

HOW DO I BUILD MY TEAM?

Conversations about recruiting commissioners may start with one question, “what makes a great commissioner,” but when those conversations involve administrative commissioners, it usually isn’t long before another question arises: “how do I build my team?” Often, that leads to a request for the rest of that list of skills and experience that a great Unit Service candidate should have. In fact, the rest of that list comes from work done before recruiting begins.

Consider four fundamental organizational concepts:

1. *You cannot do it alone* – administrative commissioners are team leaders; they need the help of a team of equally-committed volunteers.
2. *Form follows function* – it’s a bit like Shaker furniture. The Shaker’s didn’t build elaborate furniture with intricate design and decoration. It was simple and utilitarian. Many find elegance in its simplicity; regardless, at the end of the day one thing was certain: it got the job done.
3. *The composition of an administrative commissioner’s team flows from two places: (1) the role and responsibilities of that administrative commissioner, and, (2) their vision for their term of service.*
4. *There is no pre-defined structure* – the structure of the team, and the skills and experience needed by its members, is fluid and flexible. Those all respond to the nature of the work to be done.

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Similarly, the knowledge, skills, and experience needed by each member of the team is defined by the work they will be doing. The list for unit commissioners, for example, is different from the list for roundtable commissioners. Both lists may have common elements, but each will likely have unique elements, too. And not all commissioners in a certain position will share the same list. The knowledge and experience of the ideal candidate to serve as a unit commissioner for a Pack, for example, might well be a bit different from the list for the ideal candidate to serve a Team.

Our ability to provide the knowledge needed will increase as commissioner training and orientation modules become available in the BSA Learn Center. In addition, our new requirements for commissioner awards and recognition provide a clear definition of what success looks like for various Unit Service positions. Increasingly, our focus in identifying candidates will become the skills needed and a candidate’s passion and priorities, rather than prior experience and training.

In short, there is no “cookie cutter” approach to building a Unit Service team. The composition of the team is defined by the work to be done.

And remember, recruiting is a continuous process. We know the key characteristic all great commissioners share: a servant’s heart; knowing the work to be done, we know the specific passions and priorities that will enable success; experience will remain valuable, and increasingly we’ll be able to provide specific training and orientation that will enable individuals to take on new roles and responsibilities. That, in turn, enables us to continually recruit new commissioners to strengthen our ability to help units better serve more youth through Scouting.