

Marketing

Use proven methods and tools to generate widespread publicity



TRUSTWORTHY LOYAL HELPFUL FRIENDLY COURTEOUS KIND

words to live by™

OBEDIENT CHEERFUL THRIFTY BRAVE CLEAN REVERENT

Overview

Marketing isn't just something we do—it's *everything* we do. Persuasive marketing methods and campaigns positively affect every aspect of Scouting including recruitment and retention. Good widespread publicity is necessary. The following marketing information will assist you in identifying promotion concepts and methods to obtain widespread publicity.

Resources Timetable

Recruitment Marketing Back-Dater

Eight to nine months before membership event

Review results from the previous year's campaign.

- What worked?
- What did not work?
- How can you improve your marketing efforts?

Seven months before membership event

Determine the media mix your council will use in this year's membership marketing campaign.

Five to six months before membership event

Place a council order for:

- Yard signs
- Banners
- Posters
- Postcards
- Fliers

Four to five months before membership event

Secure a local printer to print marketing collateral. Start printing.

Three to four months before membership event

Send promotional materials to school superintendents, principals, community organizations, and religious institutions and ask permission to recruit at these locations.

Three months before membership event

Secure locations to post signage (posters, yard signs, banners). Check city codes for regulations on posting signs.

Two months before membership event

Place:

- Billboards
- TV public service announcements (PSAs)
- Radio PSAs

One month before membership event

Mail postcards to the parents of Cub Scout-age boys in your community.

At least two weeks before membership event

Deliver news releases to the local media. Put up posters, yard signs, fliers, etc.

District Marketing/PR Chair Position Description

Reports to: _____ Council
Marketing Chair

Professional adviser: _____
District executive

Position Summary: Works with the council vice president of marketing to determine the council marketing plan that will be implemented for the membership campaign.

Responsibilities:

- Use marketing tools produced by the National Council in support of district membership.
- Develop additional marketing tools to promote the district recruitment events.
- Promote the district recruitment events through community newspapers; include dates and times.
- Promote the success of the recruitment events at the conclusion of the events.
- Communicate Scouting's mission to the community.

Information about the BSA Brand Identity

The Boy Scouts of America's brand identity represents the essence of a movement that has been part of American culture for almost 100 years. It represents the commitment of more than 50 million alumni and countless volunteers who embody the numerous experiences we call American life. In short, our brand is an expression of all that we stand for.

A carefully managed and strategically implemented brand identity program is vital for any competitive organization. In the *Brand Identity Guide*, you will find the graphic and style elements necessary to help you manage your communications projects. These guidelines are in place to ensure the correct and consistent use of the BSA brand.

By accurately implementing these guidelines, you will protect decades of brand equity and help position the BSA for the next 100 years of success.

The *Brand Identity Guide* may be found on www.scouting.org/marketing.

Return on Investment Measurements

With any campaign or strategic effort, it is critically important to work from a point of knowledge regarding the context of the situation. This begins with a situation analysis that specifically provides insight—either quantitative, qualitative, or both—so as to discern how to move forward. But equally important is to understand the results in juxtaposition to the investment. As such, dedicated measurements are vital to establishing a return on investment (ROI). This begins with identifying the core objectives and indicators that will highlight incremental growth, awareness, or other specific critical achievements. The resulting data—if done correctly—should provide a clear way forward so as to improve efficiency.

Traditional Media

Print Media

The most popular media are newspaper, radio, television, and direct mail. Your *Membership Campaign Council Guide* will provide you with items to target each of these media. Remember that print media can be magazines, fliers, brochures, and newsletters.

Don't discount the effect of print media choices, because memory cannot be trusted, and prospective volunteers and members can't get from television or radio spots hard-copy clippings of your local council's telephone number and address to tuck in their pocket or address book. By "putting it in writing," you have an opportunity to invite prospective members to share the Scouting experience. You also can collect stories for your local council bulletin board, as well as have historical information of the event for future Scouters.

The fill-in-the-blank releases that are provided in this kit can be used in:

- Local community magazines
- Local school newspapers
- Local daily and/or weekly newspapers

Complete the fill-in-the-blank news releases, possibly utilizing your local council president, membership chairperson, local celebrated Scouter, etc., to "spice up" the community interest level of your release.

We also have several print ads available. These print ads can be utilized in your local newspaper, magazines, newsletters, bulletin boards, etc. Consider the audience of the media when choosing which ad to use.

Media Kit

Building and sending out media kits will maximize the exposure of your council's recruitment events. Each council must reach out to its audiences in as many ways as possible. This will increase visibility and awareness of the Scouting program.

- Prepare a list of reporters to contact. You may already have a media list, but it is a good idea to update the list periodically as reporters change frequently.
 - First, talk to board members who may be members of the media or who work with the media regularly. They should be able to provide you with good contact names.

- As you develop your media list, be sure to include smaller, weekly newspapers in the outlying areas of your council, as well as local radio and television stations and cable operations.
- You should call the stations and newspapers to verify the contact names. If you do not have a contact name already, ask the receptionist for the name of the reporter who covers community organizations and events.
- Develop a media kit that includes a news release, Scouting fact sheet, and information about your council. Note upcoming events that might be of interest to members of the media, especially those with good visual activities. Invite them to join you.
- When you send the media kit, include your business card so reporters can call you with questions.
- After you send your materials to the media, make a follow-up phone call to the reporter, editor, radio/television producer, or news director. However, beware that as the day goes on, media deadlines draw near. The best time to reach members of the media is in the morning.
- Check your local community calendar for possible events that can provide a tie-in, i.e., a literacy event. Develop a separate media kit focused on how the Scouting program helps fight illiteracy.
- Check your local media schedules to see if there is a major media event with which to tie-in.

Media Tip Sheet

- Find out what reporters, photographers, and other news professionals need to put a story together, and what the BSA can do to make that task easier.
- Examine the media in your area regularly to determine what types of stories and photos they use.
- Before sending a news release, check with local media to learn their lead times.
- Invite local reporters to BSA activities to experience Scouting firsthand. Remember to brief youth so that they can answer a reporter's questions with confidence.
- Ensure that the news media knows how to reach you. Be sure to respond promptly to reporters' inquiries.

- Don't be afraid to thank or compliment reporters on a well-written story. You may want to mail holiday thank-you messages to all media that have written about or visited your council, or have a youth or unit send a note. You may want to consider giving awards to reporters and news outlets that go above and beyond the norm in their coverage of BSA events and activities.
- Don't forget to send releases to nontraditional media outlets such as church, educational, community, or corporate newsletters.

Press Release Strategies

The media can be very helpful in building awareness of your recruitment efforts. In this section, you'll find tips and ideas for building coverage of your event, guidelines for developing press releases, and customizable templates for unit, district, or council recruiting events.

Tips and Ideas for Building Media Coverage

- 1. Target your audience.** Make a list of the best media outlets to help you reach the parents of Scout-age youth in your community.
- 2. Develop a media contact list.** Always send your media releases to a specific person. Develop a list of reporters and editors who cover events like yours. Find the best contact person by reading the newspaper or paying attention to radio and television broadcasts. Make a note of the reporters who cover Scouting-, youth-, family-, or community-related issues. If you are still unsure of the appropriate contact person, call and ask.

Include the following information for your media list:

- Name of assignment editor(s)
- Name of reporter(s)
- Phone number
- Fax number
- E-mail address

- 3. Develop a news release.** Remember that reporters are busy people; therefore, a one-page press release about your roundup would be ideal.

4. Grab their attention. Choose a catchy, easy-to-read headline for your news release.

5. Include all the pertinent details. Be sure your release includes the who, what, where, why, when, and how of your event. Practice the inverted pyramid style by detailing the most important information at the beginning.

6. Tell them who to call. Include the name and phone number of the contact person so the reporter can follow up.

7. Proofread your release. It is important that at least two pairs of eyes look over the advisory to ensure it's accurate and free of grammatical errors.

8. Timing is everything. Your release should be distributed to local media outlets at least a week before your event. Releases for weekly publications should be sent at least two weeks early. If you are unsure of how much time your local newspaper or radio or television station will need, simply call and ask.

9. A picture is worth a thousand words. Photos are an excellent way to tell your story. Choose fun action shots that best depict Scouting in your community.

10. Always say thank you. Always send a brief thank-you note to the reporters and editors, telling them how much you enjoyed working with them.

Press Release Templates

Use the following format and sample templates to develop press releases for your community.

General Press Release Format

For Immediate Release

Headline—One sentence. Be creative. Use proper title case, capitalizing every word except for “of,” “it,” “the,” “a,” “an,” and “from.”

Grab their attention with a strong introductory paragraph that includes who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Put the body of your press release here. Expound on the information in your introductory paragraph.

Include quotes from volunteers, parents, and youth.

The body of your press release should contain more than one paragraph. The final paragraph should restate and summarize the key points of your news release. You can also include details on your rally.

Include a short background on Scouting and your council.

For additional information, contact _____.

Press Release Template No. 1

For Immediate Release

Join the Fun! Join Cub Scouting!

Cub Scouting wants you! Now is the time to join the fun and excitement of America's foremost youth program for boys—Cub Scouting. Sign-up nights will be held throughout the week of _____.

Designed for boys ages 7 to 10, Cub Scouting combines outdoor activities, sports, academics, and more in a fun and exciting program that helps families teach ideals such as honesty, good citizenship, and respect.

Cub Scout packs will hold roundups for Scouting at elementary schools and other locations throughout the area during the next _____. Fliers with additional details will be distributed at schools before the scheduled roundups. Interested boys and parents are encouraged to attend a meeting in their neighborhood.

Cub Scout roundups are scheduled at the following locations:

-
-
-
-

The Boy Scouts of America is comprised of more than one million volunteers working together for the sole purpose of helping its nearly three million youth succeed in life.

For more information, contact _____.

Press Release Template No. 2

For Immediate Release

Cub Scouts Sponsor Sign-Up Nights in XX Locations

The Boy Scouts of America wants to make it easy to join Cub Scouting. On _____, boys and their families will be able to sign up for Scouting in a number of locations across _____.

Cub Scouting is for boys in the first through fifth grades. The program combines outdoor activities, sports, academics, and more in a fun and exciting program that helps families teach ideals such as honesty, good citizenship, and respect. Last year, more than _____ youth participated in Scouting programs across _____.

Cub Scouting roundups, or sign-up events, will be held at schools and other locations during the next _____. Fliers will be distributed in schools before the scheduled roundups. Interested boys and parents are encouraged to attend a meeting in their neighborhood.

Cub Scout roundups are scheduled at the following locations:

-
-
-
-

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For more information, contact _____.

Press Release Template No. 3

(For pack use)

For Immediate Release

Join the Fun! Join Cub Scouting!

Cub Scouting wants you! Now is the time to join the fun and excitement of America's foremost youth program for boys—Cub Scouting. A sign-up night will be held on _____ at _____. Fliers with additional details will be distributed at school.

Designed for boys ages 7 to 10, Cub Scouting combines outdoor activities, sports, academics, and more in a fun and exciting program that helps families teach ideals such as honesty, good citizenship, and respect.

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For more information, contact _____.

Press Release Template No. 4

For Immediate Release

Test your limits! Join the Boy Scouts!

The Boy Scouts want you! Now is the time to join the fun and excitement of America's foremost youth program for boys—Boy Scouts. Sign-up nights will be held throughout the week of _____.

Designed for boys ages 11 to 18, Boy Scouting combines outdoor activities, sports, academics, and more in a fun and exciting program that helps boys test their limits!

Boy Scout troops will hold recruitment events throughout the area during the next _____. Fliers with additional details will be distributed at schools before the scheduled events. Interested boys and parents are encouraged to attend a meeting in their neighborhood.

Boy Scout roundups are scheduled at the following locations:

-
-
-
-

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For more information, contact _____.

Press Release Template No. 5

For Immediate Release

Experience the thrill of adventure! Join the Boy Scouts!

The Boy Scouts want you! Now is the time to experience the thrill of adventure as a part of America's foremost youth program for boys—Boy Scouts. Sign-up nights will be held throughout the week of _____.

Designed for boys ages 11 to 18, Boy Scouting combines outdoor activities, sports, academics, and more in a fun and exciting program that helps boys experience adventure they never thought possible!

Boy Scout troops will hold recruitment events throughout the area during the next _____. Fliers with additional details will be distributed at schools before the scheduled events. Interested boys and parents are encouraged to attend a meeting in their neighborhood.

Boy Scout roundups are scheduled at the following locations:

-
-
-
-

The Boy Scouts of America is comprised of more than one million volunteers working together for the sole purpose of helping its nearly three million youth succeed in life.

For more information, contact _____.

Press Release Template No. 6

For Immediate Release

Experience High Adventure! Join Venturing!

Venturing crews want you! Now is the time to experience the thrill of adventure as a part of America's foremost youth program for young men and women—Venturing. Sign-up nights will be held throughout the week of _____.

Designed for young men and women ages 14 to 20, or 13 and completed eighth grade, Venturing combines high-adventure activities within a social atmosphere!

Venturing crews will hold recruitment events throughout the area during the next _____. Fliers with additional details will be distributed at schools before the scheduled events. Interested young men and women are encouraged to attend a meeting in their neighborhood.

Venturing events are scheduled at the following locations:

-
-
-
-

The Boy Scouts of America is comprised of more than one million volunteers working together for the sole purpose of helping its nearly three million youth succeed in life.

For more information, contact _____.

Radio/Television Media

Start developing a relationship with the public service directors of your local radio and television stations. For television, inquire about the format each station requires (DVD/Beta). Then order the proper format tape for each station.

Remember cable TV, too. Local community talk shows are usually accessible and are logical channels for presenting the Scouting story. Does the station have a youth reporter? Could a local Scout become a spokesperson?

Contact assignment editors in TV and radio newsrooms to invite them to your recruitment even if you will have a good visual activity such as shopping center demonstrations or a demonstration that depicts the emphasis of the Scouting programs. Provide them with a list of the VIPs who will be heading up or attending the event as special guests.

The difference between a newsworthy activity and a run-of-the-mill event may be a prominent speaker, a noted Scouter, an unusual demonstration, or an all-out service project. The one thing to keep in mind is that to youngsters, Scouting is fun—period. But to the public, it is important to convey the basic objectives of Scouting: character-building, citizenship, and fitness.

Parent-Oriented Radio PSAs

Live-Read Examples

If you're a parent of a young boy in first through fifth grade, the days between [fill in recruitment dates] are important to you. That's when [council name] will be conducting a major Cub Scout recruitment program. Cub Scouting combines fun with educational activities and lifelong values. Cub Scouting also helps parents to help their boys strengthen character, develop good citizenship, and enhance both mental and physical fitness. For more information on where to sign up, please visit [Web address] or call [phone number].

[Council] invites families to find out more information about Cub Scouting. Call [contact and phone number] or visit [Web address]. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. Make a difference in your son's life; start him on the right path. [Tag line.]

Young boys grow up fast. Give your son a valuable gift by encouraging him to join Cub Scouting today. The time you invest in him today will make a difference in the person he becomes tomorrow. Call your local Boy Scouts of America council today!

Do Boy Scouts still love to go camping and hiking? Sure they do, but today's Scouts learn a lot more, such as taking responsibility, being a leader, and protecting our environment. And they still have a lot of fun doing it. If there's a young man in your life, give him the gift of Scouting.

Sports are great, but few boys get to play every minute of the game. Boy Scouts are never confined to warming the bench. Scouts are doers. Find out more about Boy Scouting. Call [contact and phone number] or visit [Web address]. Make sure your boy gets to make every play.

Venturers are boys and girls ages 14 to 20, or 13 and completed eighth grade. Venturing means high adventure, meeting new challenges in the outdoors, and making good friends along the way. Find out more about Venturing's potential for you! Call [contact and phone number] or visit [Web address]. Venture forth!

Outdoor Advertising (Billboards)

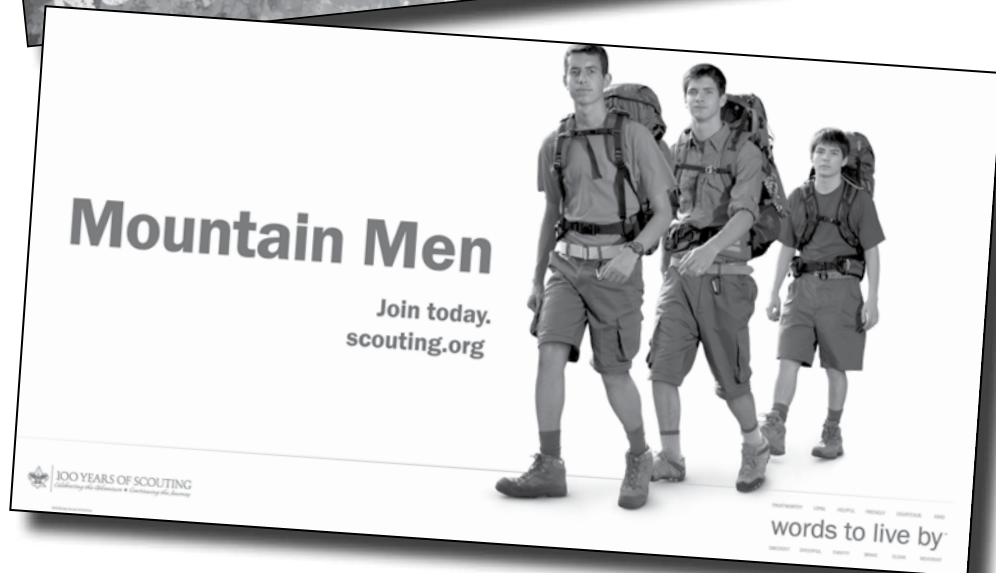
Outdoor advertising reaches people whenever and wherever they travel outside of their homes. Over time, outdoor advertising can consistently reinforce a message with crisp immediacy.

There are several billboard designs to support the Words to Live By recruitment campaign.

You may download the high-resolution images from www.scouting.org/wordstoliveby.

A customizable version is available through BSA's Brand on Demand. For more information, visit www.scouting.org/marketing.

These graphics may be used to print your billboards or signs. There are many different vendors that have the capability of printing this size. In addition to using these as traditional billboards, you could print them for use as backdrops, bus wraps, bus stop signage, taxi signage banners, signs on trucks, and movie theater advertising.



Additional Marketing Resources

Brand on Demand: Customizable Marketing Tools on Your Desktop!

Brand on Demand is a simple-to-use online resource designed to help councils create great-looking marketing materials quickly and easily. It's available online, and it's free to councils!

The convenient system features marketing templates for fliers, brochures, and even billboards, that can be customized for your market.

There are limited licenses available for BSA professionals. Every council has designated a user for the Brand on Demand system.

Get started with five easy steps:

- Log into MyBSA; select Resources, and look for Brand on Demand under Business Tools.
- Select a template (for example, a Words to Live By flier).
- Customize the flier with your council information, including uploading your own photos.
- Download the template to your desktop and send it to a printer.
- Save the file and use it again.

Spring Forward: Words to Live By 2.0

Building on the 2009 national recruitment campaign, Words to Live By, fresh, new materials targeted at all levels of Scouting—Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing in English and Spanish—are available on Brand on Demand. A sample kit of the new materials will be mailed to councils and will include fliers, billboards, and television PSAs.

Additional featured resources on Brand on Demand include:

- Friends of Scouting (FOS) Words to Live By brochures
- Customizable ads
- Race to Cub Scouting

For more information about the Brand on Demand system, please contact the Brand Management department at the national office.

Digital Media

Social Media

Many of your volunteers are a part of a social network. By creating a council social networking page, you will open a new communication channel to your key internal audience. You can use your council page to promote recruitment events and get your volunteers talking about Scouting. These conversations will then show on their page, which provides the viral sharing to their friends who may not know about Scouting.

Also, the majority of your Boy Scouts and Venturers probably are a part of social network. Get them involved in promoting Scouting and their unit recruitment events on their page—they can also send invitations for events such as their troop open house.

Scouting, on the national level, has several pages that you can connect to:

Boy Scouts of America Facebook page
(www.facebook.com/pages/Boy-Scouts-of-America/113441755297)—The official Boy Scout of America Facebook page. Accept no substitutes.

Boys' Life Facebook page
(www.facebook.com/boyslife)—Follow what's going on with *Boys' Life* on Facebook.

BSA Licensing Facebook page
(www.facebook.com/bsalicensing)—The official Facebook home for BSA Licensing.

National Scouting Museum Facebook page
(www.facebook.com/pages/Irving-TX/National-Scouting-Museum)—The official Facebook home for the National Scouting Museum.

Facebook Defined

Facebook is a social-networking Web site that was originally designed for college students, but is now open to anyone 13 years of age or older. Facebook users can create and customize their own profiles with photos, videos, and information about themselves. Friends can browse the profiles of other friends and write messages on their pages.

Each Facebook profile has a “wall,” where friends can post comments. Since the wall is viewable by the user’s friends, wall postings are basically a public conversation. Therefore, it is usually best not to write personal messages on your friends’ walls. Instead, you can send a person a private message, which will show up in his or her private Inbox, similar to an e-mail message.

Facebook allows each user to set privacy settings, which by default are pretty strict. For example, if you have not added a certain person as a friend, that person will not be able to view your profile. However, you can adjust the privacy settings to allow users within your network (such as your college or the area you live) to view part or all of your profile. You can also create a “limited profile,” which allows you to

hide certain parts of your profile from a list of users that you select. If you don't want certain friends to be able to view your full profile, you can add them to your "limited profile" list.

Facebook provides an easy way for friends to keep in touch and for individuals to have a presence on the Web without needing to build a Web site. Since Facebook makes it easy to upload pictures and videos, nearly anyone can publish a multimedia profile. Of course, if you are a Facebook member or decide to sign up one day, remember to use discretion in what you publish or what you post on other users' pages. After all, your information is only as public as you choose to make it!

MySpace Defined

MySpace is an online community that allows friends to keep in touch and meet new people as well. It started out as a Web site that bands could use to promote their music, but it has since grown into a more general community of friends. Anyone who is at least 14 years old can sign up for a MySpace account at no cost. Once you sign up, you can customize your profile by adding information about yourself—listing your interests, hobbies, and educational background, and uploading photos of yourself and your friends. You can also create your own blog for others to read.

Once you have created a profile on MySpace, you can search or browse other users' profiles. If you want to add someone as a friend, just click the "Add to Friends" link on that person's profile page. If the person approves your friend request, he or she will be added to your list of friends. Some users have only a few friends, while others have several thousand. You can send a private message to a user by clicking the "Send Message" link or post a comment on his or her page by clicking "Add Comment." Comments can be seen by all visitors to that person's profile, so be careful what you post!

The "friends" concept is the heart and soul of MySpace. By building a list of friends, you have your own network of people readily accessible from your profile page. When you click on a friend's image, you can view his or her profile and all their friends. This makes it easy to meet friends of friends, and their friends, and so on. The number of people you can

meet on MySpace is practically endless, which may be a part of the reason there are so many "MySpace addicts" out there.

In order to create a MySpace account, you need to choose a username and password, which is used for logging into your account. This gives you control over what appears on your profile page. The only way others can add content to your page is through comments, which you can choose to delete once you have logged into your account.

Web banner ads

A Web banner or banner ad is the digital equivalent to advertising in a newspaper or magazine. This form of online advertising entails embedding an advertisement into a Web page. It is intended to attract traffic to a particular Web site. Images are usually either wide and short, or tall and narrow, hence the reference to banners. These images are usually placed on Web pages that have interesting content, such as a newspaper article or an opinion piece.

Work with your local media, as well as your council board members, to place a Scouting banner ad on their Web site. The ad would then link to either your council recruitment Web page or the national recruiting site (www.scouting.org). Visitors will then find more information about the benefits of Scouting as well as how to join.

Web banners are available in support of the Words to Live By campaign. Visit www.scouting.org/wordstoliveby. You will find a banner in each of the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing sections. Through these banners, you have the opportunity to provide a specific Web address. The HTML code will be populated accordingly. Simply copy the HTML, and provide it to the Webmaster. He or she will know how to embed the banner code.

E-mail

Outlook template

An e-mail template is an easy way to share the message of your Scouting recruitment events with other parents in your community. Engage the parents of current Scouts to become

ambassadors of Scouting. Suggest that they send the e-mail to everyone in their contact list: sports teams families, school/PTA families, etc. An engaged and enthusiastic Scouting parent is one of the keys to recruitment.

An e-mail template has been created in support of the Words to Live By recruitment campaign. This template was created for use in Microsoft Outlook. After you download the template, it will open in your Outlook mail window. Simply add your distribution list, the details of your recruitment event, and click send.

E-vite

Many councils have utilized the services of an outside social-planning Web site for creating, sending, and managing online invitations (e-vites). Through an e-vite, prospective guests receive an e-mail with information pertaining to the recruitment event. The guests have the opportunity to respond as “Attending,” “Not Attending,” and “Maybe,” and have the opportunity to write additional comments.

The e-vite differs from the e-mail template in that you can track who will be attending, not attending, or thinking about it. This allows you to follow up accordingly after the event.

Texting

Texting is a great way to have our youth engaged in inviting their friends to join Scouting. Suggest that Scouts and Venturers text the invitation to their unit’s recruitment event. Many phones support MMS texting (texting that includes photos). These MMS messages can include graphics to support the campaign and demonstrate the excitement of Scouting. We suggest your council develop a competition within troops and crews to see how many youth can be recruited via text messaging—be sure to ask new youth how they heard about the event.

The key is to have the text sent from a youth; no adults should be involved. Encourage your youth leaders to start the messages, and see how viral they can become.

Final Thoughts

Start early with your local council promotions of recruiting events. In turn, districts and units can begin planning local promotions. Remember that one of the best methods of communication is word of mouth. Enthusiastic volunteers attract and sustain positive attention at civic, social, and industry functions. Create positive energy, and people inside and outside of the organization will feel it.

Council- and District-Level Ideas for Increasing Awareness

- Schedule a press conference.
- Work with your local newspaper to produce an insert promoting Scouting and the recruitment events.
- Distribute recruiting fliers with annual telephone book distribution.
- Distribute fliers and door hangers with annual food-drive bags.
- Work with your local cable company. The PSAs may be aired on cable channels such as USA, The History Channel, and Discovery Channel.
- Include the Words to Live By tagline on all council communications, including newsletters and posters.
- Have a media event—breakfast, lunch, or dinner—to gain commitment for PSAs, news releases, and editorials. This will assist in raising awareness of Scouting and building relationships with your local media.
- Work with local carry-out restaurants to attach a special postcard promoting your recruitment events. This could also be printed on the backside of local restaurant coupons.
- Send a letter to the editor: a simple, straightforward statement written to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Op-ed page: Some newspapers use this page to print reader opinions and articles by columnists.
- Send releases to local business newsletters and community bulletin boards.
- Speak formally at your chartered organization, as well as informally with parents, friends, and coworkers on behalf of your council.
- Decorate a float for Scouts to ride on in your local parade.
- Set up booths at trade shows or fairs. Provide information that visitors can take home with them.
- Hang posters and fliers in places where boys and young adults will see them.
- Deliver pancakes to local radio personalities on a chosen day. The radio personalities could talk about Scouting. Give the personalities a flier listing details of the recruiting program or coming event.
- Word of mouth can be the best marketing tool. It is a free and effective method to spread positive messages. So how do you do it?
 - The best place to start word-of-mouth marketing is inside the unit. Sparkle originates internally; enthusiasm starts in your council.
 - Enthusiastic volunteers attract and sustain positive attention at civic, social, and industry functions. Create positive energy, and people inside and outside of the organization will feel it. Enthusiasm is very persuasive.
 - Share your excitement with people. They will want to know what you are so excited about and will want to learn more.
 - Encourage everyone associated with the BSA to be informed, enthusiastic, and ready to tell people about the fun and benefits associated with Scouting. A good unit meeting question to ask is: “Who have you told about Scouting this week?”
 - Ask everyone you know to pass along the good word.
 - Smile!

Recruitment Ideas for Sharing with Units

Invitation Methods for Cub Scouting

Top Ideas

The most important methods for recruiting. All packs should consider them.

1. Pack Information Sheet

- Every pack should develop and distribute a Pack Information Sheet that includes meeting dates, times, and places; a pack calendar; a list of leaders' contact information; and other exciting information about events and activities.
- Give copies to your chartered partner, pack families, local schools, churches, and other organizations—then they can answer questions and help people get in touch with you.
- It's your chance to brag on your pack! Make it look smart. Keep a supply on hand.

2. Chartered Partner Organization Visit

- Before school begins, schedule a face-to-face meeting with your chartered partner. This important meeting gives you the opportunity to thank the organization for its support, and to outline ideas and requests for your recruitment effort.
- Take your Pack Information Sheet and perhaps a yearbook-style photo album of activities. Be prepared to explain how Cub Scouting benefits the organization.
- A can of popcorn or other appropriate gift for the head of the chartered partner, and his or her assistant, can go a long way.

3. Meeting with the Principal

- Just like a PTA presentation, a meeting with the principal will strengthen relationships and may foster support for your recruitment efforts.
- Share exciting news and successes regarding your pack and upcoming events. Be sure to include school and community service projects.
- The pack is a resource and an asset to the school. Explain the benefits for the boys and for the school. Schools should be the sites of many pack service projects. And,

Cub Scouting is educational: It has been established that active Scouting programs improve grades and study habits, and lead to better jobs and more successful lives.

- Remember, a principal will appreciate a pack that is a source of school volunteers.
- Take a can of popcorn or other gift to thank the principal for support. Be sure to make the meeting brief. Don't waste this important administrator's valuable time.

4. Fliers

- A pack can produce its own Cub Scouting promotional fliers, but often the local district or council will provide them at no charge.
- Order or produce fliers well in advance, and include the date, time, and place of the recruitment night; add the unit leadership contact information. Many flier designs also have space for information about your upcoming events.
- Joining nights should be held the first few weeks of school and fliers sent home with all boys. It might help if you offer to count out the fliers by classroom. Counts need not be exact. Ask for an average, divide by two for number of boys, and add a cushion!
- If teachers distribute them, attach a half-sheet with directions for each classroom-package of fliers. Your note should also thank the teacher for his or her assistance.

5. Wear the Uniform

- What a simple way to market Cub Scouting. The uniform is a walking billboard!
- Ask Cub Scouts to wear their uniforms not only on the days of den and pack meetings, but also on those of joining nights and other school events such as back-to-school night.
- At your meetings, provide recognition for every boy who wore his uniform that day.
- Leaders should also consider wearing their uniforms at school events.
- Design a cool pack T-shirt for Cub Scouts to wear on a more regular basis.

6. School Visits

- Visits to classrooms, the lunchroom, and even on school busses, are highly effective at getting boys excited about Cub Scouting—a great opportunity to talk up your pack activities and to offer a personal invitation to the recruitment night.
- Be sure to take visual aids, “stickers,” display boards, and simple props to make the presentation lively and memorable.
- The visit can be done up to three days before the event. Stress that the boys must take a parent or guardian, or other adult partner with them to the joining night!
- After your visit, be sure to send the school a thank-you note.
- Set up a sample campsite in front of the school—think carpool lane.

7. Stickers and Tyvek Wristbands

- “Stickers” that go on a boy’s shirt (think peel-off name tags printed with joining information) may be more likely to make it home than a flier.
- Boys can also put the stickers on their lunch boxes, notebooks, or anything else that goes home, and that a parent might see.
- An alternative to stickers is identification wristbands made of Tyvek such as those used in hospitals. They can be printed with recruitment night and pack contact information and then distributed to boys at schools or other venues.
- Many councils provide stickers free of charge. They might do the same for wristbands.
- Stickers or wristbands should include the date, time, and place for joining night, along with contact information and instructions for a parent or adult partner to also attend.
- Distribute at school visits, back-to-school events, and other such functions.

8. Yard Signs

- Before joining night, put signs at school entrances and exits, and high-traffic areas.
- Distribute signs to parents to post at their homes and perhaps places of business.
- Use council-provided signs or create your own.

- Include date, time, and place for joining night, plus a phone number and Web site address. If you design your own sign, use LARGE, DARK print.

9. Picture Boards

- Display boards speak louder than words! Get permission to set them up at back-to-school nights, recruitments, church/school activities, and other places families will see them.
- Creating these boards may be a great den activity. Be sure to include contact information, Web site address, and any joining night information.
- Be sure to use exciting photos from the previous year’s activities.

10. Back-to-School Nights

- Your pack is part of the fiber of the school, and people need to know it. Being present at back-to-school nights and other school activities is an important way to increase awareness of what we have to offer youth and families.
- Set up a table with fliers, a sign-in sheet, stickers, picture board, and other visuals; speak with all families attending. Be sure to have a supply of your Pack Information Sheet, and pack “business cards.”
- Take names and contact information of interested families so you can personally call and remind them to attend the recruitment night.
- All pack leaders should be in uniform for this event.
- Encourage pack leaders and parents to volunteer at back-to-school nights. They can help with set-up, take-down, and other duties. Support the school and PTA, and they will support you.

Pack Families

The families of the pack are your most important resource. They know people; their sons have friends; and getting everyone—especially parents—involved in marketing your program can be an easy way to introduce the idea of volunteering. Don't be shy! Working with other adults is fun, and many will thank you. Just remind them we're looking for our nation's future leaders. Our parents are our ambassadors!

"Business" or "Buddy" Cards

- Design and print attractive "business cards" for parents and Cub Scouts to distribute to friends and other families. The cards also work well as a "takeaway" at school, church, and community functions.
- Perhaps use a child-oriented version—a "buddy card"—for the Cub Scouts to use with their friends.
- Think about creating a special version to pass out with candy on Halloween.
- Include pack meeting date, time, and place; leadership contact information; and perhaps a catchy slogan that alludes to the fun new families will enjoy. Print upcoming activities on the reverse side.
- Use a commercial print shop or a business card template on your home computer.

Customized Invitation Letters

- Produce and e-mail a letter to parents that they can customize as from their family, and then send to friends and acquaintances.
- Include information on the benefits of Cub Scouting, your pack's activities, and why your families are involved.
- It is important that any letters invite families to a specific gathering, indicate how to learn more, and what to do if they cannot attend.

Personal Phone Calls/E-mail Invitations

- Ask each family to brainstorm other families they could personally call or e-mail with an invitation to join.
- The pack should provide each family with copies of the Pack Information Sheet, yard sign, business card, and other items to help spread the excitement of Cub Scouting.

- Pack leadership could also create an e-mail "newsletter" or other promotional copy for families to forward to others on their brainstormed list.
- Have an incentive for the family inviting the most new members.

Promotions Through Family Affiliations

- Most families, of course, are affiliated with other organizations and businesses: place of employment; customers or clients; church; musical groups; various clubs; sports; etc. These contacts can also be avenues to spread the word about Cub Scouting.
- The Boy Scouts of America publishes a Family Talent Survey Sheet, or you can create your own "family resource questionnaire." Be sure it asks for information about family affiliations outside of Scouting.
- The Pack Information Sheet and business or buddy cards also come in handy with this invitation method.

Halloween Candy

- Halloween represents an opportunity where often parades of children actually stop by the homes of Cub Scouting families. Why not take advantage of the opportunity?
- Provide a sticker or label that your pack families can affix to candy they give to out.
- Sheets of labels with invitations can be printed from your computer.

Pack Web Site

- Check with your parents and find talent to set up and maintain your own pack Web site. This is getting to be the "norm" these days; most packs seem to have them.
- The site should be designed for members of your pack, as well as for the community to learn about what we have to offer and that we are developing tomorrow's leaders.
- Limit what the public can see—to information about joining nights and pack activities in general. Provide a link to the National Council (www.BeAScout.org) for information about Cub Scouting and the Boy Scouts of America.

- Provide password-protected access that allows pack families to see the more detailed information about activities and events.
- Think logically about youth-protection issues. For example, refer to boys only by their first names. Check with your local council about the rules for a pack Web site.
- Check with your council, your school, and other community organizations to see if they will provide links from their sites to yours.
- Include your Web site address on all pack promotional materials.

Schools

The greatest potential for Cub Scout membership growth is in the schools. Boys who would benefit from what we have to offer spend more time there than almost anywhere else. Pack leaders should develop strong relationships with principals, teachers, and parent organizations. This will go a long way—especially in those areas where the local Scouting council or district has limited access. Don't forget to research and include local private schools and "home-school" associations.

PTA/PTO Presentations

- At the beginning of each school year, it is a good idea to schedule a brief presentation to your school's parent-teacher organization.
- Share information about the number of families in your pack, recent and planned activities, and the benefits of Cub Scouting for both boys and families.
- Distribute Pack Information Sheets and business cards.
- Take a few cans of popcorn to pass around in appreciation for their ongoing support.
- Offer the pack's assistance and involvement in PTA/PTO events and projects.
- It is extremely helpful if several pack leaders and parents are active in the PTA/PTO.

Involvement in School Activities

- Back-to-school nights, carnivals, fund-raisers, and other school activities represent excellent opportunities for pack parents and leaders to volunteer, and thus pay the school back for its support—or sew goodwill toward developing it.
- The pack's participation will help the school see the pack as a positive resource and

committed ally, for they too are developing future leaders.

- If parents cannot volunteer, they should at least attend and otherwise support school functions, and be on the lookout for prospective new families.
- Be sure to be available for flag ceremonies throughout the year.

Intercom Announcement

- Obtain permission to use the school's public-address system or intercom to make announcements regarding pack meetings and activities, and to promote joining nights.
- The announcements must be brief, upbeat, and well-rehearsed.
- Seek a parent to handle this—one with a strong a "broadcast" voice.

Video Announcement

- If your school has a closed-circuit television system, ask if one of your articulate, well-uniformed Cub Scouts or leaders could read a joining night announcement on-camera.
- Make sure the reader is well-rehearsed. You can point to your favorite television anchor as an example for how your "news" should be read.
- Your school may also allow you to show one of the Boy Scouts of America's membership promotional videos, either over their TV system, at an assembly, or in a classroom. Work with your district executive to obtain a copy.
- Have the boys in the pack create a commercial for their pack. Boys appeal to boys!

Textbook Covers

- Create and distribute a textbook cover that promotes Cub Scouting and your pack.
- These can be easily created on a computer.
- Perhaps design it as a template that dens and families can personalize.

Personal Letters of Invitation

- Use a formal invitation letter or card to invite all families in the school to your joining night.
- Work with pack families to gather names and addresses, or use a school directory if available.

- Invitations should be mailed two weeks ahead.

Display Case

- Use a school display case or bulletin board to show the excitement in your pack.
- Include action pictures to catch attention and motivate boys to attend the joining night.
- Consider purchasing an electronic “picture frame” that loops through a number of photos.
- Include a poster with the date, time, and place of the recruitment night, and with other information that will help families make the decision to join.
- Some schools will let you keep up the display year-round, but do this **ONLY** if you are able to update it from time to time with upcoming pack activities.

Phone Calls

- Personally call each family at the school, and any additional prospects you might have listed through discussions with others in the pack. Share a few details about your activities, and invite them to the joining night.
- This is a great opportunity to answer questions and share stories about the program.
- Calls should be made at least one week in advance.
- Ask other pack families to help with the calls.

Silicone Wristbands

- If ordered in quantities of 100 or more, these debossed promotional wristbands can be purchased for as little as \$1 each, or even less. Try an Internet search on “promotional wristbands” to check out different sources.
- Customize the wristbands with your pack’s Web site address so people can learn more about your activities.
- Distribute to boys at the school or award them to new members and their recruiters.
- It is even possible in some markets to sell them for a small return.

School Reader-board

- Ask at your school if you can display a message on the outdoor marquee to promote your recruitment night or other pack activity.
- Give lots of notice and make your message short so it can be read as people drive by.

Lunch Tray Liners

- You’ve seen them at McDonald’s and other places—a promotional piece that fits the food tray! Provide information about your pack and its activities, and how to join.
- Tray liners should include pictures, puzzles, and other exciting visuals in order to attract attention and motivate children to even take them home.
- To make the idea more attractive to the school, you could also coordinate the message to include information about girls youth organizations.

Assist and Be an Asset to the School

- Have uniformed pack leaders volunteer to serve lunch and/or serve as lunch monitors on the day of your joining night.
- On the day of your joining night, have uniformed pack leaders volunteer to
 - Serve lunch
 - Be lunch room monitors
 - Serve as crossing guard
 - Assist with drop-off and pick-up
- Be sure to take a picture board, stickers, and fliers to build interest and attention.

After-School Promotional Activity

- Work with the school administration to set up an activity on school grounds.
- If you have volunteers willing to get food-handler permits and meet other regulations, make it a hot dog barbeque! Nothing attracts attention like free food.
- Have uniformed Cub Scouts participating along with other children. Make it coed and allow all ages to join in. The younger boys will soon be ready for Tiger Cubs.
- Take the games and activities straight out of Cub Scouting literature.
- Have a picture board, displays, stickers, fliers, and copies of your Pack Information Sheet; watch for parents stopping to pick up their sons.

School Service Projects

- If the pack supports the school, the school is more likely to support the pack.
- Make sure service projects are based on what the school needs.
- Boys and leaders should be in uniform as they work.
- Do projects at times when a maximum of boys and parents will see the action.
- Seek coverage in the school newsletter and the local newspaper.
- Ask to have pictures and a description displayed on a bulletin board in a hallway.
- The pack can offer to manage the school's recycling program, which produces a win-win. The pack has an ongoing service project; the school benefits by working toward a "green" designation; and the earth benefits.

Follow-Up Joining Nights

- It is highly unlikely that all the boys who want to join will make it to one recruitment night. There is just too much going on these days for both boys and parents. As a result many packs hold two or more joining nights per year.
- Help families understand that if they missed the first meeting they can still join at a subsequent night, or at any other time of the year!

Churches

There is a reason so many churches serve as Scouting chartered partners. Most appreciate our family values and our stand on duty to God. Contact the local minister, priest, bishop, rabbi, or other pastor, and establish a mutually beneficial relationship!

Bulletin Inserts, Articles, and Calendars

- Create an attractive insert, and encourage churches in your pack's drawing area to include it with their weekly bulletin. Handle all the printing, and offer to help with the inserting process as well.
- Submit regular articles for churches to include within the text of their bulletins.
- Include pack leader contact information and details about your joining nights and upcoming activities.

- Make articles brief with no long paragraphs. Bold and underline all contact information and activity dates so they will stand out. Inserts should look like an advertisement that guides the eye to critical information.
- If the church produces a weekly or annual calendar, be sure to get all your pack activities listed in it.

Church Service Projects

- The same suggestions apply here as with the already covered school service projects.
- If we support the church in this way, then while our Cub Scouts are learning the valuable lessons of service, the pack will be earning the respect of the church.

Sunday School Presentations

- Ask to make a brief presentation at local religious education classes ("Sunday school").
- Take a few Cub Scouts with you, and be sure to be in uniform.
- Promote and explain the religious awards program for that faith.
- Participate in Scout Sunday services; wear the uniform; set up an information table.

Messages from the Pulpit

- Though this is especially appropriate for Scout Sunday, many pastors are willing to promote Cub Scouting at other times as well. Our values are an important factor.
- Schedule a meeting with the pastor and follow the same guidelines indicated for a meeting with a principal. Pay special attention to the appropriate Religious Awards Program.
- Ask if he or she would be willing to deliver a message along with the sermon and to preach about the values of Cub Scouting.
- Provide a brief summary of important points that might be covered.
- Investigate the possibility of a pack leader delivering a brief message during the part of a service reserved for announcements; cover the joining night or other pack event.

'Welcome to Cub Scouts' Table

- Secure permission to set up a display that boys and parents can visit as they enter or exit the church. Perhaps it will make a future leader feel welcome!
- Use some of the same ideas indicated previously for a school display: lots of pictures, the Pack Information Sheet, and so forth.
- Have the table staffed by uniformed pack leaders and Cub Scouts.
- Do this the day messages are delivered from the pulpit, and yes, on Scout Sunday.

After-Church Promotional Activity

- This would be similar to covering the after-school promotional activity.
- It could be done in a "fellowship hall" or on church grounds, depending on the weather, facilities, and available space.

Community

The following ideas can help market your pack's program throughout your community. Try not to keep your pack a secret! Build awareness that Cub Scouting is alive, healthy, and relevant. You will reach not only additional families, but may well develop general support for Scouting aims and objectives.

Community Events and Parades

- Do some research! The local chambers of commerce are good places to begin. Make a list of all the local carnivals, parades, and other events in the area around your pack. Then contact organizers to learn how you can be part of them.
- Set up a display board or booth at community events such as carnivals and parades. Have uniformed leaders and Cub Scouts there to answer questions, along with plenty of fliers and your Pack Information Sheet to distribute.
- Encourage pack families to volunteer to assist with the set-up, clean-up, or activities at community events.
- Look for opportunities for your Cub Scouts to present flag ceremonies—especially for patriotic celebrations and 9/11 remembrances. Get them in their best uniforms, and practice, practice, practice!

- Parades are great fun for the entire Scouting family. Build a float, march, or volunteer to carry banners! Again, have plenty of information available to distribute.

Pack Special Events in the Community

- Hold a special event such as a "Kite Day," bike rodeo, or carnival. Invite the entire community. Get the local paper to cover it! Community service projects are good too.
- Negotiate a special price at the zoo and offer "Cub Scouting at the Zoo." Publicize it through newspapers, schools, and churches. A science center or museum works too.
- Secure a partner for the event, perhaps the local fire or police department, a school, or a church. This can lead to increased exposure and credibility.
- Have a schedule of events and activities planned for children of all ages. Consider setting it up for just part of a day so people will leave wanting more.

Sporting Events and Recreation Centers

- Sports are a major activity for many families; be on the lookout for their marketing possibilities.
- Work with youth sports associations to set up information tables at games.
- Get permission from local sports venues to hang banners or posters, or to set up information tables during games and tournaments.
- Host an activity at a local recreation center. These are often very popular places where kids of all ages hang out. An example might be a basketball skills clinic for children.

Popcorn and Fund-raising Opportunities

- Selling popcorn or conducting other fund-raisers represents an opportunity to do more than just generate revenue.
- For each item sold, attach information or give the customer a thank-you card that also promotes your pack activities and successes.

Community Reader-boards

- Use marquees at businesses, churches, and neighborhood or recreation centers to promote joining nights and pack activities.
- Contact organizations well in advance, in order to plan the message and its timing.

- Look especially for “scrolling” signs; the moving message attracts more attention.
- Be sure to thank the organization for its support.

Local Libraries

- Ask the local library if you can hang posters there and leave a supply of your Pack Information Sheets on the counter for interested patrons.
- Design and print Cub Scouting promotional bookmarks for libraries to distribute.
- Libraries also have events; your pack’s involvement could lead to more exposure.
- Encourage pack leaders to volunteer to read (in uniform) for story time.

Promotion Through Businesses and Offices

- Visit local businesses and post offices to seek permission to set up a window or countertop display, or to leave information about your pack activities.
- Ask grocery stores or drug stores if they will insert your Pack Information Sheet or business card into each shopping bag.
- Family-friendly businesses are the best bet. And they will be especially interested if the display might bring in or increase business.
- The best time to use these methods may be during the Scout Week celebration.

Door hangers

- Create attractive door hangers with pack contact information and joining night details.
- Target specific areas within your community, and assign them to dens for distribution of door hangers. Use the same rules that you would for door-to-door sales, with full involvement from accompanying parents and leaders.
- Door hangers work especially well in apartment complexes and subsidized housing, but be sure to first obtain permission from building management.
- Blanket key areas in your community on a specific day. Make this a pack activity and give the Cub Scouts a special participation recognition.

The Media

The media is all about communications and marketing; it's what they do. Every news story about Scouting helps generate support; every public-service announcement draws a level of interest. There is always somebody out there watching, listening, or reading. Let's help them see and hear about Cub Scouting!

Local Newspaper “News Stories”

- Community newspapers are always interested in what’s going on in their neighborhoods. Usually, they are looking for stories to write.
- Every pack meeting or activity represents an opportunity for a story: Who earned what, who won the race, what families are involved? They are all of interest.
- Develop a relationship with the publisher and editors. Look for a parent with good writing skills who might be willing to prepare and submit news releases.
- Alert the paper several weeks before any of your major activities. You never know; they might send a reporter/photographer.
- Make sure your pack meetings and activities are included in the community events section or calendar that most papers publish. This is a good method to consider for the larger papers as well.

Newspaper or Newsletter Advertising

- Sometimes it pays to purchase small ads in newspapers and in the newsletters published by schools, churches, and even large business that realize they have employees with families.
- An ad might be a one-time purchase for a joining night or major activity, but some newsletters—especially those from churches—will also print low-cost business card-sized ads that become permanent fixtures on the back page.

Community Access Television

- Most communities and local cable companies have community access channels.
- They may run public service announcements, feature live guests, and cover various community events.

- Become familiar with the station in your community and contact management to learn about the possibilities.
- If you have the talent and interest among pack families, try filming a 30-second spot based on your activities and plans for the coming year. Of course, you might want to check with channel management—just to make sure they will run it.

Drive-time Radio PSAs

- Make your own public service announcement! To get ideas, listen to advertising on the radio. Then plan what will be said, write it out, and rehearse and record!
- If you can recruit someone with a voice recognized in the community, then all the better!
- Some stations—especially talk-radio and sports stations—may have radio hosts or personalities willing to do the recording for you.

Sign spinner

- Maybe you've seen them on street corners. They're the latest thing. Instead of someone just standing there wearing a sandwich-board, young people hire out as "sign spinners." They use large—usually cardboard or vinyl—signs that they twirl over and around themselves like a basketball player might show off his ball-handling skills. It involves a combination of acrobatics, baton-tossing, and martial arts movements to attract the attention of passing motorists.
- OK, so maybe this one's a long shot, but having a sign spinner spinning a Cub Scouting message would certainly attract attention. You never know, one of your Cub Scout's older siblings may already be skilled in the art!

Top Ideas

The most important methods for recruiting. All troops should consider them.

1. Troop Information Sheet

- Every troop should develop and distribute a Troop Information Sheet that includes meeting dates, times, and places; a troop calendar; a list of leaders' contact information; and other exciting information about events and activities.
- Give copies to your chartered partner, troop families, local schools, churches, and other organizations—then they can answer questions and help people get in touch with you.
- It's your chance to brag on your troop! Make it look smart. Keep a supply on hand.

2. Chartered Partner Organization Visit

- Before school begins, schedule a face-to-face meeting with your chartered partner. This important meeting gives you the opportunity to thank the organization for its support, and to outline ideas and requests for your recruitment effort.
- Take your Troop Information Sheet and perhaps a yearbook-style photo album of activities. Be prepared to explain how Boy Scouting benefits the organization.
- A can of popcorn or other appropriate gift for the head of the chartered partner, and his or her assistant, can go a long way.

3. Meeting with the Principal

- Just like a PTA presentation, a meeting with the principal will strengthen relationships and may foster support for your recruitment efforts.
- Share exciting news and successes regarding your troop and upcoming events. Be sure to include school and community service projects.
- The troop is a resource and an asset to the school. Explain the benefits for the boys and for the school. Schools should be the sites of many troop service projects. And, Boy Scouting is educational: It has been established that active Scouting programs improve grades and study habits, and lead to better jobs and more successful lives.

- Remember, a principal will appreciate a troop that is a source of school volunteers.
- Take a can of popcorn or other gift to thank the principal for support. Be sure to make the meeting brief. Don't waste this important administrator's valuable time.

4. Fliers

- A troop can produce its own Boy Scouting promotional fliers, but often the local district or council will provide them at no charge.
- Order or produce fliers well in advance, and include the date, time, and place of the recruitment night; add the unit leadership contact information. Many flier designs also have space for information about your upcoming events.
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- The visit can be done up to three days before the event. Stress that the boys must take a parent or guardian, or other adult partner with them to the joining night!
- After your visit, be sure to send the school a thank-you note.
- Set up a sample campsite in front of the school.

6. Yard Signs

- Before joining night, put signs at school entrances and exits, and high-traffic areas.
- Distribute signs to parents to post at their homes and perhaps places of business.
- Use council-provided signs or create your own.
- Include date, time, and place for joining night, plus a phone number and Web site address. If you design your own sign, use LARGE, DARK print.

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- Limit what the public can see—to information about joining nights and troop activities in general. Provide a link to the National Council (www.Scouting.org) for information about Boy Scouting and the Boy Scouts of America.
- Provide password-protected access that allows troop families to see the more detailed information about activities and events.
- Think logically about youth-protection issues. For example, refer to boys only by their first names. Check with your local council about the rules for a troop website.
- Check with your council, your school, and other community organizations to see if they will provide links from their sites to yours.
- Include your website address on all troop promotional materials.

Schools

The greatest potential for Boy Scout membership growth is in the schools. Boys who would benefit from what we have to offer spend more time there than almost anywhere else. Troop leaders should develop strong relationships with principals, teachers, and parent organizations. This will go a long way—especially in those areas where the local Scouting council or district has limited access. Don’t forget to research and include local private schools and “home-school” associations.

PTA/PTO Presentations

- At the beginning of each school year, it is a good idea to schedule a brief presentation to your school’s parent-teacher organization.
- Share information about the number of families in your troop, recent and planned activities, and the benefits of Boy Scouting for both boys and families.
- Distribute Troop Information Sheets and business cards.
- Take a few cans of popcorn to pass around in appreciation for their ongoing support.
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- It is extremely helpful if several troop leaders and parents are active in the PTA/PTO.

Involvement in School Activities

- Back-to-school nights, carnivals, fund-raisers, and other school activities represent excellent opportunities for troop parents and leaders to volunteer, and thus pay the school back for its support—or sew goodwill toward developing it.
- The troop’s participation will help the school see the troop as a positive resource and committed ally, for they too are developing future leaders.
- If parents cannot volunteer, they should at least attend and otherwise support school functions, and be on the lookout for prospective new families.
- Be sure to be available for flag ceremonies throughout the year.

Intercom Announcement

- Obtain permission to use the school's public-address system or intercom to make announcements regarding troop meetings and activities, and to promote joining nights.
- The announcements must be brief, upbeat, and well-rehearsed.
- Seek a parent to handle this—one with a strong a “broadcast” voice.

Video Announcement

- If your school has a closed-circuit television system, ask if one of your articulate, well-uniformed Boy Scouts or leaders could read a joining night announcement on-camera.
- Make sure the reader is well-rehearsed. You can point to your favorite television anchor as an example for how your “news” should be read.
- Your school may also allow you to show one of the Boy Scouts of America's membership promotional videos, either over their TV system, at an assembly, or in a classroom. Work with your district executive to obtain a copy.
- Have the boys in the troop create a commercial for their troop. Boys appeal to boys!

Textbook Covers

- Create and distribute a textbook cover that promotes Boy Scouting and your troop.
- These can be easily created on a computer.
- Perhaps design it as a template that others can personalize.

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- Use a formal invitation letter or card to invite all families in the school to your joining night.
- Work with troop families to gather names and addresses, or use a school directory if available.
- Invitations should be mailed two weeks ahead.

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- Use a school display case or bulletin board to show the excitement in your troop.
- Include action pictures to catch attention and motivate boys to attend the joining night.

- Consider purchasing an electronic “picture frame” that loops through a number of photos.
- Include a poster with the date, time, and place of the recruitment night, and with other information that will help families make the decision to join.
- Some schools will let you keep up the display year-round, but do this **ONLY** if you are able to update it from time to time with upcoming troop activities.

Phone Calls

- Personally call each family at the school, and any additional prospects you might have listed through discussions with others in the troop. Share a few details about your activities, and invite them to the joining night.
- This is a great opportunity to answer questions and share stories about the program.
- Calls should be made at least one week in advance.
- Ask other troop families to help with the calls.

Silicone Wristbands

- If ordered in quantities of 100 or more, these debossed promotional wristbands can be purchased for as little as \$1 each, or even less. Try an Internet search on “promotional wristbands” to check out different sources.
- Customize the wristbands with your troop's Web site address so people can learn more about your activities.
- Distribute to boys at the school or award them to new members and their recruiters.
- It is even possible in some markets to sell them for a small return.

School Reader-board

- Ask at your school if you can display a message on the outdoor marquee to promote your recruitment night or other troop activity.
- Give lots of notice and make your message short so it can be read as people drive by.

After-School Promotional Activity

- Work with the school administration to set up an activity on school grounds.
- If you have volunteers willing to get food-handler permits and meet other regulations, make it a hot dog barbecue! Nothing attracts attention like free food.
- Have uniformed Boy Scouts participating along with other children. Make it coed and allow all ages to join in.
- Have a picture board, displays, stickers, fliers, and copies of your Troop Information Sheet; watch for parents stopping to pick up their sons.

School Service Projects

- If the troop supports the school, the school is more likely to support the troop.
- Make sure service projects are based on what the school needs.
- Boys and leaders should be in uniform as they work.
- Do projects at times when a maximum of boys and parents will see the action.
- Seek coverage in the school newsletter and the local newspaper.
- Ask to have pictures and a description displayed on a bulletin board in a hallway.
- The troop can offer to manage the school's recycling program, which produces a win-win. The troop has an ongoing service project; the school benefits by working toward a "green" designation; and the earth benefits.

Follow-Up Joining Nights

- It is highly unlikely that all the boys who want to join will make it to one recruitment night. There is just too much going on these days for both boys and parents. As a result, many troops hold two or more joining nights per year.
- Help families understand that if they missed the first meeting they can still join at a subsequent night, or at any other time of the year!

Churches

There is a reason so many churches serve as Scouting chartered partners. Most appreciate our family values and our stand on duty to God. Contact the local minister, priest, bishop, rabbi, or other pastor, and establish a mutually beneficial relationship!

Bulletin Inserts, Articles, and Calendars

- Create an attractive insert, and encourage churches in your troop's drawing area to include it with their weekly bulletin. Handle all the printing, and offer to help with the inserting process as well.
- Submit regular articles for churches to include within the text of their bulletins.
- Include troop leader contact information and details about your joining nights and upcoming activities.
- Make articles brief with no long paragraphs. Bold and underline all contact information and activity dates so they will stand out. Inserts should look like an advertisement that guides the eye to critical information.
- If the church produces a weekly or annual calendar, be sure to get all your troop activities listed in it.

Church Service Projects

- The same suggestions apply here as with the already covered school service projects.
- If we support the church in this way, then while our Boy Scouts are learning the valuable lessons of service, the troop will be earning the respect of the church.

Sunday School Presentations

- Ask to make a brief presentation at local religious education classes ("Sunday school").
- Take a few Boy Scouts with you, and be sure to be in uniform.
- Promote and explain the religious awards program for that faith.
- Participate in Scout Sunday services; wear the uniform; set up an information table.

Messages from the Pulpit

- Though this is especially appropriate for Scout Sunday, many pastors are willing to promote Boy Scouting at other times as well. Our values are an important factor.
- Schedule a meeting with the pastor and follow the same guidelines indicated for a meeting with a principal. Pay special attention to the appropriate Religious Awards Program.
- Ask if he or she would be willing to deliver a message along with the sermon and to preach about the values of Boy Scouting.
- Provide a brief summary of important points that might be covered.
- Investigate the possibility of a troop leader delivering a brief message during the part of a service reserved for announcements; cover the joining night or other troop event.

'Welcome to Boy Scouts' Table

- Secure permission to set up a display that boys and parents can visit as they enter or exit the church. Perhaps it will make a future leader feel welcome!
- Use some of the same ideas indicated previously for a school display: lots of pictures, the Troop Information Sheet, and so forth.
- Have the table staffed by uniformed troop leaders and Boy Scouts.
- Do this the day messages are delivered from the pulpit, and yes, on Scout Sunday.

After-Church Promotional Activity

- This would be similar to covering the after-school promotional activity.
- It could be done in a "fellowship hall" or on church grounds, depending on the weather, facilities, and available space.

Community

The following ideas can help market your troop's program throughout your community. Try not to keep your troop a secret! Build awareness that Boy Scouting is alive, healthy, and relevant. You will reach not only additional families, but may well develop general support for Scouting aims and objectives.

Community Events and Parades

- Do some research! The local chambers of commerce are good places to begin. Make a list of all the local carnivals, parades, and other events in the area around your troop. Then contact organizers to learn how you can be part of them.
- Set up a display board or booth at community events such as carnivals and parades. Have uniformed leaders and Boy Scouts there to answer questions, along with plenty of fliers and your Troop Information Sheet to distribute.
- Encourage troop families to volunteer to assist with the set-up, clean-up, or activities at community events.
- Look for opportunities for your Boy Scouts to present flag ceremonies—especially for patriotic celebrations and 9/11 remembrances. Get them in their best uniforms, and practice, practice, practice!
- Parades are great fun for the entire Scouting family. Build a float, march, or volunteer to carry banners! Again, have plenty of information available to distribute.

Sporting Events and Recreation Centers

- Sports are a major activity for many families; be on the lookout for their marketing possibilities.
- Work with youth sports associations to set up information tables at games.
- Get permission from local sports venues to hang banners or posters, or to set up information tables during games and tournaments.
- Host an activity at a local recreation center. These are often very popular places where kids of all ages hang out. An example might be a basketball skills clinic for children.

Popcorn and Fund-raising Opportunities

- Selling popcorn or conducting other fund-raisers represents an opportunity to do more than just generate revenue.
- For each item sold, attach information or give the customer a thank-you card that also promotes your troop activities and successes.

Community Reader-boards

- Use marquees at businesses, churches, and neighborhood or recreation centers to promote joining nights and troop activities.
- Contact organizations well in advance, in order to plan the message and its timing.
- Look especially for “scrolling” signs; the moving message attracts more attention.
- Be sure to thank the organization for its support.

Local Libraries

- Ask the local library if you can hang posters there and leave a supply of your Troop Information Sheets on the counter for interested patrons.
- Design and print Boy Scouting promotional bookmarks for libraries to distribute.
- Libraries also have events; your troop’s involvement could lead to more exposure.
- Encourage troop leaders to volunteer to read (in uniform) for story time.

Promotion Through Businesses and Offices

- Visit local businesses and post offices to seek permission to set up a window or countertop display, or to leave information about your troop activities.
- Ask grocery stores or drug stores if they will insert your Troop Information Sheet or business card into each shopping bag.
- Family-friendly businesses are the best bet. And they will be especially interested if the display might bring in or increase business.
- The best time to use these methods may be during the Scout Week celebration.

Door hangers

- Create attractive door hangers with troop contact information and joining night details.
- Target specific areas within your community for distribution of door hangers. Use the same rules that you would for door-to-door sales, with full involvement from accompanying parents and leaders.
- Door hangers work especially well in apartment complexes and subsidized housing, but be sure to first obtain permission from building management.
- Blanket key areas in your community on a specific day. Make this a troop activity and give the Boy Scouts a special participation recognition.

The Media

The media is all about communications and marketing; it's what they do. Every news story about Scouting helps generate support; every public-service announcement draws a level of interest. There is always somebody out there watching, listening, or reading. Let's help them see and hear about Boy Scouting!

Local Newspaper “News Stories”

- Community newspapers are always interested in what’s going on in their neighborhoods. Usually, they are looking for stories to write.
- Every troop meeting or activity represents an opportunity for a story: Who earned what, who won the race, what families are involved? They are all of interest.
- Develop a relationship with the publisher and editors. Look for a parent with good writing skills who might be willing to prepare and submit news releases.
- Alert the paper several weeks before any of your major activities. You never know; they might send a reporter/photographer.
- Make sure your troop meetings and activities are included in the community events section or calendar that most papers publish. This is a good method to consider for the larger papers as well.

Newspaper or Newsletter Advertising

- Sometimes it pays to purchase small ads in newspapers and in the newsletters published by schools, churches, and even large business that realize they have employees with families.
- An ad might be a one-time purchase for a joining night or major activity, but some newsletters—especially those from churches—will also print low-cost business card-sized ads that become permanent fixtures on the back page.

Community Access Television

- Most communities and local cable companies have community access channels.
- They may run public service announcements, feature live guests, and cover various community events.
- Become familiar with the station in your community and contact management to learn about the possibilities.
- If you have the talent and interest among troop families, try filming a 30-second spot based on your activities and plans for the coming year. Of course, you might want to check with channel management—just to make sure they will run it.

Drive-time Radio PSAs

- Make your own public service announcement! To get ideas, listen to advertising on the radio. Then plan what will be said, write it out, and rehearse and record!

- If you can recruit someone with a voice recognized in the community, then all the better!
- Some stations—especially talk-radio and sports stations—may have radio hosts or personalities willing to do the recording for you.

Sign spinner

- Maybe you've seen them on street corners. They're the latest thing. Instead of someone just standing there wearing a sandwich-board, young people hire out as "sign spinners." They use large—usually cardboard or vinyl—signs that they twirl over and around themselves like a basketball player might show off his ball-handling skills. It involves a combination of acrobatics, baton-tossing, and martial arts movements to attract the attention of passing motorists.
- OK, so maybe this one's a long shot, but having a sign spinner spinning a Boy Scouting message would certainly attract attention. You never know, one of your Boy Scout's older siblings may already be skilled in the art!

Top Ideas

The most important methods for recruiting. All crews should consider them.

1. Crew Information Sheet

- Every crew should develop and distribute a Crew Information Sheet that includes meeting dates, times, and places; a crew calendar; a list of leaders' contact information; and other exciting information about events and activities.
- Give copies to your chartered partner, crew families, local schools, churches, and other organizations—then they can answer questions and help people get in touch with you.
- It's your chance to brag on your crew! Make it look smart. Keep a supply on hand.

2. Chartered Partner Organization Visit

- Before school begins, schedule a face-to-face meeting with your chartered partner. This important meeting gives you the opportunity to thank the organization for its support, and to outline ideas and requests for your recruitment effort.
- Take your Crew Information Sheet and perhaps a yearbook-style photo album of activities. Be prepared to explain how Venturing benefits the organization.
- A can of popcorn or other appropriate gift for the head of the chartered partner, and his or her assistant, can go a long way.

3. Meeting with the Principal

- Just like a PTA presentation, a meeting with the principal will strengthen relationships and may foster support for your recruitment efforts.
- Share exciting news and successes regarding your crew and upcoming events. Be sure to include school and community service projects.
- The crew is a resource and an asset to the school. Explain the benefits for the youth and for the school. Schools should be the sites of many crew service projects. And, Venturing is educational: It has been established that active Scouting programs improve grades and study habits, and lead to better jobs and more successful lives.

- Remember, a principal will appreciate a crew that is a source of school volunteers.
- Take a can of popcorn or other gift to thank the principal for support. Be sure to make the meeting brief. Don't waste this important administrator's valuable time.

4. Fliers

- A crew can produce its own Venturing promotional fliers, but often the local district or council will provide them at no charge.
- Order or produce fliers well in advance, and include the date, time, and place of the recruitment night; add contact information. Many flier designs also have space for information about your upcoming events.
- Joining nights should be held the first few weeks of school and fliers sent home with all youth. It might help if you offer to count out the fliers by classroom. Counts need not be exact. Ask for an average, but leave a cushion!

5. Yard Signs

- Before joining night, put signs at school entrances and exits, and high-traffic areas.
- Distribute signs to parents to post at their homes and perhaps places of business.
- Use council-provided signs or create your own.
- Include date, time, and place for joining night, plus a phone number and Web site address. If you design your own sign, use LARGE, DARK print.

6. Picture Boards

- Display boards speak louder than words! Get permission to set them up at back-to-school nights, recruitments, church/school activities, and other places families will see them.
- Creating these boards may be a great group activity. Be sure to include contact information, Web site address, and any joining night information.
- Be sure to use exciting photos from the previous year's activities.

7. Back-to-School Nights

- Your crew is part of the fiber of the school, and people need to know it. Being present at back-to-school nights and other school activities is an important way to increase awareness of what we have to offer youth and families.
- Set up a table with fliers, a sign-in sheet, stickers, picture board, and other visuals; speak with all families attending. Be sure to have a supply of your Crew Information Sheet, and troop “business cards.”
- Take names and contact information of interested families so you can personally call and remind them to attend the recruitment night.
- Encourage crew leaders and parents to volunteer at back-to-school nights. They can help with set-up, take-down, and other duties. Support the school and PTA, and they will support you.

Crew Families

The families of the crew are your most important resource. They know people; their sons and daughters have friends; and getting everyone—especially parents—involved in marketing your program can be an easy way to introduce the idea of volunteering. Don't be shy! Working with other adults is fun, and many will thank you. Just remind them we're looking for our nation's future leaders. Our parents are our ambassadors!

“Business” or “Buddy” Cards

- Design and print attractive “business cards” for parents and Venturers to distribute to friends and other families. The cards also work well as a “takeaway” at school, church, and community functions.
- Perhaps use a youth-oriented version—a “buddy card”—for the Venturers to use with their friends.
- Include crew meeting date, time, and place; leadership contact information; and perhaps a catchy slogan that alludes to the fun new Venturers will enjoy. Print upcoming activities on the reverse side.
- Use a commercial print shop or a business card template on your home computer.

Customized Invitation Letters

- Produce and e-mail a letter to parents that they can customize as from their family, and then send to friends and acquaintances.
- Include information on the benefits of Venturing, your crew's activities, and why your families are involved.
- It is important that any letters invite families to a specific gathering, indicate how to learn more, and what to do if they cannot attend.

Personal Phone Calls/E-mail Invitations

- Ask each Venturer to brainstorm other families they could personally call or e-mail with an invitation to join.
- The crew should provide each family with copies of the Crew Information Sheet, yard sign, business card, and other items to help spread the excitement of Venturing.
- Crew leadership could also create an e-mail “newsletter” or other promotional copy for youth to forward to others on their brainstormed list.
- Have an incentive for the Venturer inviting the most new members.

Promotions Through Family Affiliations

- Most families, of course, are affiliated with other organizations and businesses: place of employment; customers or clients; church; musical groups; various clubs; sports; etc. These contacts can also be avenues to spread the word about Venturing.
- The Boy Scouts of America publishes a Family Talent Survey Sheet, or you can create your own “family resource questionnaire.” Be sure it asks for information about family affiliations outside of Scouting.
- The Crew Information Sheet and business or buddy cards also come in handy with this invitation method.

Crew Web Site

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- Work with youth sports associations to set up information tables at games.
- Get permission from local sports venues to hang banners or posters, or to set up information tables during games and tournaments.
- Host an activity at a local recreation center. These are often very popular places where youth of all ages hang out. An example might be a basketball skills clinic for children.

Popcorn and Fund-raising Opportunities

- Selling popcorn or conducting other fund-raisers represents an opportunity to do more than just generate revenue.
- For each item sold, attach information or give the customer a thank-you card that also promotes your crew activities and successes.

Community Reader-boards

- Use marquees at businesses, churches, and neighborhood or recreation centers to promote joining nights and crew activities.

- Contact organizations well in advance, in order to plan the message and its timing.
- Look especially for “scrolling” signs; the moving message attracts more attention.
- Be sure to thank the organization for its support.

Local Libraries

- Ask the local library if you can hang posters there and leave a supply of your Crew Information Sheets on the counter for interested patrons.
- Design and print Venturing promotional bookmarks for libraries to distribute.
- Libraries also have events; your crews’s involvement could lead to more exposure.
- Encourage crew leaders to volunteer to read (in uniform) for story time.

Promotion Through Businesses and Offices

- Visit local businesses and post offices to seek permission to set up a window or countertop display, or to leave information about your crew activities.
- Ask grocery stores or drug stores if they will insert your Crew Information Sheet or business card into each shopping bag.
- Family-friendly businesses are the best bet. And they will be especially interested if the display might bring in or increase business.
- The best time to use these methods may be during the Scout Week celebration.

Door hangers

- Create attractive door hangers with crew contact information and joining night details.
- Target specific areas within your community for distribution of door hangers. Use the same rules that you would for door-to-door sales, with full involvement from accompanying parents and leaders.
- Door hangers work especially well in apartment complexes and subsidized housing, but be sure to first obtain permission from building management.
- Blanket key areas in your community on a specific day. Make this a crew activity and give Venturing a special participation recognition.

The Media

The media is all about communications and marketing; it's what they do. Every news story about Scouting helps generate support; every public-service announcement draws a level of interest. There is always somebody out there watching, listening, or reading. Let's help them see and hear about Venturing!

Local Newspaper "News Stories"

- Community newspapers are always interested in what's going on in their neighborhoods. Usually, they are looking for stories to write.
- Every crew meeting or activity represents an opportunity for a story: Who earned what, who won the race, what families are involved? They are all of interest.
- Develop a relationship with the publisher and editors. Look for a parent with good writing skills who might be willing to prepare and submit news releases.
- Alert the paper several weeks before any of your major activities. You never know; they might send a reporter/photographer.
- Make sure your crew meetings and activities are included in the community events section or calendar that most papers publish. This is a good method to consider for the larger papers as well.

Newspaper or Newsletter Advertising

- Sometimes it pays to purchase small ads in newspapers and in the newsletters published by schools, churches, and even large business that realize they have employees with families.
- An ad might be a one-time purchase for a joining night or major activity, but some newsletters—especially those from churches—will also print low-cost business card-sized ads that become permanent fixtures on the back page.

Community Access Television

- Most communities and local cable companies have community access channels.

- They may run public service announcements, feature live guests, and cover various community events.
- Become familiar with the station in your community and contact management to learn about the possibilities.
- If you have the talent and interest among crew members, try filming a 30-second spot based on your activities and plans for the coming year. Of course, you might want to check with channel management—just to make sure they will run it.

Drive-time Radio PSAs

- Make your own public service announcement! To get ideas, listen to advertising on the radio. Then plan what will be said, write it out, and rehearse and record!
- If you can recruit someone with a voice recognized in the community, then all the better!
- Some stations—especially talk-radio and sports stations—may have radio hosts or personalities willing to do the recording for you.

Sign spinner

- Maybe you've seen them on street corners. They're the latest thing. Instead of someone just standing there wearing a sandwich-board, young people hire out as "sign spinners." They use large—usually cardboard or vinyl—signs that they twirl over and around themselves like a basketball player might show off his ball-handling skills. It involves a combination of acrobatics, baton-tossing, and martial arts movements to attract the attention of passing motorists.
- OK, so maybe this one's a long shot, but having a sign spinner spinning a Venturing message would certainly attract attention. You never know, one of your Venturer's older siblings may already be skilled in the art!