

How to Organize New Venturing Crews

Venturing offers huge opportunities to grow while providing an additional way to accomplish the mission of the Boy Scouts of America. Some would even argue that by having a teen Scouting program built on values and ethics, we are providing a lifeline to an age group that is at great risk than even the other age groups we serve. These young people have tremendous pressures on them. Venturing can help them through these tough times. We can help them learn and grow and even have a safe place to do these things. We can give them an opportunity to do these things with quality, knowledgeable adults who care about them. We can make a difference! So let's start organizing crews.

First, let's talk about how some of the ways crews are different than packs and troops. Generally when we organize packs and troops, we do basically the same things each time. Another way to say that is that the program we establish in one chartered organization is pretty much the same as in another. Now we do recognize there can be some differences such as one religious organization who has a pack might induce some religious aspects into its program or one troop might have more of an advancement emphasis where another might have more of a camping emphasis.

However, in Venturing this opportunity of different programs is even greater. The first thing to remember though is that Venturing is still Venturing no matter what the crew does. There are certain things that bind crews even when they do different activities. They all have the Venturing Oath, the Venturing hand shake, the Venturing salute, the advancement program, adult and youth training programs like Kodiak, shared council and district activities, award programs such as the Hornaday Conservation program or the Distinguished Shooting Achievement Award. They all use the same Venturing methods and share the resources you provide.

As we begin organizing crews though, all of this is important to know. Here are the reasons:

As organizers (salesmen) we need to know our product obviously, but salesman number one is to sell from the buyer's point of view. That means we have to ask the question, "What do they want?" or another way of looking at it is what can Venturing provide them. Rather than designing a standardized program or box that every chartered organization has to fit in, Venturing was designed to be flexible to meet the needs of every potential chartered organization. Any chartered organization has the potential too to offer any kind of program such as a church could have a crew that does primarily scuba diving, or a bike shop could offer a crew that does mostly mentoring. Don't pre-judge or automatically put a chartered organization into a box, ask them what is important to them.

Now this is where the art or challenge comes in. As an organizer, you have to be ready to answer the question “What will we do?” once you find out what is important to them. This is where Venturing deviates from Cub Scout and Boy Scout unit organization. With Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting, the answer is basically the same with every chartered organization while Venturing can be different.

As an organizer, you have to be prepared with that answer and be confident and enthusiastic that the district or council can help the chartered organization do that.

Example 1: A Scuba Shop

You and your District Executive have determined that your local scuba shop is interested in learning more about starting a crew. While visiting with the owner, you explain what Venturing is and how a crew works. You explain how you have a large support network in your district to provide training, support, and resources. Probably at some point the shop owner will ask you “what would our crew do?” If you are prepared, you would reply, “Well that depends on what is important to you.” You might prompt some with suggestions like, you could offer scuba training and scuba trips. Then after you have a group of scuba trained Venturers, they could assist you with Discover Scuba sessions for Boy Scout troops, other crews, and other youth groups. They could even make presentations on scuba and snorkeling at Cub Scout Day Camps, den meetings, Boy Scout summer camp, church youth groups, camporees, roundtables, and other scout gatherings. They could even integrate an ethics message into their scuba presentations. Other activities could include taking advanced first aid and aquatics courses, leadership training like Kodiak and Kodiak X, dive trips, or even helping out at a dive mission in Honduras. And if you wanted to expand beyond scuba, which we recommend for variety you could go white water canoeing, caving, go paint faces at a children’s hospital, volunteer to clean a section of highway or waterway, or take a trip Australia.

You would explain that it is good to have a basic plan of what you could do, but once you get started and have trained youth crew leaders, the youth will tell you what they would like to do.

Example 2: A Church

Religious organizations offer a very wide range of program options so it is probably even more key to be ready to help give them some direction based on their needs. Let’s say you are making your first sales call with a church’s youth minister and youth lay leader. Once again you have told them all about Venturing. They tell you they have approximately 100 active youth in their high school youth program. Now here is your first challenge. Do they start a crew with all one hundred youth, do they start one or more crews inviting any of

those 100 youth to join the crew they are interested in? Let's use the all 100 youth crew scenario first. Let's assume they are doing something right to be able to attract those 100 youth so they might have a legitimate reason for asking you what Venturing can do for them. Here is where your skill comes in. You might start asking them some questions about what the youth group does. Does it have a personality? Some youth groups could be into doing music or puppet shows, or building houses in Mexico, or helping with Habitat for Humanity projects, or working at a homeless shelter. Since this again is such a broad area of interest and you will have to feel your way through to what we can do for them, let's use another example. While visiting a church like the one above, we found out their "big thing" was an annual mission trip to Mexico where they built houses for the poor. When asking questions, we find that they have been taking the group in rented 15 passenger vans, pulling heavily loaded cargo vans, with very little trip planning, and that all the planning and decisions were being made by adults. So in this case, when they asked, "What can Venturing do for us?" some of the answers were:

1. We can assist with trip planning, safety, food preparation and sanitation, borrowing of cooking and camping equipment.
2. We can do youth protection training for adults.
3. We can assist with a place to stay along the way.
4. We can train your youth and adults so that your program is youth run.
5. We can assist you with program all doing the year that is meaningful.
6. We can provide a religious based advancement program to help get the youth closer to their religion.
7. We can help you with things like first aid training, carpentry skills, and safe driving skills.
8. We can offer our camps for pre-trip shake downs and religious retreats.
9. We can assist you with activities that might attract and keep youth such as trips, outdoor activities, mentoring training, and service opportunities.
10. We can train your youth on how to plan and recruit.
11. We can train your adults on how to support and work with youth.
12. We can help you market your program.
13. We can assist you with fundraising.

Note: Also see the section on working with faith-based organization crews for additional information.

Example 3: A JROTC program

If you visit any of the services' JROTC program website to see what their objectives are, they match perfectly with Venturing. Army JROTC command believes very strongly in what Venturing can offer their classroom programs, but you still have to sell the local classroom instructors. When visiting them, again, be prepared for

answering the question “What can Venturing do for me?” The answer could be somewhat different in each classroom even though there are some common things we can provide that are attractive to all JROTC instructors. Let’s start with the common elements:

1. Youth protection training.
2. Youth leadership training specifically Venturing Leadership Skills, Kodiak, and Kodiak X. Explain that Kodiak X is a leadership challenge course similar to military leadership challenge course.
3. Help with teaching skills like orienteering, first aid, marksmanship, climbing and rappelling, and mentoring.
4. Use of camp (probably the most important to them) and even specialized JROTC programming for them at the camp.
5. Opportunities to serve (thus marketing JROTC) at camporee, scout shows, day camp, etc.
6. Program resources, scholarships, and grant opportunities.
7. And finally, we can help you do your job in the classroom.

Now on the specifics: It helps if you know what the curriculum for that class is so you can find opportunities that might be of specific need for that instructor. Once when visiting a Navy JROTC classroom, the district new unit organizer found out that the instructor had been a Navy aviator and that he knew very little about orienteering. However, orienteering was part of the established Navy JROTC curriculum for that class. Once the organizer found out that fact he explained how the council had many expert orienteering instructors and that they could come to the classroom to do basic instruction followed by on the ground sessions at the camp and even orienteering competition. Then they found out that the instructor had been making up his on six hours worth of first aid instruction. Again the new unit organizer offer the council’s resources in the American Red Cross first aid area. He also explained that the council ran an annual First Aid Iron Man contest that the JROTC crew could compete in. From there additional ways the council could help the JROTC instructor popped up. Finally the instructor said, “Wow, am I glad you came by! You can help me do my job.” Additionally JROTC instructors as well as the cadets themselves like the awards and especially the Ranger Award.

Hopefully after reading these three examples, you will see the “selling from their point of view” or “what can Venturing do for me” approach. Selling Venturing and organizing crews can be one of the most fun and rewarding experiences you can have. You just need to be prepared, know what you selling, be able to find out what the potential chartered organization needs and wants, and then be able to paint them a picture of what their crew might look like.

Together We Organize plans (new unit campaign)

The Plan

The Venturing Together We Organize plan is a group recruiting approach designed to identify and sell organizations on starting the Venturing program. It is a step-by-step approach to educate these organizations and motivate them to organize Venturing crews.

Experience tells us that Together We Organize plans are most successful...

1. When a like group is targeted, such as all religious organizations, all civic clubs, or all Boy Scout troops.
2. When breakfast, lunch, or dinner is included.
3. When the host is a member of the group such as a minister for religious groups and a person who can't be turned down .
4. When Venturers attend and give testimonials. There is nothing like showing the product.
5. When the host endorses the program and asks that the participants commit to starting a Venturing crew of their own.
6. When you have organizations there who have had a positive experience who can give testimonials.
7. When the meeting including the meal are short and to the point.
8. When you plan well ahead.
9. When there are no conflicts such as holidays or golf tournaments.
10. When you know what you are doing and are prepared to sell the value of Venturing.

Suggested Schedule

- 90 days Your district or council committee commits to holding this event.
- 60 days Informational materials ordered
Prospective hosts identified
- 45 days Prospects identified
Host recruited
Host adds to prospect list
Recruit and train new crew organizers
- 40 days Location secured
Speakers and program features secured
- 21 days Letters sent to invitees by the host
All details finalized such as agenda, materials, and speeches
- 14 days All invitees are contacted by the host personally or by phone for a commitment to attend. You can use volunteers and even Venturers to help the host make these calls.
- 7 days Send reminder postcards to invitees.
- 1 day Have Venturers call the invitees to remind them of the meeting tomorrow.
- D-day Staff advisor and council or district support volunteers arrive early to set up. Help prepare host. Have Venturers collect commitment cards. Assign volunteer new crew organizers and Venturers to each table.
- +1 day Follow up with those who have committed to start a crew or who want more information.
- +30 days Meeting of new crew organizers to check on progress of new crew organization. Recognize those new crew organizers who have already started their assigned new crew. Appropriate council or district committee personnel give a call to offer their help, such as the advancement committee calling to offer to help the crew develop an advancement plan. Place a notice on your website and council newsletter welcoming your new crews.

Sample Invitation Letter

(On Host's Letterhead)

Date

(Personalized to each prospect)

Dear *(first name)*:

Today's teenagers face greater challenges, more negative influences, and stress more than any generation before. You can help! You can provide these young men and women a program that will safely challenge them, help them build self-worth, help them build personal and leadership skills, and help them to help others.

The Boy Scouts of America's fastest growing program ever Venturing, is for young men and women 14 through 20 years of age and has proven itself over and over as the premier teenage develop program in our country.

I ask you to join me for lunch on Tuesday, July 20th from 11:30 am till 1:00 pm for a great meal and a short informational program about Venturing. I encourage you to attend. It will help you and your organization to have a positive impact on our local teens. I will even have some real Venturers in attendance so you can meet them and hear how Venturing has changed their lives.

Sincerely,

J. Price Travis, DD
UMC Superintendent

RSVP by July 13th, my number is 555-972-2000

Sample Together We Organize Agenda

As They Gather	Displays and demonstrations by existing Venturing crews
Welcome at the door	Have the host and a Venturer welcome each person. Have Venturer pin a Venturing lapel pin on each person.
Welcome and Introductions	Host
Invocation	Venturer or Youth Minister from a church with a successful crew.
<i>Buffet Luncheon</i>	
What is Venturing	Host or other person knowledgeable of Venturing
Our Success	Endorsement by an organization who has a successful crew.
What Venturing Means to Me	Venturer
How to Organize a Crew	District or Council Venturing Chairman
Commitment to Start a Crew <i>(Have Venturers pick up commitment cards when participants hold them up.)</i>	Host
Closing Remarks	Host

Follow-up

(What happens after the Together-We-Organize meeting)

1. Collect the cards. Sort into groups such as those who say they are committed, those who would like additional information, and those who aren't interested.
2. List those prospects who did not attend so you can personally follow up with them.
3. If you hadn't already recruited, trained, and assigned volunteer new crew organizers, assign who will call on your prospects. Start with the ones who indicated a commitment. Next see those who indicated they want more information. If you have enough manpower, do both at the same time.
4. Make an appointment at the Together We Organize event if you can once the commitment to start a crew is made. However, many times the prospects ask for a follow up meeting so they can get more information. Call and make an appointment for a follow up visit as quickly as you can and schedule the follow up meeting for as soon as you can.
5. View the video Selling Venturing to the Head of an Organization, AV -03V011 for tips and developing a plan to secure the commitment.
6. Train volunteers to assist with the sales call.
7. Pair new volunteers with experienced volunteers to make the sales call.
8. Follow the steps to organizing a crew using Briefing the Organizing Committee video, AV-03V012.
9. Follow up with every prospect!
10. Celebrate your successes. Thank and recognize your host for their leadership. Share your new unit start ups with your Venturing committees so they can start to help the new crews become strong.
11. Tell the world about your new crews-let the Venturing marketing committee do their thing!

Suggested materials to support your Together We Organize event (Ordering Information can be found [Here](#)):

1. Venturing New Unit Sales Kits
2. Scouting's Next Step brochure (good for Scoutmasters).
3. Venturing for Religious Organizations brochure
4. Venturing posters
5. Venturing ink pens
6. Venturing lapel pins
7. Venturing Highlights, No. 25-200
8. What is Venturing Fact sheet

Sample commitment card

	Your name: _____
Your organization: _____	
Your phone: _____ Email: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I'd like to start a new crew	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested, but would like more information.	
When would be a good time to follow up with you?	
Date: _____ Time: _____	

Recruiting and New Crew Organization Resources

Venturing Sales Kit, General, No. 25-871

Venturing Sales Kit, Faith Based Organizations, No. 25-250

How to Organize a Sea Scout Ship, available at www.scouting.org/venturing

Sea Scout Recruiting Brochure, available at www.scouting.org/venturing

Sea Scouts, Join the Adventure, No. 25-302

Venturing: Scouting's Next Step Brochure, No. 25-031

Venturing...Time Well Spent Brochure, No. 02-340

Venturing and Your Youth Ministry, Brochure, No. 25-326

Ready to Rock? Brochure, No. 25-195

[Selling Venturing to the Head of an Organization](#), DVD, No. AV-03DVD23

[Briefing the Organizing Committee](#), DVD, No. AV-03VO12

Selling and Supporting Venturing, DVD, No. AV-03DVD20

(Venturing For Scoutmasters [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) and [Venturing for Religious Youth Groups](#))

[Sea Scouts: Chart a Course for Life](#), DVD, No. AV-03DVD18

[Hangin' Out](#), DVD, No. AV-03DVD18

Venturing Fast Start, (printed version kit) available at www.scouting.org/venturing

Venturing Adult Leader Fast Start, ([Interactive version](#)), No. AV-0321CD ([Hardcopy version](#)) No. 25-878

[Venturing Highlights](#), Brochure, No. 25-200

Venturing Awards and Recognition Program, Poster/brochure, No. 25-884

For these and other resource description, pictures, prices, and details, see either the [Venturing Highlights, No. 25-200](#) .