of the audience when planning and presenting the program theme?

Some points to consider:

You should consider the different personalities of the group.

Roundtable program feature presentations should be tailored to the different personalities within the group, such as individuals that are:

Apprehensive
Inhibited/outgoing
Self-protective

You must also consider different ability/skill levels.

Roundtable participants will have different levels of ability, skill, and experience relative to the program feature.

Likewise, within each unit the youth will have varying levels of maturity, skill, ability, and experience. Leaders should be shown how to teach the skills at the level of their youth.

It is tiring for both the roundtable audience and the presenter if the same leader presents the program at every roundtable.

Some benefits that can come from sharing leadership in the program feature presentation include:

- It builds participation.
- It increases interest among unit leaders.
- It builds attendance.

Look for Scouters who know how to teach a skill on the youth level and how to organize other leaders as resources.

Ceremonies

Providing information on program related ceremonies is also valuable at Roundtable.

Unit ceremonies can reinforce citizenship and character development.

Include various types of ceremonies at roundtable and emphasize the use of simple props that can be made from readily available materials.
Unit participation in ceremonies can also help increase attendance.
The following ceremonies should be included at roundtable:
• Opening and closing ceremonies
• Recognition ceremonies
• Advancement ceremonies
• Graduation ceremonies
• Others
Unlike the other Roundtable programs, the Venturing Forum does not normally teach unit Ceremonies.

Visual Aids

Using visual Aids at Roundtable is important.
Behavioral scientists tell us that we receive 80 percent to 90 percent of all communication through our sense of sight.
It is also estimated that 60 percent to 80 percent of all human behavior and communication occurs in a nonverbal manner.
Seeing is believing!

Games

Games should be part of all Scouting programs.
Demonstrate a theme-related game that might be played at a unit meeting.
Involve as many participants as possible. The game need not be completed but be sure to have a demonstration followed by practice.
Tricks and puzzles. A trick or puzzle that Scouters can take back to their youth adds to the fun and provides one more program tip for leaders.

Morale

Roundtable can be a long time to keep the attention of all participants.
The attention span of the youth is also a concern for leaders in their own units.
With the use of stunts and icebreakers at roundtable, you teach the group how to get involved and make it fun.
Stunts and icebreakers also give the group an opportunity to stand and stretch.
Applause stunts may be used for recognition or advancement, skits, Good Turns, and thank-you's.
You can use *Group Meeting Sparklers* as a resource.

Roundtable Promotion

Promotion is a key ingredient to increasing your roundtable attendance
Use multiple methods to promote Roundtable so that you can reach all target audiences.
In Summary,
The Roundtable Team is Responsible to plan effective Roundtables.
The Goal is for your Roundtable to provide such a great service that it makes the leaders WANT TO BE THERE

The District – 20 Minutes

District Structure

Let's look at how local Scouting is structured, and how the role of unit commissioner fits in to that structure.
The Boy Scouts of America is organized geographically into local councils. These councils are organized into smaller territories called districts.

For the next few minutes, we will explore how districts operate to support their council and the units they serve.

District purpose

The purpose of a District is to support the units in their communities enabling them to be successful in delivering a quality program to the youth we serve.

District leadership

A second key element is the coordination and mobilization of resources to support the unit, ensuring the growth and success of those units within the district's territory.

These resources include:
- Volunteers, our greatest asset. All of these positions are volunteer positions except the district executive. Chartered organization representatives are voting members of the district because of their position.
- Council fiscal resources, used to provide materials to units
- Program knowledge, most often provided by our volunteers

Four functions of the district

All Districts are responsible for carrying out four standard functions.
These four functions are the pieces to the puzzle that make up your District:
- Membership
- Fund Development

- Program
- Unit Service

We will discuss each of these functions in detail.

Membership

The first function of the district committee is **membership** growth.
The five sources of membership growth are:
- The establishment of new units
- Recruitment of new youth
- Retention of members
- Webelos to Scouts BSA *and* Scouts BSA to Venturing/Sea Scout transition
- Retention of units

Fund development

The second function of the district committee is **finance**. The objective is to see that the district provides its share of funds to the total council operating budget.
Funds are raised from a variety of sources including:

- Friends of Scouting
- Product sales like popcorn and Camp Cards
- Special events
- District activity budgets

Special events are fund raising events like golf tournaments, sporting clays and silent auctions.
District activities include program opportunities for youth and volunteers like camporees, pinewood derbies and district recognition banquets.

Program

The third function of the District Committee is **program**.
The committee helps Scouting units with:

- Training adult volunteers
- Camp promotions
- Activities and civic service
- Youth advancement and recognition

Unit Service

The fourth function of the district committee is **unit service**.
Unit service provides coaching and consultation for unit adults by district volunteers to help ensure the success of every Scouting unit.

Interrelationships

The order in which the functions are listed is not meant to suggest the order of their importance, but the natural interrelationship and flow of the functions:

- The Scouting movement cannot achieve its purpose without first organizing units and enrolling members.
- The district cannot support its units without the funds to do so.
- Unit programs are supported by the district through its program functions and unit service.

All four functions are equally important and necessary. If one suffers from lack of attention all the work of the district suffers.

As you are progressing through training you will notice that course content will commonly follow these four functional areas with the ever-present emphasis on volunteers.
When you successfully have all four functions working together in your district, outstanding Scouting programs will be the result.

Standard district organization

Each district, regardless of size, has a district committee to coordinate the work of the district. A typical district usually would have an operating committee for each of the four functions, including a commissioner staff for the unit service function. Let's take a moment to identify where each of the four functions fit into our organization chart.

The four functions are:

- Membership
- Finance
- Program
- Unit Service

The exact method of organizing their district is flexible and should be based on the needs and characteristics of the communities in your district.
Notice that the program function has several subcommittees.

Next Step

You have completed the classroom portion of Roundtable Commissioner Basic Training, it's time to begin the application phase. Over the next 30 days, review the Roundtable commissioner on-boarding progress record with your coach. If you do not know who your coach is just yet, Ask your Assistant District Commissioner for Roundtable or District Commissioner to connect you with someone who will guide you through the on-boarding steps. Once you have completed the steps outlined in the progress record, your coach will enter your training in Training Manager, and you will receive your trained patch and commission as a Roundtable Commissioner.

Wreath of Service

BSA commissioners and professional staff members share the wreath of service in the design of their badges of office to signify their shared responsibility for providing unit service. They also share something else unique in Scouting: a commission. The issuance of a commission

represents the formal empowerment by the BSA to perform the duties and undertake the responsibilities of a unit commissioner and your acceptance of that obligation.

Summary

Close with the following statement –
As a leader, you have made a personal commitment to Scouting and your district. It's a commitment of time, effort, and knowledge. It's a commitment of patience and understanding. It's a commitment to be a living example for the scouters in your district, and to lend a helping hand to fellow those fellow scouters.