

Recruiting Commissioners Step-by-Step

1. Determine what commissioner positions are needed.

- Assess the effectiveness of existing volunteers.
- Define the responsibilities of the position and write a brief job description.
- List the qualities that are most likely to get the job done.

2. Determine the best prospects for the job.

- Consider many sources for prospects.
- List possible prospects for each job.
- Consider their qualities for the job.
- Prioritize prospects based on who has the qualities that best fit the job.

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

- Learn what the prospect's interests, abilities, and motivations are.
- Tailor your approach to the prospect's interest.
- Try to determine who can make the best approach. You need someone to open the door who has enough influence with the prospect to gain his or her interest. Perhaps that's you.
- Anticipate questions or objections. Decide in advance how you will answer them.
- Develop specific information on what you want the prospect to do. A few well-written, attractive pieces of paper can explain commissioner service and your district, and outline a job description. Develop this sales tool around the job you want done, tailoring it to the prospect's interests and skills. Don't dump the whole load. The prospect doesn't need every detail on commissioner service and probably will not read more than a few pages.

4. Make an appointment.

- Do not recruit over the phone, and

do not let the prospect say "no" over the phone. Ask for an appointment to discuss a community matter. Try not to give too much information about what it is.

- Determine the best time and the most appropriate place. If possible, avoid office pressures. Try for a lunch or other time away from daily distractions. If you recruit at home, make sure the prospect's spouse is there so you can sell them on the idea together.

- Make sure that someone the prospect respects or who has influence with the prospect goes with you. Never recruit alone.

5. Make The Sale.

- Introduce everyone. Be sure the prospect understands what all of you do in Scouting.
- Make small talk about the prospect's interest, family, and achievements, based on your research.
- Sell the sizzle. Deliver an exciting, enthusiastic, and brief pitch on commissioner service and youth. Don't dwell on details. Talk about the purposes in serving units that will most interest the prospect.
- Describe the job you want the prospect to do, its importance to youth, and to the community. Be specific. Remind the prospect that he or she is the best person for the job.

Ask for questions. Be sure the prospect understands what is expected. Be prepared to overcome objections. Answer the prospect's questions briefly and positively.

- Know when to close the sale. Don't keep selling if you think the prospect is not interested or if the prospect is sold. Don't oversell the job. Don't give too much detail. Make the job seem important, fun, and worthwhile. And don't under-

sell the job. Be sure the prospect knows exactly what is expected and is willing to do it.

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

6. Ask for a commitment.

You need this person—say so. Be patient . . . wait for an answer.

7. Have a fall-back position in mind.

Don't let the prospect off the hook. Leave the prospect something. Get his or her help in recruiting others. In any event, the prospect will be flattered and will know more about Scouting. Keep the door open for a later decision in the event you are turned down.

8. Follow up. After the prospect says "yes":

- Give them the videotape titled, "The Unit Commissioner: Helping Units Succeed."
 - Formally acknowledge the commitment with a letter and a copy of the "Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service."
 - Invite and take the person to the next commissioner meeting.
 - Prepare an appropriate news release or announcement in the council newsletter.
 - Within a week or two, follow up with specific orientation and an assignment.
- Group recruiting is a special and exciting approach for a district. It involves bringing three or more people together to hear about Scouting and then asking them to serve in some capacity.

Group Recruiting

Group recruiting has several advantages:

- This approach can do wonders to bring your commissioner staff up to strength quickly.
- If 10 or 15 people are asked to accept a challenge that can be handled by 10 or 15 people, each person figures that if the others will accept, he or she will to. No one sees themselves being saddled with an overwhelming task.
- Many people seek association with others. If the group includes the right people, their reaction is positive. In many group recruiting situations, nearly 100 percent agree to serve.
- When a whole staff is recruited together, they can be trained together. As a complete team, they can build team spirit and promptly begin to function effectively.

There are cautions:

- Group recruiting is a more involved process and may require considerable advance planning and preparation.
- Group recruiting does not take the place of good one-by-one recruiting, which is still necessary to fill some vacancies such as a roundtable commissioner or where only one or two additional people are needed.

There are two types of group recruiting:

1. Leadership Conference

- This is best used when there are only a few existing commissioners.
- A list of many prospects is developed at an informal gathering of community leaders.
- Select a host who can attract the prospects. The host invites prospects to his or her club, office, living room, or other attractive or prestigious location. A luncheon is an appropriate setting.
- The program inspires, tells the Scouting story, presents the need, and asks for a commitment.

2. Group Recruiting in a Single Company or Organization

- The company president or other organization leader is asked to list and bring together highly selected employees, often working through company department heads or personnel director.
- The meeting, usually held on company time, informs, inspires, asks, and gets commitments. District leaders match people to jobs and follow up immediately.
- A company may be asked to “adopt” and fill the entire staff. (The local phone company provides the training committee. The chamber of commerce fills the commissioner staff. NESA members fill the advancement committee.)

WHERE DO YOU FIND THEM?

Wonderful people are available for commissioner service.

Begin a prospect inventory of index cards listing people who are potential commissioners. Jot down information such as occupation, hobbies, children, volunteer experience, membership in organizations, interests, and the right person to help recruit them. Don't say “no” for anyone.

Consider such sources as:

- Your friends, associates, and business contacts.
- Chamber of commerce listings of organizations, major employers, boards of directors, and labor unions.
- Service club membership rosters.
- Educators, real estate brokers, shopkeepers, government employees, and other business, professional, and service people. Consider people whose activity causes them to travel through your district as well as those who are permanently located in the district.
- Eagle Scouts. Recruit NESA members to serve as commissioners.
- Check all boy applications for parents with previous Scouting experience.
- Check donor lists for people with special people skills.
- Neighborhood association leaders and other local opinion setters.