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 are likely 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-ofAmerica/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/NationalScouting-Museum)—The official Facebook home for the National Scouting Museum.

Facebook Defined

Facebook is a social-networking website 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 email 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 website. 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!

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 website. 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 website. The ad would then link to either your council recruitment Web page or the national recruiting site (www.BeAScout.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 recruitment campaign. Visit www.scouting .org/marketing. 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.

Email

Outlook template

An email 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 email 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 email template has been created in support of the 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 website for creating, sending, and managing online invitations (e-vites). Through an e-vite, prospective guests receive an email 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 email 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.