

RECOMMENDED VENTURING ROUNDTABLE COMBINED WITH THE VENTURING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (VOA) MEETING

Venturing Roundtable Overview

The 2018–2019 Venturing Roundtable Planning Guide is designed to help you plan a successful roundtable program for your district. In this guide you will find:

- Two optional Roundtable formats that will allow flexibility for districts and councils to best support the local Venturing program based on their local needs.
- A new concept recommended for Venturing Roundtables from the National Venturing Committee. The primary recommendation is that Venturing Roundtable be held separately from traditional Cub Scout and Boy Scout Roundtables and instead be held in conjunction with the Venturing Officers Association (VOA) Meeting at the district, multi-district or council level. This allows the Venturing Roundtable to not only support the Venturing Advisors but it will now support the VOA and Venturing Officers attendance will also be part of the primary function of the Venturing Roundtable program.
- When the Venturing Roundtable Planning Guide refers to “leaders” it is talking about all leaders, including Venturing Officers. Unlike Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts, Venturing Roundtables are intended to support both adult leaders and the Venturing Officers.
- In the last section (Part IV) of the Venturing Roundtable Planning Guide will be information to support districts and councils that feel that the traditional Roundtable format best meets the needs of their local district and/or council.

Venturing is a year-round program. This means that crews can meet and conduct activities all year, so roundtable may need to operate year-round as well. Of course, that is up to the council and districts to decide as part of the yearly planning process.

This publication is a guide and should be used as options to meet the local district and council needs. Local Roundtables should be planned and executed based on the local needs of the district and/or council.

Councils and districts are encouraged to create topics that meet any needs they identify. Topics from previous years are archived on the [Roundtable Support](#) page of the Commissioner website. Crews are free to plan and execute a diverse and widely varying program based on the unique abilities and interests of the crew members. For this reason, flexibility has been built into the Roundtable Planning Guide.

VENTURING ROUNDTABLE LEADERSHIP

Coordination of all roundtables held in the council is under the jurisdiction of the assistant council commissioner for roundtables. This person reports to the council commissioner and conducts an annual council-wide roundtable planning meeting followed by a midyear review. This process brings a level of standardization to district roundtable in terms of content by promoting the use of national roundtable guides and other resources while allowing local flexibility for the districts. In some larger councils, there may be multiple assistant council commissioners for roundtable depending on the local needs.

The district roundtables fall under the guidance of the assistant district commissioner for roundtables. This individual oversees the district roundtables in all program areas, reports to the district commissioner, and works with the district structure. He or she should also work in cooperation with the assistant council commissioner for roundtable to see that annual planning and midyear review programs are well-attended by the district’s program-specific unit roundtable commissioners. In addition, the assistant district commissioner should make sure the national roundtable guide materials are used so that the units will be getting proper program materials.

Roundtable programs are then implemented by the roundtable commissioners for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturing. These individuals are responsible for coordinating and conducting the various parts of the roundtable meetings. They make their contributions with guidance and help from the assistant council and district commissioners.

Assistant roundtable commissioners conduct tasks directly for the program-specific roundtable commissioners, assisting in the development and delivery of the monthly meeting agendas and program items.

As part of the roundtable team, assistant roundtable commissioners fully participate in the training and award structure for commissioners. Each roundtable commissioner may have as many assistants as needed.

For example, Cub Scout roundtables may need several assistants for their program breakouts while Venturing roundtables may not need as many.

The Venturing Officer Association Vice President for Program (VP Program) is also a key member of the Venturing Roundtable Team that functions similar to a roundtable commissioner or assistant roundtable commissioner. In the VOA they are the responsible individual for program-related training and the adults provide him or her with assistance as needed. During the Combined Roundtable Session, the topic will be presented under the direction of the VP for Program with the roundtable commissioner or roundtable commissioners assisting them. This provides the Venturing officers with an opportunity to provide leadership with assistance of the Roundtable Team.

The positions of assistant council commissioner for roundtable and assistant district commissioner for roundtable have specific [Role Descriptions](#).

Assistant district commissioners for roundtable and/or roundtable program commissioners should be in attendance at all district commissioner meetings to report on roundtable attendance and program highlights for the next month. This gives unit commissioners important information for their units.

TRAINING AND RECOGNITION FOR THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

Roundtable commissioners and assistants should all be trained so they will be fully qualified to present material and teach skills at roundtables in an interesting way.

Training opportunities include:

- Roundtable commissioner and assistant roundtable commissioner basic training
- Program specific basic training (Venturing leader training)
- Council commissioner colleges, conferences, and workshops
- Council trainer development conferences
- The Fundamentals of Training
- The Trainer's Edge
- Wood Badge courses
- Philmont training conferences
- Other local and special-topic training as available

All roundtable commissioners are eligible to strive for commissioner service awards including:

- The [Arrowhead Honor Award](#)
- [Commissioner Key](#)
- [Doctorate of Commissioner Science Award](#)
- [Distinguished Commissioner Service Award](#) (this is now a nominative award)

Earning these awards should be encouraged, and those who have fulfilled the requirements should be publicly recognized for their service and dedication to Scouting.

THE VENTURING ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONER AND VOA VP FOR PROGRAM

Roundtable commissioners should be knowledgeable Scouters who are able to pull together many different resources to create a high-quality learning and fellowship program. They need not be experts on all topics. Instead, they are willing to find interesting presenters who can add variety and excitement to roundtables for which the commissioner is not the best presenter.

Roundtable commissioners and assistants participate in the process of developing an annual plan for roundtable delivery in order to allocate resources, secure presenters, and ensure each meeting offers a high-quality experience to the attendees. These may include local resources such as museums, outdoor associations, education centers, and many other community or special interest groups. The suggested program information in this guide offers both a good starting point and an entire annual roundtable plan.

The VOA VP for Program and the VOA President should also be heavily involved in the roundtable planning process. Once an annual plan is adopted, it should be shared with the units. Sharing the plan in advance helps the units ensure the most appropriate attendees are at each round-table based on the topic to be presented.

For example, a roundtable featuring recognition would be very helpful to a unit recognition chair and new unit leaders who want to learn how the recognition program is administered. Likewise, a program on backpacking would be very relevant to advisors and associate advisors who may have a direct role in coaching the Venturing Officers who will be presenting that program to the crew or to those planning high-adventure events with these elements.

It is also important for roundtable commissioners and their assistants to be trained for their roles. They should take advantage of council-level roundtable commissioner training, as well as a broad variety of training in different topics that may be of interest to their attendees. Venturing leader position-specific training is highly recommended for all members of the Venturing roundtable team. This training can include classes on interesting topics at the council's University of Scouting.

USING THE VENTURING ROUNDTABLE PLANNING GUIDE

Much of how the roundtable team chooses to use this planning guide will depend upon experience, direction of the council, and needs of the individual districts. If you are looking for assistance as to which topics to use ask your attendees what they want. Being flexible is the key to a successful roundtable, but keep in mind that while the program is flexible, policy is not.

Roundtables should always accurately represent Boy Scouts of America policy to ensure units receive accurate information so they can present safe and compliant programs.

For those who have never planned a roundtable, the sample program outlines can serve as a great example. Many roundtable commissioners use the outline exactly as written, but each roundtable may be modified to suit the purposes and personalities of the team and the leaders who attend.

As commissioners gain confidence in their ability to plan roundtables, they can add extra features or substitute other topics or activities based on the local needs of those in attendance.

It is recommended that districts follow a similar schedule of activities based upon the annual council roundtable planning conference. This provides some continuity in program and information, thus giving unit personnel the ability to attend any roundtable and find similar activities for helping units build strong programs.

Of course, a plan that works in Florida in January may not work that same month in Minnesota. So, feel free to customize the order in which you present the year, using the materials included in this guide. Tailor the year to fit your council and districts' particular needs and interests.

Just be sure to adhere to BSA policies, add the personality and interests of your roundtable team, and have FUN!

LENGTH AND FORMAT OF ROUNDTABLE

Experience has shown that although roundtable meetings for each of Scouting's programs (Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing) could be successfully conducted separately, a greater benefit is derived from the fellowship and unity that comes from holding these meetings on the same night and in the same location.

The 90-minute format is recommended for the Roundtable combined with the local VOA Meeting. This 90-minute period provides sufficient time to accomplish both the roundtable portions and the VOA meeting. Both the length of time will depend on what is needed at the local level and can vary from meeting to meeting.

Roundtable commissioners will find that this guide allows for a great variety of roundtable configurations. Your roundtable may be 60, 90, 120, or 180 minutes based on the district needs and frequency of meetings. It is recommended that roundtables be held monthly except when there is a VOA activity planned for the meeting.

The VOA is also recommended to have periodic activity related meetings that may not include a roundtable portion. The frequency of having the roundtable portion combined with the VOA is up to the local VOA, but roundtable should always be held quarterly at a minimum. This will support all concerned with the opportunity for additional support and resources to be shared and will allow for face-to-face interaction and networking opportunities.

Many districts choose to offer a time (often referred to as “cracker barrel”) after the closing of the meeting to allow Scouters to mingle, share experiences and ideas, and enjoy fellowship with one another. Refreshments or other activities may be provided; but, be mindful of time and budget constraints for the roundtable team and participants.

TECHNOLOGY AND ROUNDTABLE DELIVERY

When a local district is in a tightly contained geographic area, such as a suburban area of a major city, meeting in person is usually both easy and convenient. But face-to-face roundtable meetings become more difficult when a district includes several counties and many of the roads are rural two-lane roads. The amount of time required to drive to the roundtable site from the farthest reaches of the district may discourage unit leaders from attending in person, especially in poor weather. Roundtable teams for such districts should consider alternative methods to reduce the geographic barriers to roundtable attendance.

One alternative might be a longer roundtable format (up to 180 minutes) that permits attendees to receive more training and better justifies the time required to travel to the roundtable site. This longer format may allow for not meeting every month, but rather on alternate months or even quarterly. Another alternative might be hosting roundtables in two or more locations on a rotating basis. If the district leadership is able to do so, the district could hold more than one roundtable per month, each in a different part of the district. Each of these alternatives has been used successfully in parts of the country.

If those alternatives aren't practical, the leadership of a geographically large district should consider whether it is preferable to deliver at least some portion of the roundtable using one or more of the commercially available telephonic or video services, including those over social media outlets. The availability of such services is constantly improving, so it may be time to take a look at what is new and available in your area. Some issues to consider and resolve include:

- Availability of suitable internet connectivity at the roundtable site
- Availability of the equipment necessary to record and transmit a roundtable from the host site, including cameras, quality microphones, and lighting
- Cost of the various telephone or video services for both the host and remote participants
- Limits imposed by the service provider on the number of simultaneous participants
- Whether to record and broadcast both the joint session and all the breakout sessions, or just the joint session, keeping in mind the need for more equipment if multiple breakout sessions are filmed simultaneously
- Whether to enable two-way communication so remote participants can ask questions and participate in group discussions, or whether the remote participants will only be able to listen to presentations
- Whether the remote participants have access to the necessary technical resources (equipment and band-width) to receive a particular type of telephonic or video feed

Another consideration is ensuring a sufficiently large in-person attendance to maintain the camaraderie which is the essence of most successful roundtables. The district leadership should determine whether the in-person attendance can be maintained if the roundtable is broadcast to everyone in the district in real time, or whether it would be better to limit access to recorded roundtables to leaders of selected units. YouTube videos and podcasts can be posted a few days after the actual roundtable to encourage in-person attendance. And it is possible to post “non-public” YouTube videos, for which the URL (web address) is given only to leaders of selected units that are considered to be “sufficiently remote” from the roundtable site.

When the usual roundtable location does not have Wi-Fi or other internet connections in the meeting room, or when the remote participants don't have access to high speed internet (either cable or wireless), it may not be possible to have an effective video roundtable. In such cases, if the meeting room has either a telephone jack or a high quality cellular signal, an alternative is for the remote participants to use a conference call service. A high-quality speaker phone, possibly one with multiple microphones, should be used to ensure that remote participants can hear all the participants gathered in the meeting room. When such speaker phones are not available, a cell phone connected to an external speaker via an auxiliary cord or Bluetooth can serve the same purpose. Districts should email copies of handouts to the remote participants (or post the handouts on the district website) when using a conference call rather than streaming video.

Many of the free services (such as Skype and Google Hangout) limit the number of simultaneous remote participants to as few as 10. When a district uses a service that restricts the number of free remote participants, the district should evaluate the possibility of having remote participants gather at satellite locations closer to their homes. Each satellite location can count as one participant, if several leaders use a single speaker phone or video monitor.

There is also "[Facebook Live](#)." Facebook Live permits an unlimited number of viewers to text questions and comments to the person filming the video. When the filming stops, Facebook Live archives a copy for sharing with viewers who did not see the video while it was being filmed. Some districts report good results using Facebook Live as a means of both conducting and archiving electronic roundtables.

Other services (such as GoToMeeting, WebEx, and TeamViewer) support a larger number of remote participants but require the payment of either monthly or per-minute fees. Some services have tiered fees for different numbers of simultaneous participants.

FreeConferenceCall.com is an example of a service that does not charge to set up a call, but requires participants to pay their own telephone service for the call (such as long-distance charges or wireless-to-landline charges). Some councils choose to provide conference call services that are toll-free to remote participants and absorb the cost of the service, whereas other councils require the remote participants to pay for the call.

Some districts may choose to use a blend of in-person roundtables during certain months, real-time remote audio and/or video roundtables during other months, and YouTube videos or podcasts for selected presentations when the primary need is the dissemination of information rather than an interactive discussion. Examples of the latter could include recordings of presentations on Friends of Scouting, Internet Rechartering, or a topic that every new leader should hear as a supplement to available online training. Having these supplemental topics available via podcast or YouTube videos would enable new leaders to hear that information whenever they accept a position for which that information would be useful, without having to repeat basic information at roundtable.

For more information on technology and roundtable delivery, the quarterly newsletter, *The Commissioner*, has included numerous articles on technology options for roundtable delivery and will continue to do so in the future. The first such article was included in the Fall 2013 edition. The Winter 2014 edition included an article on one district's use of YouTube videos of roundtable sessions. The Fall 2015 edition included an article on the BSA's social media policy relative to YouTube videos and podcasts. Current and archived copies of *The Commissioner* can be found on line.

ROUNDTABLE RESOURCES

The best and most current resources for Venturing related information can be found at the National Venturing Website at <http://www.venturing.org/>

The best and most current resources for BSA Roundtable support can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable/>

The best and most current resources for BSA Training related information can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/training/>

The best and most current resources for Commissioners can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/>

Program Features for Troops, Teams, and Crews, Vols. 1, 2, 3 bring together 48 features to help making program planning easier for unit and youth leaders. The mix of topics—outdoor, sports, health and safety, citizenship and personal development, STEM, and arts and hobbies—provides the kind of variety, adventure, challenges, and opportunities for advancement units can use to keep members coming back. They can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/resources/program-features-vols-1-3/>

Venturing Officers Association Administration Guide is available at https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/VOA_Administration_Guide.pdf

Venturing Officers Association (VOA)

The purpose of the Venturing Officers Association (VOA) is to provide support and guidance to maintain and grow the Venturing program. VOAs collaborate with other committees in providing training for Venturers and Advisors, programming for crews, and monthly or quarterly forums to bring together youth and Advisors.

What Is a Venturing Officers Association? A team of officers (youth president and vice presidents for administration, program, and communication), supported by an Advisor, keeps the VOA organized. This forum provides a voice for youth to help strengthen the Venturing program. A VOA holds several meetings during the year and hosts a few events that help to bring the crews, districts, councils, or areas together. Each event may have a different goal: training, adventure, recognition, fun—or all of the above.

How Do VOAs Operate? In many ways, VOAs operate like a crew. A crew plans activities that are fun and of interest to the members of the crew. A crew plans activities that build a well-balanced program of adventure, leadership, and service. The VOA does the same things, but it offers a program and leadership opportunities that extend beyond an individual crew. And VOAs, like your crew, make sure that everyone has fun as a key part of the program.

What Does a Venturing Officers Association Do? Venturing Officers Associations provide opportunities for adventure, leadership, personal growth, and service (ALPS). By doing so, they serve to model best practices in programming for local crews and to provide a program resource for Venturers and Advisors throughout the VOA's area of operation.

Venturing Officers Associations provide opportunities for personal growth and leadership for their officers, just as the leaders and members of the VOA provide programming of interest to their constituents. A strong VOA usually means strong crews. Program and training events offered by the VOA give Venturers the chance to meet other Venturers to build friendships and networks, to learn from their experiences, and to have fun!

The purpose of VOAs is not to hold meetings but to provide fun and informative program opportunities for Venturers. In many ways, the VOA serves as a forum for planning and carrying out great program. The leadership and Advisors for a VOA know they have done their job well when they see that the efforts of the VOA have served to strengthen the Venturing program in their area of operation.

Benefits of Having a Venturing Officers Association. Operating a Venturing Officers Association meets several needs that support Scouting and Venturing in your local community. As a youth-led program and governance body, the VOA is in an excellent position to take charge of its own Venturing destiny through the activities it supports.

Benefits of Having a Venturing Officers Association combined with Venturing Roundtables. Operating a Venturing Officers Association in conjunction with Venturing roundtable combines the best of both worlds. It allows the VOA to meet together while the advisors meet separately in an Advisor Roundtable Session and then it brings everyone back together for a Combined Roundtable topic that applies to everyone. Best of all it reduces two meetings to attend down to one which is an effective use of time.

Parts of a Venturing Roundtable

Roundtables have distinct program elements that help organize the event and manage time effectively. The parts listed below correlate with the program outlines provided in the 60-, 90-, 120-, and 180-minute roundtable program outlines. These may be adapted to fit local needs, but each program portion works together to build a diverse, useful, and relevant roundtable meeting that will engage the audience, convey important information, and add to the knowledge and skills of the attendees.

GENERAL VOA MEETING OPENING

The general opening of the VOA Meeting and the combined portions of the roundtable meeting are under the direction of the VOA President. Normally the VP for Program will conduct the combined roundtable session with the assistance of the Venturing roundtable team. A sample agenda for the VOA Meeting is included in this guide.

Welcome

The VOA President calls the meeting to order and starts welcoming all participants to the meeting. Start on time. It is unfair to those who arrived on time to have to wait. Beginning with an enthusiastic greeting will set the tone for a fun evening of learning and fellowship.

Prayer

In keeping with the Venturer's duty to God, include a nonsectarian prayer in the general opening session. As some people aren't comfortable praying in public, ensure success by asking a team member or participant in advance to offer the prayer. Begin with an appropriate introduction such as "prepare yourself for prayer as is your custom."

Announcements

Although you have already welcomed those in attendance, extend a special welcome to newcomers. You may wish to present them with special recognition or a certificate. Make them feel welcome so they'll bring additional unit leaders with them to the next roundtable.

Be sure to explain the flow of the evening's activities. Point out the various program groups and where they will be gathering. Take care of housekeeping items such as the location of restrooms and any policies specific to the building in which you are meeting. This is especially important for your newcomers—do not assume everyone already knows.

Do not let announcements hijack the time and program needs of units! Keep them to a minute or less and emphasize that the fliers contain detailed information.

Separation for the Venturing Advisor Roundtable Session. The adult leaders will separate and allow the VOA meeting to be completed under the direction of the VOA President while they attend the Advisor Roundtable Session.

VENTURING ADVISOR BREAKOUT SESSION

This session will last as long as the designated VOA Meeting time (approximately 45 minutes) and could be shorter or longer depending on local circumstances.

Icebreaker

A brief exercise can help get people settled into the room and focused on the roundtable theme. It also provides a couple of minutes to ensure that everyone has made it to the breakout session and to start building excitement around the program topics.

Sample Skit

A sample skit is presented to show leaders how Venturing purposes and ideals can be symbolized in a variety of fun activities. When you have awards to be presented use the opportunity to hand them out using a ceremony. If some crews are noted for excellent ceremonies and skits, the roundtable commissioner might ask those leaders to perform one for the group. Be sure to involve as many participants as possible.

Tips for Crew Meetings

Unit leaders can always use a new idea or approach to keep crew meetings interesting, diverse, and exciting.

Roundtable is a great place to share these tips, whether they are pulled from training resources, shared among participants, collected from commissioner observations during unit visits or found in the "Tips for Crews" section of this guide

Many books and media resources developed by the BSA are listed in the “Resource” section of this guide. These resources may offer tips, or one or two of them could be introduced at this time. Explain how these materials can be obtained, and how they might help the units deliver a better program for Venturers. Often, leaders are looking for new resources but are simply unaware of where to find them.

Keep in mind that there are also many great books, periodicals, and other media tools produced by knowledgeable groups and experts outside the BSA. Feel free to highlight these as well; but, remember to point out any BSA policies that may be in conflict with the materials referenced.

Venturing Interest Topic

The interest topic is a feature designed to add variety to roundtable programming. Examples might include a training highlight, a review of an upcoming annual event, recognition information, or any of a number of topics related to Venturing issues.

Several interest topics are provided in this guide and can be used as appropriate, based on council or district priorities. The topics are written as suggested outlines for a discussion or presentation, and each may be customized if desired to fit the needs and interests of the local roundtable audience.

The interest topics include a number of recommended presentation styles designed to create more variety in how roundtable is presented. Varying the presentation style from month to month can encourage greater participation by units and help keep roundtable exciting.

Four basic presentation formats are used for the interest topics. Different formats can be used throughout the program year to create greater interaction and idea sharing among units. A good suggestion is to mix the topics in a way that provides a variety of roundtable formats and increases audience engagement.

- **Expert presentation** features a speaker, often someone with special training or from an outside group, who imparts knowledge to the audience.
- **Open forum** allows participants to share information or ideas, such as possible camping locations or program themes.
- **Directed discussion** blends a presentation and an open forum, as the presenter guides a conversation on the topic and interacts with the audience to achieve certain goals.
- **Roundtable fair or round-robin** is a multi-station event, such as a district program preview night, where participants move between various stations and topics.

Sometimes the interest topic itself and the participants’ skill levels will suggest the style to use. For example, a backpacking interest topic directed toward leaders who are not experts might be best presented as a training session.

If the participants are mostly experienced backpackers, an open forum sharing ideas and trails may be more valuable to them.

No matter what presentation format you select, look for ways to help everyone actively engage in the roundtable instead of just being an audience. As in a crew meeting, a fun activity, some hands-on experience, and a good Q&A will create a more enjoyable event and enhance the learning opportunity.

Several topics are provided in this guide as outlines that can be adapted for each roundtable environment.

Councils or districts should use the included template to design local topics for additional program needs. Interest topics from previous roundtable guides are archived at www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Commissioners/roundtable.aspx.

Program Feature of the Month

Venturers are looking for an action-packed program full of fun activities. In this section, roundtable commissioners delve into various program features for ideas to help units deliver quality programs.

[Program Features for Troops and Crews](#) (volumes 1, 2, and 3) provides units with complete monthly meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources. Additional features include recommendations for related recognition and awards, leadership applications, and references to other materials and web resources.

The council roundtable plan should help establish the month in which to present each feature based upon what is most appropriate to the local area. Councils and roundtable commissioners may also choose to come up with program ideas of their own to meet the needs of local units.

Ensure that each feature is presented at roundtable at least three to six months before that program will be used at the unit level. This gives the unit leaders time to gather resources, get training, and work with the youth leaders to present the program in an effective manner.

Consider reaching out to local experts to present this portion of the roundtable. Many subject matter experts, whether or not they have a Scouting background, are eager to share their knowledge of a particular activity.

Cultivating relationships with them will help in gaining community support for the Scouting program. Make sure to provide the experts with any BSA materials they may need in advance; for example, they should come to the roundtable knowing what the *Guide to Safe Scouting* says about their particular area of expertise.

Also, be sure to offer an appropriate thank you for their assistance. If possible, a gift of some sort that is personalized by the district can serve as an expression of gratitude to their time and effort on behalf of Scouting.

Open Forum (Q&A)

As time permits, roundtable personnel should answer questions posted on the “parking lot” or any other questions that have come up as a result of the roundtable discussions. For unique, unit-specific questions, ask for a way to get in touch with the individual after the meeting to provide the information needed.

Closing and Commissioner’s Minute

This is done in each breakout group, so it is not necessary to reconvene all the Scouting groups. The content should be thought-provoking and inspirational. It offers encouragement to the participants to use the skills they learned at the roundtable to provide a better program for their youth.

The Commissioner’s Minute can serve as a model for the Advisor’s Minute at the end of their crew or VOA meetings.

Be sure to end the roundtable program on time as a courtesy to your attendees and presenters.

Returning to the Combined Roundtable Session. At the designated time all of the advisors should return to the VOA meeting for the Combined Roundtable Session

The Combined Roundtable Session

The Combined Roundtable Session is held under the direction of the VP for Program and there are several suggested topics included in this guide. These are generally program-related topics that are intended to be relevant to both the advisors and the youth officers. This session will last approximately 20 minutes but the time will be based on the VOA meeting Agenda and could be shorter or longer depending on local circumstances.

AFTER THE MEETING

Fellowship (Cracker Barrel)

Knowing that a healthy snack or refreshing beverage awaits may be just the incentive one needs to attend the roundtable. Sometimes simple is best. This fellowship time following the scheduled portion of the roundtable meeting is often a super opportunity for Scouters to connect with each other. However, time constraints must be respected for those needing to clean up. Checking with the venue ahead of time that no food restrictions exist on use of the facility is critical. Scouters should feel free to leave at their convenience.

This is a good time to collect Getting to Know You surveys or Roundtable Program Evaluation forms. These completed forms may give you ideas for planning next month's program and help ensure you are addressing the needs of the leaders in your district.

Note: In some of the planning outlines, this function is slated for a different time, rather than the end of the meeting.

Roundtable Team Meeting

At the close of each roundtable, conduct a short team session to evaluate the meeting, and review the plans for next month's meeting. Make sure everyone involved is ready, and ensure the availability of all necessary materials.

The roundtable commissioner and assistant roundtable commissioners along with the VP for Program should brainstorm and discuss ideas for a follow-up plan for units whose leaders and crew officers are not attending roundtable. Read and review the Getting to Know You surveys and the Roundtable Program Evaluations. The key to new ideas that will pull in new units and maintain leaders' attendance may be found in these forms.

It is acceptable to perform this function another day to better serve the roundtable team as long as these after meeting functions take place.

Venturing Roundtable Mechanics

Advisor and Venturing Officer Participation

Roundtables should be presented as learning experiences. Leaders watch demonstrations and then practice what they just learned. Because people learn best by active involvement rather than by observation, Venturing leaders and Venturing officers attending a roundtable should have as much opportunity as possible to participate. Participation can be in the form of a role-play, a panel discussion, or a hands-on experience with a skill being taught.

Roundtables may also engage leaders by making assignments to individuals or a crew in advance so they have time to prepare. This makes roundtables a more satisfying experience and convinces Venturing leaders that these are their roundtables.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

Promotion is a major key to increasing roundtable attendance. If a roundtable is fun and exciting and meets the needs of the unit leaders, the current participants will keep coming back. But it all begins with getting the leaders to attend their very first meeting.

Promoting roundtable is more than just letting leaders know when and where the roundtable is happening. Your goal is to make them want to come because of the contacts they can make, the help they will receive in planning and running a meeting, and the fun they will have. The VOA Vice President for Administration/Communication should be involved with publicity and promotion efforts.

Any of your roundtable promotional materials should include the following information:

- **Purpose**—Let leaders know how roundtable meetings will help them in their leadership positions.
- **Involvement**—Roundtables are interactive, hands-on meetings in which participants are actively involved.
- **Contact**—Include the name and telephone number of a contact person who can answer leaders' questions about roundtables.

Tools that can help with promotion include:

Fliers. Informational fliers that detail what roundtable is about should be distributed to new leaders and at basic leader training courses. Continue the distribution throughout the year at summer camps, camporees, or anywhere else Venturing leaders are present.

Invitations. Computer-generated invitations are easily created and are impressive to the new leader. Have a roundtable team member attend training events to hand-deliver invitations and invite new leaders to roundtable. This could be done at the closing of the training session—for example, reminding Scout leaders that training continues at their roundtable.

Mailed Announcements. This method can be expensive and time-consuming, but it might be worth the effort and expense for special events. Check with your district executive (DE) or council office for help in mailing out your announcements; they may have access to postage meters and accounts with the post office.

Chartered organizations. If chartered organizations have printed communications, place stories in them. These can include church bulletins, monthly reports, and company newsletters. This method can be especially helpful for geographically large areas.

District or council newsletters. Be sure all roundtable dates and meeting places are listed on the district and council calendars. Include relevant information in each month's newsletter or article detailing the agenda for that month.

District or council websites. Many districts and councils maintain websites. Keep up-to-date information on these sites about plans for upcoming roundtable events.

Highlight last month's meeting to get people excited about future roundtables. We are in the age of instant information and digital presence; be sure the roundtable is part of this. Be sure the location information, start time, and contact information is current and accurate.

Local news media. Submit brief announcements to the local news section of your community newspaper or create public service radio announcements. Local cable television stations may have a community bulletin board that allows posting information about the monthly roundtable.

Telephone trees. Telephone campaigns can take time, but the entire roundtable team can cover a phone list in one evening. Try to keep the conversation to roundtable matters and set a time limit for each call. Be sure to place calls at a time that is convenient to the recipient. Messages on voicemail can also be effective. You can also run a separate telephone tree for unit commissioners, encouraging them to remind their units to attend roundtable.

Email/social media messages. Establish an email directory of district Venturing leaders. Reminders of roundtable meetings and special events can be sent efficiently to many people through this avenue of communication. One best practice is to send notes about a completed roundtable to participants halfway before the upcoming roundtable. This reminds them of the information they gathered and the fun they had; and, lets them know the planned topics for next time. Make sure to invite them to bring a friend. Also send materials about the last roundtable to those leaders who did not attend. This shows that they were missed and provides them with needed information despite their absence.

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

Now that leaders are attending roundtable, what keeps them coming back? A well-planned roundtable program will inspire leaders to try the program ideas they see, and they will want to come back next month for more ideas, fun, and fellowship.

With the many demands on leaders' time, however, roundtable commissioners may want to consider using additional incentives to ensure continued attendance. These could include special recognition or awards for regular attendance, most meetings attended in a row, or milestones. Sometimes fun items tied to the roundtable theme, corporate logo items donated by local businesses or leaders, or even gag gifts from the local dollar store can be enjoyable incentives that leaders look forward to at the end of the planned program. That little something extra might make the difference between a leader attending roundtable or staying home after a busy day.