



Planning Roundtables

How do we deliver effective roundtables? First, we must define what a successful roundtable should look like. Roundtable really consists of two parts: (1) building relationships with unit and district leaders and (2) providing unit service.

Relationships: If you do not develop a relationship with those you serve, then the service you provide will be limited to the presentations given at your roundtable. If you seek first to develop relationships at roundtable, then you will create an environment of learning where everyone feels comfortable discussing their unit needs with the roundtable team either during the roundtable sessions or after the formal meetings.

Unit service: Provide unit service that is appropriate to the needs of your local district. We should always support unit leaders by delivering effective roundtables that provide program ideas, networking, and timely communication that is tailored to your district.

Now that we all know something about what a roundtable should look like, we need to discuss the basics of planning roundtables.

Roundtable planning guides and other resources provided by the national service center are all options for you to use, but you should use what is most appropriate for the needs of your district while still following the current BSA guidelines.

Some Basic Steps to Consider in Roundtable Planning

1. Determine the needs of the units in your district. Talk to your district commissioner and district chair to assist in identifying areas that they feel should be improved.
2. Review the calendars that affect units in your district. Look at the district and council calendars for activities and training events. Try to highlight these events to increase participation of the units. Also, review the public calendars in your area from the city, county, schools, and church and civic organizations.
3. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Utilize all available resources for your roundtables. There are numerous BSA publications and other resources to choose from when preparing for your roundtable.
4. Survey your participants to see what topics they need. But remember, roundtable is intended for supplemental program training; it is not for basic leader-specific training topics.
5. Work with the district committee members and the district commissioner's staff and other subject matter experts to provide presentations and support to your unit leaders.
6. The final step we will discuss is making your roundtable worth the effort to attend. If you are providing the resources and relationships needed for unit service in your district, your roundtables will be a success! If participants feel the information is of little or no value, they will stop coming.

Successful roundtables are all about building relationships and providing unit service.

