



## Recruitment and Retention: Bridging the Gap

By Larry Chase and Kevin Baker

As commissioners, we have responsibility for both recruitment and retention: recruitment of commissioners and retention of both commissioners and the units they serve.

**Two things help bridge the gap between recruitment and retention: relationships and training.**

Relationships are key to successful recruitment. Once a great candidate for a position has been identified, a successful “ask” is dependent upon having a relationship that enables clear, direct communication about the opportunity and its responsibilities. Sometimes the recruiter has the relationship needed to have that conversation; sometimes someone else does. In the latter case, the recruiter should ask the Scouter with that relationship to go along and support the “ask.” The chances of success increase greatly with that approach.

Once a successful ask has been made and a new member of the team is on board, relationships are equally important in ensuring that the new team member is retained.

Continuing to clearly and openly communicate about expectations, accomplishments, and meeting commitments; expressing genuine concern for satisfaction with the new position; giving and accepting feedback; and demonstrating interest in the new team member’s family, career, and personal life all help build and maintain a relationship based on trust and mutual respect.

Volunteers who find themselves in that type of relationship are more likely to remain engaged and be effective contributors. Too, our revised recognitions for commissioners can help build and maintain relationships. For some they provide an incentive to complete training and take on additional responsibility; for others they offer meaningful public recognition for a job well done. Regardless, they offer another opportunity to build relationships.

Too often, we view training as simply a means to increase knowledge and skills. Certainly, that is one objective. Training can also help increase retention. Increased knowledge and skill build confidence: Trained commissioners know what to do and how to do it and that enables them to take initiative. It also enables them to have greater impact. All are likely to increase satisfaction, and satisfied volunteers are likely to remain committed and engaged.



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Trained, confident commissioners will build deeper, stronger relationships with other Scouters, coupled with a network of resources that are most effective at helping units better serve more youth. When those relationships are with leaders of the units they serve, that will increase their ability to work collaboratively with them; when they are with members of the district operating committee, that increases their knowledge of resources available to support unit needs. When units grow and thrive, their retention is seldom an issue.

**Unit service is all about relationships.**

**Trained commissioners are confident and proactive. Great relationships and great training help us attract and retain effective, engaged commissioners who, in return, help us retain units.**

*Larry Chase is the recruitment and retention chair and Kevin Baker is the incoming recruitment and retention chair for the National Commissioner Support Staff.*

