

Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships: A Strategic Issue for Professionals

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Scouting's special partnership between volunteers and professionals is the core of its success and the key to what we do. When the partnership thrives, the Scouting movement thrives. If the partnership is not working well, Scouting suffers.

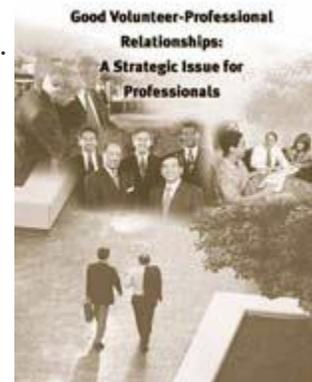
We are living in an amazing age. It is an age remarkably different from that of our grandparents. It's simply not possible for most of us to imagine a world with no electric lights, no water pipes, no washing machines, no automobiles, no telephones, no air conditioning, no computers.

In little more than a century, America's engineers have taken us from the four-mile per hour donkey to the 600-mph wide-body jet and from the eight-mph pony express to the 186,000-mile per second global telecommunications network. Technological innovation and commerce no longer are constrained by geopolitical boundaries; today we live in a "global village."

Do you realize it is now possible to carry a pen-sized device in one's pocket that will enable voice conversation anywhere on Earth? One can "dial" calls simply by speaking to the device much as one speaks to a telephone operator. Individuals can also carry the equivalent of a large library in their pocket or purse, as well as micro-devices that will permit them to locate themselves anywhere on Earth within a few feet. What indeed would our grandparents think?

No matter what your job or task in the profession, the skill in working with volunteers is central.

Yet despite the many positive contributions of science and engineering, and despite all the amazing technological innovations constantly enriching our lives, most of the greatest challenges we are facing today come from non-technological sources.



For us to prosper in the 21st century—perhaps for our children to survive in the 21st century—we must remaster and use our human social skills. We need to sharpen skills in:

1. Positive ethical values and how to transmit them to the next generation.
2. Communications in which people really understand each other.
3. Political science and international relations.
4. Good citizenship—how to act responsibly from the family to the new global village.

And that brings us to the volunteer movement of Scouting and to Scouting professionals. Scouting is in the people business—the business of values and effective communication and good citizenship and enlightened human relationships.

Scout professionals succeed because they have great ability and work exceedingly hard at developing strong volunteer relationships. Your greatest single professional achievement is the effective involvement of volunteers in carrying out the mission of the district and council.

No matter what your job or task in the profession, the skill in working effectively with volunteers is central. Whether it's a finance campaign, organizing units, effective commissioner operation, or planning the annual Scout show, recruiting, guiding, and skillfully relating to volunteers will bring you success.