

The Service Unit Meeting GUIDE

How to run an effective Service Unit Meeting

The goal of this guide is to outline how to run effective monthly service unit meeting as a service unit manager.

The **Service Unit** is composed of all registered adults and girls in a geographic area and is an integral part of the council. It provides the opportunity, through discussion at Service Unit meetings, for each active Girl Scout adult working within that Service Unit to participate in the development and implementation of council plans. It is the epitome of a volunteer-led organization.

A **Service Unit Team** includes any Service Unit leadership position and the Membership Manager assigned to the area.

The **Service Unit Manager** presides at the SU Meeting. Therefore, planning, conducting, and following up on these meetings is a very important part of her/his job.

Why is it held? To plan for Service Unit events and projects, to discuss Service Unit needs and ways of funding them, to discuss matters of business referred by council, such as policies and plans, to share information.

Who Comes?

- Product Managers
- Leaders and Co-leaders
- Consultants
- Registrars
- Treasurer
- Organizer
- Communications
- Event-planners
- Parents
- Others are welcome as visitors

Why They Come?

- For information
- To exchange ideas about troop programs, problems, needs and successes
- To gain inspiration, stimulation and a feeling of belonging
- For the opportunity to express attitudes and reactions
- For fellowship and fun
- Additional training

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PLANNING THE MEETING

Set the Date for the Meeting	Set definite dates for the entire year. This helps to promote attendance, as it gives members a chance to make arrangements to attend. The schedule of your meetings should fit into the council plan for meetings in order to insure the flow of information among all groups in the council.
Secure the Meeting Location	It should be as attractive as possible, large enough to accommodate the membership, centrally located, and should be reserved for at least the entire year.
Announce the Meeting	Reminders of the meeting, giving time, place and date, should be given to the membership a week or so before each meeting- even though they have been provided with a year's schedule. This is a function of the Communication Service Unit Team member.
Plan the Agenda at the Team Meeting	<p>The agenda maps out the things to be done at the meeting, determines who is to do what, and makes it possible for the meeting to move along in a logical and orderly manner.</p> <p>Be sure each team member is clear as to their role in the meeting and how much time they will have at their disposal.</p> <p>Keep in mind:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The purpose of Service Unit meetings, who attends, and why.2. The business to be transacted. To determine this, check:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Notes from the last meeting for unfinished business▪ Service team reports for matters that need discussion or explanation▪ Notes from the last Roundtable meeting (if applicable) for announcements and items of business▪ Items of general interest from the community
Determine the Length of the Meeting	Unless training is a built-in part of the meeting, it should be scheduled to last not more than one hour. The agenda should be planned so that the business of the meeting can be completed within this time limit.

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Prepare Presentation	<p>The method of presentation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stimulate and involve all members• Provide for variety and flexibility• Provide time for discussion, questions, and reactions
Sign- Sheet & Agenda	<p>Have sign-in sheet ready for attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fill in the troop numbers ahead of time on the sign-in sheet, in numerical order.• Place it in an obvious spot and have someone in charge of seeing that all sign in as they arrive. <p>Give each person present a “programmed agenda”. This is a very specific listing of all the topics to be covered during meeting, with plenty of space after each time for them to fill in any additional notes from the meeting.</p>
CONDUCTING THE MEETING	
	<p>To insure an interesting and productive meeting, the Service Unit Manager should do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call the meeting to order on time• Preserve order throughout the meeting, using good humor, tact, and patience.• Allow the Service Unit Team to share a part of the meeting as needed (i.e. registration training, product training, etc).• Hold the group to items under discussion.• Be friendly, attentive, impartial, and a good listener.• Provide for ample discussion of all-important matters.• Take leadership in discussions by bringing up pertinent questions of which he/she is aware but which have not been considered by the group.• Summarize points of discussion from time to time, to make sure the feeling of the group is expressed and understood.• Make sure that all decisions and recommendations are understood by the group.• See that all reactions and conclusions are recorded.

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- End the meeting on time. If there are adequate reasons for prolonging it:
 - Ask the group for permission to continue for another _____ amount of minutes
 - Allow anyone who must or choose to leave at this time.
 - You may choose to close the meeting on time if there is no group agreement, table items for discussion and reserve 15 minutes for anyone with additional questions.
- Thank everyone for their attention, participation and time.

FOLLOWING UP ON THE MEETING

Report	It is recommended that an accurate report of the meeting be compiled. It need not be detailed, but action and reaction on all matters of business should be recorded. This is the function of the Service Unit Communications member.
Follow-through	See that decisions made at the meeting are carried out. Confer with people who accept assignments and if people express special needs, see that some action is taken.
Absentees	Inform absentee members of any business they need to know. Members of each troop present can tell other adults registered with their troop. The SU meeting notes/minutes can be sent to each absent member. Continue to encourage each troop to send a representative (it need not be the leader!) for the purpose of bringing back information and materials.
Meeting Checklist	<p>Use the checklist below to evaluate the meeting.</p> <p>BEFORE the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was the meeting place easily accessible to all the participants?• Was the physical setup of the room conducive to discussion and participation?• Were the purposes of the meeting defined?• Were the necessary resources/facts gathered before the meeting?• If audio-visuals were to be used, was there pre-planning and pre-testing?

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DURING the meeting

- Was there an opening and closing which tended to make a unity of the meeting?
- Did each person feel relaxed and comfortable?
- Were people willing to listen?
- Did the SU Manager help people to voice opinions, even if they were different and controversial?
- Did learning take place?
- Did volunteers demonstrate knowledge of their roles and functions?
- Were decisions reached; follow up planned, timetables set?

AFTER the meeting

- Did participants leave with a sense of the values of Girl Scouting and feeling of inspiration?
- Did the group achieve the purpose of the meeting?
- Did the attendance justify the time and preparation involved in the meeting?
- What plans were made to get information and decisions to people who did not attend?

HELPFUL HINTS FOR GREAT MEETINGS

Mechanics

Set up kaper charts for the year. Each month, the adults from a different troop would be responsible for one or more of the following:

- Refreshments
- Setting up tables and chairs
- Providing a pre-activity or “early-bird” activity
- Preparing exhibits (troop projects, new materials and resources, etc.) to be viewed before and after the meeting
- Provide door prizes
- Babysitting (if facilities are available)
- Opening and/or closing
- Clean-up

Have a permanent file for each troop:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before the meeting, put in it all the information sheets and materials they should take away from the meeting.• After the meeting, have them return the folder with any reports or whatever they have been requested to turn in.
Attendance	<p>Don't limit attendance to just leaders. If the leader is unable to attend meetings, she should send a representative from the troop- the assistant leader or troop committee chair or a capable parent.</p> <p>When others attend the meetings, it sometimes gets them more involved.</p> <p>If someone other than the leader or assistant leader show up time after time, it may indicate someone who interested enough to be approached for a specific job.</p>
Physical Comfort	<p>Arrange seating carefully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Straight rows of seats are not desirable for large groups because those in the back are unable to see or hear.• Try curved (semi-horseshoe) rows, like those in an amphitheatre or at a concert. <p>Pause for a break (for coffee, or to look at displays, or pick up materials) if they seem to be getting restless.</p>
Giving Information	<p>Avoid reading long lists of announcements, as this can be boring, time-consuming and open to misinterpretation. Also those who take slow or scanty notes are lost.</p> <p>Instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write announcements (in BIG LETTERS) on a blackboard or sheets of newsprint, or• Duplicate them and provide a copy for each member or troop• Explain them if and as necessary.
Stimulating Interest	<p>Use a variety of voices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Troop organizers can introduce new leaders• Troop consultants can give mini-enrichment sessions (i.e. icebreakers you can use with your troop, etc.)• Membership Managers can answer questions, interpret new information or give trainings• Outside speakers (board members, community members, etc.) can be invited

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	<p>Use video, web resources when available</p> <p>Vary the format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have one outdoor meeting during the year• Open the meeting with a potluck dinner• Meet at a restaurant (each can pay his/her own way) when there is little business to discuss (December or May?)
Appreciation	<p>Assign someone to serve as a greeter at the entrance of the meeting, especially to greet any newcomers.</p> <p>Give recognition to leaders who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have taken training• Have an impressive length of service• Have an exceptionally good troop program, etc.
Continuous Enrichment	<p>Leaders enjoy sharing successful projects and ideas.</p> <p>In most meetings, there is time to teach a new skill to take home and use right away (such as a game or song or ceremony).</p> <p>Trainers or consultants can be invited to give a brief workshop before, during or after the meeting.</p> <p>In a month when there is little or no business to transact, the entire allotted time could be devoted instead to a workshop.</p>
How to Spice Up Your SU Meeting	<p>Let recent additions to the group participate by giving them an assigned task.</p> <p>Bring an exotic dessert or dish.</p> <p>Give out a door prize.</p> <p>Draw out your quieter members with gentle questions.</p> <p>Plan a worthwhile service project.</p> <p>Give your group a “personality” test so folks can get a better understanding and appreciation of one another.</p>

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	<p>Take homemade cookies and exchange recipes.</p> <p>Meet once a year at a different location (i.e. Camp Pioneer)</p> <p>Have each person share one personal goal for next month for which they'd like accountability.</p> <p>Plan "Theme" meetings well in advance. (Cinco de Mayo, Halloween, Rainbow, etc.)</p> <p>Hold 15 minute enrichment workshops (flag ceremonies, songs, games, crafts, bridging ceremonies, etc.)</p> <p>Make new leaders welcome by giving them a new leader's kit (i.e. a shoe box full of new crayons, glue, stickers, beads, etc.)</p>			
Service Unit Meeting Theme Suggestions	Wizard of Oz Academy Awards Camping Disco Murder Mystery Theater Around the World Mardi Gras	Space Airplane Western Country Club Spa Cruise ship	Star Wars Circus 70's, 80's theme Black and White Winter Wonderland Mexican Fiesta	Hollywood Luau/Beach Pirate Olympics Grease Slumber Party