

**Front End Analysis Plan for the
Reorganization and Adult Leadership Development of
the Onondaga District Roundtables**

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IDE 712

May 3, 2004

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Front End Analysis Plan for Reorganization and Staff Development of the Onondaga District Roundtables

Abstract – This outlines a front end analysis for planning monthly meetings that involve some adult leadership development at the district level of scouting.

I. Introduction

I have been involved with the Boy Scouts of America since September 2001 when my son was a Webelos Scout. I volunteered as an Assistant Webelos Den Leader for 2 years. During this period I attended the required training for adult leadership in my position. I completed the Webelos Leader Specific training, Outdoor Webelos Leader Training, and Youth Protection by April 2002.

My son advanced to the Boy Scouts in March 2003. I also moved to the Boy Scout troop and attended additional training for a new leadership position. I completed the Troop Committee Challenge and Boy Scout Leader Fast Start by January 2004. I also renewed my Youth Protection training, which is necessary every two years. I attended the NE-III-161 offering of Wood Badge training in September 2003 and completed the Trainer Development Conference in March 2004. I am currently the Troop Committee Chairman for Troop 1276 in the Onondaga District, Hiawatha Seaway Council, of the Boy Scouts of America. I

outline my various training to indicate that I am committed in time and effort to my leadership position in this organization.

The Onondaga District of the Hiawatha Seaway Council holds a monthly roundtable meeting for the adult leadership volunteers. I have only attended 2-3 District roundtable meetings during my scouting experience. I found them to be a waste of my time and effort. The meetings I attended were not well structured, there was no clear agenda, handout materials were not explained and the overall objective of these meetings was not apparent to me. According to information found on a webpage for a Boy Scout district in Houston:

“Roundtable provides a forum for adults involved as leaders in the Boy Scout program to:

- discuss topics of interest, both formally and informally
- learn about upcoming District and Council events and programs
- meet and exchanges ideas with other leaders from the Golden Arrow District “

“Roundtable is open to all adults involved with the Boy Scout program. Registered troop leaders are especially encouraged to attend.”

(Sam Houston Area Council, 2004).

Another web resource explains roundtables:

“Don't let the name roundtable fool you.

It isn't necessarily round, and you don't need a table.

It's a training know-how show.

It's the single most important function of the district.

It's the Scout program in action.

It's your most effective medium for getting the program to the unit.

It's an information source for leaders.

It's a meeting where leaders can discuss and share what works in their troops -success stories!

It's Scout leaders having fun while learning.”

“Roundtables are a form of commissioner service and supplemental training for volunteers at the troop level to give them an example for troop meetings, information on policy, events and training opportunities, service opportunities, and misc ideas. It's also an an opportunity to share experiences and enjoy fun and fellowship so they will be able to provide a stronger program for their Scouts.” (Rosegarden’s Scouting Resources, 2004).

If we use these explanations as a basis for any roundtable meeting held anywhere throughout the Boy Scouts of America organization, we have a foundation for creating a quality roundtable program. According to the 2004-2005 Boy Scout Roundtable Planning Guide, distributed by the National Headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America (2004, p.1), “The mission of the Boy

Scout roundtable is to provide quality resources, knowledge, and skills to unit leaders to enable and motivate them to deliver an outstanding program to their Scout troops.” This mission is a statement of the role, or purpose, by which the Boy Scout roundtable should intend to serve the unit leaders. The guide further indicates that the individual district should develop a vision for the roundtables. A vision statement identifies where the Boy Scout roundtable intends to be in the future or where it should be to best meet the needs of the unit leaders.

I was asked to participate in the Annual District Roundtable Planning meeting, April 18,2004, by Frank Johnson, the Onondaga District Training Chairman. I am developing this report for Mr. Johnson and Peter Demlein, the Onondaga District Chairman.

II. Define the Task

1. Initial Definition of the Problem

Currently, the roundtable planners struggle with attendance at the monthly meetings. There is the perception of a coffee hour with the “old boys club” of adult leaders who have been active in scouting for a number of years and for whom the roundtable meetings seem to revolve around. Mr. Demlein has expressed a concern that the meetings are not attracting new and/or younger leaders and that eventually the participants will “die off” and the roundtable meetings will cease to exist. The wealth of experience and knowledge will be lost. This will have an adverse affect on the quality of troop programs and the future of

scouting in this area. Unit leaders should be provided with ample opportunity to develop valuable scouting skills that can be passed on to the boy program. This goes above and beyond what is provided in the basic training that leaders are expected to complete. The roundtable should be the perfect venue for networking and sharing information between adult leaders with little or no other outlet for information.

In her book, *Training Needs Assessment*, Allison Rosset (1987) outlines criteria to determine training needs in an organization. A needs assessment involves the evaluation of the actual and desired outcomes based on the available skills and knowledge, current environment conditions, and the incentives and motivations of the individual(s) to be trained. The tools used for this could be interviews or surveys.

The leaders of Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops are volunteers. They already contribute an amount of time and effort to their own groups. Attending roundtables once a month is not required. These volunteers have a wide variation of skills and knowledge of the different aspects of scouting. The setting of the roundtables is similar to the setting of a typical pack or troop meeting, which may or may not be conducive to certain types of training. Incentives and motivation is difficult to determine especially from volunteers.

2. Potential Solutions to the Problem

The first step to a solution was the selection and use of a planning committee for the roundtables in 2004-2005. The agenda for the first planning meeting, held in April 2004, was (1) determine the format of roundtable meetings (Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing Crew), (2) set a standard agenda to follow at all roundtable meetings, and (3) set program themes and create an annual program plan. The District Chairman appointed an Assistant District Chairman to head the roundtable committee. Additionally there will be a Cub Scout RT Chairman and a Boy Scout RT Chairman.

Eventually, the participants at the planning meeting decided on a format for the meetings, where all attendees will meet together, then break-out for separate Cub Scout and Boy Scout themes, then come back together for final announcements and networking. It was agreed to use the sample agenda in the 2004-2005 Boy Scout Roundtable Planning Guide, with some revisions for the break-out program features. The themes suggested in the planning guide (2004) would also be followed (see Figure 1), with the exception of the December and June meetings, which would be a holiday party and year-end picnic.

September - Fishing
October - Athletics
November - Science
December - Cooking
January - Wilderness Survival
February - Communications
March - Pioneering
April - Environment
May - Orienteering
June - Mechanics

Figure 1 2004-2005 Boy Scout Roundtable Themes

Additional documents were developed to assist in planning and assessing roundtables (see the Appendices). There is a planning checklist and worksheet to consistently plan each month's activities. There is a monthly roundtable evaluation and a self-evaluation for each RT committee member. Then each of the attendees would be asked to complete a roundtable questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of a given roundtable.

3. Training Components

To supplement the mission of providing “quality resources, knowledge, and skills to unit leaders to enable and motivate them to deliver an outstanding program to their Scout troops” (Boy Scouts of America, 2004), it would be advantageous to use an instructional design model for planning the roundtable program features for leader development. Using a model for each month would provide a consistent and effective program of leader development. This model is generalizable to the planning of any scout event or leader development program. Program planners and content specialists or presenters can easily use this model to create and deliver program features of the roundtables.

The Instructional Development Model for Adult Leadership Development is based on the Six Steps of Planning. I received these steps at the Trainer Development Conference I attended in March 2004. The six steps of planning are (1) Define the Task, (2) Identify Resources, (3) Consider Alternatives, (4) Create the Plan, (5) Work the Plan, and (6) Evaluate. I redesigned this model using an easily identifiable Boy Scout symbol, the Fluer-de-Lis. (See Figure 2.)

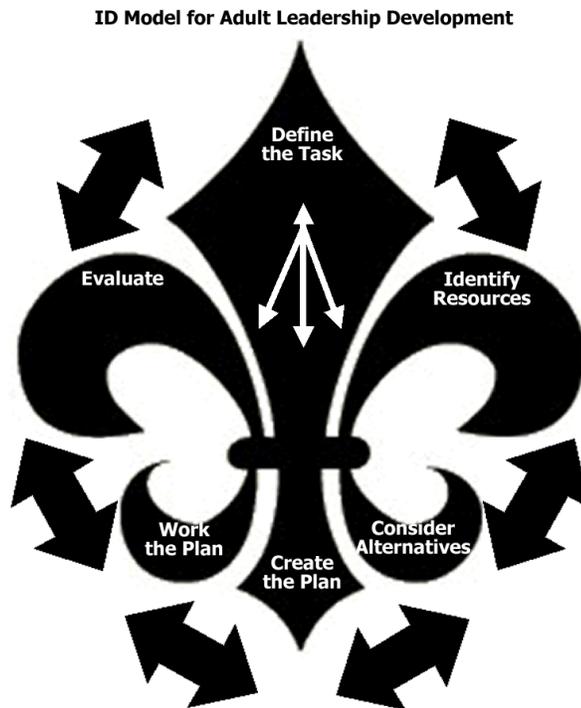


Figure 2 Instructional Design Model

4. Analysis and Assessment Techniques

One of the ways I would like to contribute as the ID practitioner for the planning committee is to assist with the analysis and assessment of the roundtable program optimal and actuals. I will also propose to assist in the design, development, and implementation of the adult leadership development features.

My needs assessment or program analysis will consist of a district survey. I will contact all current leaders of Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops to determine (1) why people do or do not currently attend roundtables, (2) what

they think the purpose of roundtables is now, and (3) what they think the purpose of the roundtables should be. I will assemble the results of the survey and present to the District Chairman and Training Chairman.

5. Preliminary Plan

My ultimate plan is to personally invite current leaders of Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops to the roundtables. I think informing them up front of the monthly themes and keeping them informed of the scheduled speakers and topics, will help to encourage attendance at the meetings. I think the roundtables actually need a marketing plan to attract attendance. It may be possible to try and involve leaders actively in the presentations from month to month, holding their interest in seeing new faces and learning new information.

III. Conclusion

With proper planning, roundtables will run smoother, participation will increase, participants will know what to expect at meetings and will be better informed of the scouting program activities and expectations. We should use all available resources, whenever possible, and practice what we preach. Be prepared.

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Appendix A:

Roundtable Questionnaire

Roundtable Questionnaire

Dear Scouter:

We do not want our roundtables to become "squaretables." To keep Scouting going and growing in our area, we need your constructive criticism. Please complete and return the questionnaire below. Your response will help plan future roundtables. No names, please. We want you to remain anonymous so that you may respond freely.

Thank you.

1. Have you attended more than one roundtable? Yes No

2. In your opinion, what should be the purpose of a roundtable? _____

3. Do you think this roundtable served a purpose? Yes No

Explain _____

4. What did you learn from this roundtable? _____

5. What did you think was the most helpful? _____

6. What did you think was the least helpful? _____

7. What, if anything, do you plan to use with your Boy Scouts? _____

8. Would you attend another roundtable? Yes No

Why? _____

Why not? _____

9. Would you recommend the roundtable to other Boy Scout leaders? Yes No

Why? _____

Why not? _____

10. Was your answer to question 8 influenced by the distance you have to travel? Yes No

11. How would you improve these roundtables? _____

Other comments _____

All suggestions are always welcome.

Appendix B:

Monthly Roundtable Evaluation

MONTHLY ROUNDTABLE EVALUATION	
MONTH: _____	
1. Did roundtable begin and end on time?:	Yes _____ No _____
2. How many units attended?:	Cub Scout _____ Boy Scout _____
3. Which ones did not?:	_____ _____ _____
4. How many leaders attended?:	Cub Scout _____ Boy Scout _____
5. Was staff and/or other presenters prepared?:	Yes _____ No _____
Strengths:	_____ _____ _____
Needs improvement:	_____ _____ _____
6. Was the program feature(s) of the month covered thoroughly?:	Yes _____ No _____
7. Was time allocated properly for all parts of the program?:	Yes _____ No _____
8. Was the program action-filled?:	Yes _____ No _____
9. Was the program dull?:	Yes _____ No _____
10. Was it positive?:	Yes _____ No _____
11. How can we improve next month's roundtable?:	
a. Planning:	_____ _____ _____
b. Personnel:	_____ _____ _____
c. Promotion:	_____ _____ _____
d. Presentation of program:	_____ _____ _____
e. Hands-on activities:	_____ _____ _____
Comments:	_____ _____ _____ _____

Appendix C:

Roundtable Planning Checklist

ROUNDTABLE PLANNING CHECKLIST		YES	NO
<u>Assurance of a Good Program</u>			
1. Is planning done well in advance?			
2. Is promotion of your roundtable effective?			
3. Do you double-check assignments and last-minute details?			
4. Is roundtable built around a program feature?			
5. Do you, as roundtable commissioner, share the presentation with others?			
6. Do you include practical ideas that unit leaders can use?			
7. Do you feature activities that involve everyone attending?			
8. Is emphasis on doing rather than sitting and listening?			
9. Do you emphasize that a roundtable is a good place to get program ideas?			
10. Is emphasis on the positive, not the negative? Success, not failure? Opportunities, not problems?			
11. Do you reproduce handouts of program ideas that cannot be found in Scout literature and are too detailed for simple note-taking?			
12. Does your roundtable give specific help for each of the unit meetings for the next month?			
13. Do you utilize expert unit leaders?			
<u>Attractive Arrangements</u>			
1. Are the rooms large enough for activities, ceremonies, games?			
2. Are the chairs movable?			
3. Is parking adequate?			
4. Have you taken physical comfort into consideration?			
5. Is someone assigned to greet people as they arrive?			
6. Do you start and stop on time?			
7. Does the information center have up-to-date information and handouts?			
8. Are audiovisual materials effectively used?			
<u>Balance of Emphasis</u>			
1. Are Scout skills taught?			
2. Do you provide training in methods of unit operation?			
3. Are council and district activities reviewed?			
4. Is roundtable fun, fast-moving, and full of color?			
5. Do you include ceremonies and morale features?			

Appendix E:

Self-Evaluation for the Roundtable Team Members

Self-Evaluation for the Roundtable Team

Taking this self-evaluation will help you to determine your effectiveness as a member of the roundtable team. As a result of considering each yes/no response you will be able to target needs for improvement. No one else should be allowed to know the results of your self-evaluation. It is for your use only.

1. Do you prepare a written agenda at your monthly planning meeting for the next month's roundtable that includes a time schedule, staff assignments, and backup personnel? Yes ___ No ___
2. Do you arrive at least ¼ hour before the roundtable? Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you use a variety of presentation methods to carry out your assignments? Yes ___ No ___
4. Do you make yourself available to unit leaders before and after the roundtable? Yes ___ No ___
5. Do you wear the proper uniform at all roundtables? Yes ___ No ___
6. Do you use materials and equipment at the roundtable that are readily available to unit leaders? Yes ___ No ___
7. When you arrive at the roundtable are you fully prepared for your presentation with all of your equipment and materials? Yes ___ No ___
8. Do you maintain a positive attitude while at the roundtable? Yes ___ No ___
9. Do you regularly attend the monthly planning meetings? Yes ___ No ___
10. Are you dependable? Yes ___ No ___
11. Do you contribute suggestions and ideas during the roundtable planning meeting? Yes ___ No ___
12. Do you continue to show creativity in your ideas for the roundtable? Yes ___ No ___
13. Do you use materials other than those found in the Roundtable Planning Guide or Program Helps? Yes ___ No ___
14. Are your assignments completed on time? Yes ___ No ___
15. Do you contact pack leaders and promote roundtable attendance? Yes ___ No ___
16. Do you help assure that there are meaningful and effective roundtable planning meetings? Yes ___ No ___
17. Have you received roundtable basic training for your position? Yes ___ No ___
18. Are you able to handle unexpeded and unplanned situations that arise at roundtable? Yes ___ No ___
19. Do you respect the opinions and ideas of other roundtable team members? Yes ___ No ___
20. Do you feel you are an important member of the roundtable team? Yes ___ No ___
21. Do you help set annual roundtable goals? Yes ___ No ___
22. Do you feel that your abilities and qualifications match the job you are currently doing at the roundtable? Yes ___ No ___
23. Do you have fun at the roundtable? Yes ___ No ___

Scoring: Count the number of "yes" responses and check it against the Effectiveness Scale below.

Effectiveness Scale	Number of "Yes" responses:	15-18	Somewhat effective team member
	23	11-14	Improvement needed
	19-22	0-10	Not an effective team member

Look at your "no" responses to assess what you need to work on for your own development as a more effective roundtable team member.