Spice Up Your Service Unit Meetings

Ways to Make Your Service Unit Meetings Informative

1. Plan ahead! Use your Service Team meetings to draft your agenda. Ask your Team members:
   - What needs to be accomplished?
   - What decisions need to be made?
   - What ideas need to be generated?

2. Develop your agenda
   - Solicit topics from team members, and others involved in meeting
   - Determine the best order of topics
   - Decide how much time is needed for discussion on each topic
   - Decide on resources and equipment needed.

3. Have a typed agenda and adhere to the agenda. Include phone number of who to call for more info.

4. Start & end on time. This is extremely important! Show your volunteers that you value them. Keep meetings to 1½ hours but reserve your meeting space for 2 hours. If your meeting is only an hour, it probably isn’t interactive at all. If it ends on time, then leaders will still have ½ hour to ask questions & socialize. Balance business and fun. If the meeting is ALL business, it’s boring. Give them something useful to take home and use with their troop.

5. Have Team members present different parts of the agenda so it’s not always the Service Unit Manager who is speaking.

6. Do not spend time at the meeting on agenda items that don’t involve all the troops such encampments or grade level events. Have level events discussed in the level breakouts. That way everyone doesn’t have to listen to information that is not pertinent to them.

7. Insure that fliers have all the information necessary, including someone to call if you have questions. Don’t read to the audience! Just give the highlights.

8. Publicize events as far in advance as possible. Give out the information flier at least 2-3 months in advance.

9. Have a newsletter and then use it to inform. List deadlines, hint at information you will be covering at the meeting, have reminders about upcoming events & service projects and remind them of the Service Unit and Team meetings.

10. Put events on your Agenda only once. Have an event “rep” (committee member or chair) available at the back of the room before and after (but not during) each successive Service Unit Meeting to take registrations and answer questions. (This keeps time involved to a minimum and everyone doesn’t have to sit though the information several months in a row.)

11. Have display boards for level and/or council information.
Ways to Make Your Meetings Interactive

- Set a fun tone! The Service Unit Manager & Team need to be upbeat, fun & energetic. Your enthusiasm & willingness to help create a good atmosphere.
- Devote meeting time to hands-on activities rather than lecture or flier reading.
- Have refreshments where they can serve themselves & chat while they eat. Rotate hostess duties by school, troop, or level. Hospitality provides the snacks & supplies and takes care of set-up & clean up.
- Model meetings upon what a Girl Scout meeting for girls might be like. Inform people through activities that teach instead of lectures and reading.
- Have workshops on: ceremonies, songs, games, ideas for thanking parents, service projects, etc.
- Teach techniques like How to teach games/songs, How to get parents to help, etc. Visit the Service Team Toolkit for prepared workshops that you can use.
- Have an Opening & Closing that leaders can participate in and then use with their troops.
- Seat people different ways: by school, Girl Scout level, random, separate leaders from co/assistant leaders, etc. (This helps people network with each other)
- Use round tables or clusters of chairs instead of classroom/theater style seating.
- Have Service Team Members speak to their parts of the agenda from wherever they are in the room - instead of always standing up front & center.
- Move people to another table, room or part of the room (i.e.: move into the hallway and do a ceremony).
- Have icebreaker activities that allow people to meet one another.
- Give out "leader bucks" and then have occasional auctions to spend them. These can be earned for attending, contributing, sending in permission slips, troop newsletters, taking on a team position, helping a committee, taking additional girls, etc.
- Teach a song or make a craft at every meeting.
- Have “Trivia” questions throughout the meeting. Throw prizes to the people with correct answers. This helps get the information out about Volunteer Essentials, Council Policies, Safety Activity Checkpoints, etc.
- Have display boards for leaders to use stickers to record their attendance at meetings, events, training, when they've done a service project. This can be very helpful at SU award time!
- Make name tags to be worn at each meeting. It’s easier to talk to someone new if you at least know her or his name. Collect the name tags after each meeting to hand out again next month.
- Have a troop sharing table – craft, program idea, field trip, etc. Be sure to include instructions or contact information.
Ways to Make Your Meetings Well Attended

- Publish a calendar of meeting dates. Hand out at new leader orientation and with registration materials for returning leaders. Hand it out again at the first Service Unit meeting. Put the date of the next meeting on the bottom of your agenda.
- Meet the same day, time, & place every month.
- Send a reminder e-mail, postcard or newsletter 1-2 weeks prior to each meeting.
- Have event registration deadlines coincide with Service Unit meetings.
- Have assistants call and remind leaders/assistant leader or troop representative to attend or to send someone to represent their troop.
- Have a greeter (or consultants or organizers) who say hello to everyone as they arrive and help newcomers find their folders, seats, etc.
- Have an older girl troop offer babysitting in another room as a service to leaders.
- Make the agenda visually exciting. Use graphics and or colored paper. Be sure to leave some blank space for writing notes.
- Have a theme! Incorporate it into your agendas, recognitions, ceremonies, everything! Use it to tie your year together. (i.e.: Teach a different knot at every meeting, give everyone a new recipe at each meeting.)
- Reward people for being on time with candy, an extra handout, a special sticker on their nametag, etc. A little recognition items shows your appreciation that they made this meeting a priority.
- Open with a workshop. Leaders will then have hands-on examples of something they can do with their girls. (Ceremonies, service project ideas, how to say thank you, etc.)
- Hand out swaps at each meeting. Have a name tag or friendship tie, which they can wear and pin on their swaps.
- Have troops make table centerpieces and give them away at the end of each meeting. You must be present to win!
- Have door prizes. Nothing fancy, just fun or thematic. Be sure to have one of the drawing at the very end of the meeting. Again, you must be present to win!
- Say THANK YOU! Remind leaders that what they are doing is important and how much you appreciate their making the extra effort to provide the best program experience for girls.
- Assign “Girl Scout Sisters” or “Leader Buddies” who call each other to see how things are going, remind one another about the meeting and ride to meetings together.
- Encourage your Consultants to be proactive. Ask them to call new leaders and invite them to the meetings. Have them call people who don’t attend to find out why they didn’t show – do they need a ride, baby sitter, someone to sit next to?

For additional information on Service Unit Meetings see How to Plan Effective Meetings.