



Energizing Your Council

A Workshop

Purpose: To present and discuss ideas to increase the activity level of councils in the Navy League.

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss factors that cause reduced council activity.
2. Learn strategies for overcoming the factors that caused reduced council activity.
3. Plan an Energizing Strategy for your council.
4. Understand the importance of follow-up, measurement and recognition for execution of your Energizing Strategy.

- Agenda:**
1. Brainstorm the Question: "Why do councils become inactive?".
 2. Present and discuss what draws members to the Navy League.
 3. Evaluate strategies for attracting new members to your council.
 4. Plan a Energizing Strategy for your council.
 5. Develop measurement, feedback and recognition activities as part of your Energizing Strategy.
 6. Plan next steps.

Limit: One Hour during the Workshop

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Less Active Councils - Why?

You are attending this workshop because you are concerned that a Navy League council you are involved with in some capacity has become less active. Before we can design an effective strategy for energizing a council, we must first understand better why councils become less active.

Remember:

"Insanity is defined as doing the same things we've always done...and expecting the results to be different!"

So we need to learn what things councils do that lead to reduced activity, then think of ways to change our thinking and thus get the council moving forward again.

Your facilitator will now lead you in a structured brainstorming session. The session will have three phases (steps):

1. Generation
2. Clarification
3. Evaluation

Brainstorming is *always* conducted to answer a question. The question is written on the easel pad or board so that the group can focus on possible answers. Here's the process:

Generation: During the generation phase, we want to collect the ideas of the participants in the quickest, most efficient manner possible. We accomplish this objective by following the **Rules of Brainstorming** below:

- Only one person may speak at a time.
- All ideas are recorded on an easel or board and kept visible to everyone.
- Express your idea using the KISS principle (short and sweet).
- Each person contributes only one idea when it is his or her turn.
- Everyone is given a turn in sequence.
- It's OK to pass if you can't think of another idea.
- Don't repeat ideas already listed.
- Build on the ideas of others.
- **No criticism or discussion of ideas as they are being generated!**

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Clarification: The clarification phase gives everyone an opportunity to ask questions about any idea listed. The objective of this phase is to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of the idea that has been recorded.

Evaluation: The evaluation phase gives the group an opportunity to combine ideas that are similar and eliminate ideas that don't appear to fit the question.

Any questions? Then let's get started.

The question we want to brainstorm is **"Why do councils become less active?"**

Take a minute to think about why a council becomes less active. Write your ideas below and share them when it is your turn during the exercise.

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Exercise

Purpose: *To brainstorm reasons for reduced council activity.*

Action:

1. Review the **Rules of Brainstorming**.
2. Select a "scribe" - someone who will write the ideas on the easel or board.
3. Complete the **Generation Phase**, following the instructions of your facilitator.
4. Complete the **Clarification Phase**, ensuring that everyone understands the meaning of all ideas listed.
5. Complete the **Evaluation Phase**, combining like ideas and striking ideas that are not germane to the question.

Limit: *This exercise should take fifteen (15) minutes.*

This list will be used for developing our Energizing Strategy later in the workshop. Before we start development, we need to review what draws members to the Navy League.

Navy League Membership Survey - 1999

An extensive survey was completed in 1999 with Navy League members answering questions about their satisfaction with the Navy League. The results are insightful and should help us design our Revitalization Strategy.

What are the strengths of the Navy League?

The top four strengths identified were:

1. Support and recognition of sea services personnel;
2. Influence legislation that supports the sea services;
3. Provide opportunities for young people; and
4. Support the community.

Correspondingly, two strong weaknesses were identified:

1. Lack of awareness and interest at the council level;
and
2. Aging membership.

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What are the most compelling reasons to join the Navy League?

The top four reasons to join were:

1. Want to support the sea services;
2. Patriotism;
3. Interest in Navy League Programs (especially youth programs); and
4. Membership benefits.

What is most satisfying about membership in the Navy League?

There were five responses most cited:

1. Participation in social programs at the local level;
2. Opportunity to tour ships and interact with enlisted personnel;
3. Support of the sea services;
4. *Sea Power* magazine; and
5. Support of youth programs (scholarships, Sea Cadets, JROTC).

Other studies have shown that people volunteer for one of three reasons:

- Achievement - they want to give something back to society (the charitable impulse).
- Affiliation - they want to meet new people or associate with people of like minds.
- Power - they want to be in a leadership position and influence the direction of the organization.

Obviously, not everyone joins the Navy League to lead the organization, so we need to provide opportunities for both volunteers and other members. Can you think of examples from your council when an assignment was mismatched with the volunteer? Did that person remain active?

The next step is to combine our personal knowledge of council members and our communities to develop an Energizing Strategy for our council.

Energizing Strategies

If you have ever asked to revitalize an inactive council, you'll be advised to call up all council members and try to convince them to become active (again). This strategy is probably insane, don't you agree? We need a different

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approach that introduces "new blood" into your council, preferably **young blood!** Here's an approach:

1. Step One - Assess Council/Community Strengths. There is a council in your community for a reason. The reason may no longer be valid, but that doesn't mean we should ignore it. Some reasons often cited for forming a council are:
 - A desire to support and interact with personnel at local military facilities - ships, bases, stations or reserve centers in one of our sea services (Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, NOAA, Public Health Service or Merchant Marine);
 - A desire to attract ships or ship visits to your community;
 - A large population of military retirees who want to maintain their connection with the sea services;
 - Supporting the commissioning of a ship, particularly a "namesake" ship (named for the community, state, geographical area, local resident or local historical event);
 - Adoption of the community's "namesake" ship;
 - A major defense contractor in the community wants to demonstrate support of the sea services;
 - Youth group support - Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Naval Junior ROTC, Marine Corps Junior ROTC, Young Marines, Sea Scouts or NROTC units found in many communities;
 - A parent's desire to support a child involved in the sea services or a youth group;
 - A desire to support a sea services historical platform (ship, base, museum, or site);
 - Dispute with an existing council;
 - Distance to attend meetings and functions of the assigned council; and
 - A desire to demonstrate support of our country (patriotism) and the sea service personnel fighting to protect our freedoms.

There are probably other reasons, so if you know of them, please share with the group. Now that we have a better understanding of what attracts people in general to the Navy League, and what might attract people to join in your community, let's summarize your strengths.

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Exercise

Purpose: To summarize the strengths of your community and to identify reasons citizens might join your council.

- Agenda:**
1. List below the reasons you believe a council can exist in your community.
 2. List below reasons local citizens would support a council in your community.
 3. Rank your responses in importance to revitalizing a council in your community.

<u>Community Strengths</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Citizen Support</u>	<u>Rank</u>

Limit: This exercise should take 15 minutes

2. Step Two - Select Target Groups for Recruiting. The Navy League wants to recruit younger members who can become the present and future leaders of our League! Therefore, at least one of your target groups for recruiting should have a younger population. In general, younger members can be recruited from four target groups:

- Parents of Youth Group participants;
- Parents and spouses of active duty sea service personnel;
- Reserve personnel and their families; and
- Community Affiliate members.

Other target groups include:

- Members of related organizations (MOAA, ANA, SNA, Cruiser/Destroyer/Submarine Veterans, Naval Institute, Naval Order, Navy Memorial, Naval

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Academy Alumni Association, Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association, Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association, VFW, American Legion, and Reserve Associations - ROA, NRA, Fleet Reserve). These organizations tend to have an older membership profile, but can provide new members and new blood. Many of these groups have been approached by the Navy League's Direct Mail solicitations, so they may be aware of the Navy League and it's mission/goals.

- Civic-minded citizens involved in other civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.).
- Active duty personnel leaving one of the Sea Services (Transition Assistance Program).
- Local businesses interested in becoming Community Affiliate members (see "Recruiting Community Affiliate Members" Workshop).

You probably know of other potential membership groups that can be targeted. Please share them with us.

3. Step Three - Determine How to Make Contact with Target Groups. How do you reach the group you have targeted for membership recruiting? Let's discuss some ideas.

Parents of Youth Group Participants - You should have the names/addresses of the young people in your youth groups. Verify the parent's name, then invite them to join. The adult leaders of your youth groups should be members of the Navy League - ask them first, then get their help in recruiting the parents. If the parent cannot afford to join, try asking an existing member (individual and/or business) to "sponsor" the parent for membership. Also, the parent may be willing to help recruit their employer as a Community Affiliate member, with the parent becoming one of the 4 individual members!

Parents and spouses of active duty personnel - If your council provides support to local sea service commands, you should ask the spouses of active duty personnel to join the Navy League. They are eligible for a reduced rate membership (\$30). The active duty member may want their spouse to be a member and can convince them to join. The spouses who join may be willing to assist your council in recruiting other spouses, but *you must ask them*.

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Parents of active duty personnel are harder to reach since their son or daughter usually are not assigned locally. One method used by some councils is to sponsor a Family Appreciation Day in their community and identify parents through a registration process. Details on how councils do this can be obtained from your facilitator.

Reserve personnel and their families - The War on Terrorism has caused many reservists to be recalled to active duty, which provides opportunity for councils to provide services to their families and potentially recruit them as members. Families of recalled reserves are often without a *military* support system - base facilities, Fleet Family Service Center, Navy & Marine Corps Relief Society, etc. The local reserve center may be their only link to the military family support system, and **they can use our help**. The contact point is your local reserve center commanding officer, who can advise you on services needed.

Community Affiliate members - A Community Affiliate member can be any business in your community that wants to support the young men and women serving our nation in one of the sea services, wants to support one of your youth groups, or wants to build their business in your community. They may or may not have a business relationship with the sea services or your council. Navy League Corporate members are typically larger companies that do business with the Department of Defense and want to demonstrate their support of the sea services. A local branch, plant or office of a Corporate member may become a Community Affiliate member to connect with the local council. The levels of membership available to a business are described in the NLUS "Guide to Business Awareness: Community Affiliate, Business Associate, Corporate Membership", which is the handout for the "Recruiting Community Affiliate Members" workshop. A Community Affiliate membership includes four individual members in your council. The individual members can become a source of new energy for your council, but you must engage them.

Related organizations - Related organizations are best approached through your existing members who belong to

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these groups. Consider having a joint meeting with some of these groups to discuss a topic of mutual interest, listen to a speaker of mutual interest, or tour a local military or defense industry facility. Co-sponsoring a Symposium at a local college or university is another means of engaging these organizations. The NLUS Direct Mail program has probably contacted many of the individual members of these groups.

Civic organizations - Establishing a Speakers Bureau is the most effective method for reaching civic/service groups. These groups are always looking for speakers, since many of them meet weekly. The Navy League Speakers Kit has prepared speeches that your speakers can use to tell the Navy League story ask for support of your youth groups, and ask them to join as individual or Community Affiliate members. The Navy League Centennial videotape is an excellent "program" for a civic group, since it discusses the history of the Navy League and focuses on our mission and goals.

Separating Active Duty personnel - Military personnel are processed through a Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which assists them in learning to survive in the civilian world. The Navy League has an agreement with the U.S. Navy to provide support to TAP through the Highline Program. Active duty personnel who participate in the TAP program are eligible to join the Navy League while still on active duty. The Council Guide on the Highline Program can assist your council in planning to approach this group (you should also contact the Director of Regional Activities for assistance in using TAP to recruit personnel separating from active service).

Step Four - Establish Goals and Supporting Programs for the Reenergized Council. As we learned earlier, many members join the Navy League for the social activities, contact with sea services personnel and to support youth groups. Younger members have special needs, however. Because of family and work commitments, they tend to avoid meeting in the evening and during lunch! Meetings that are less rigid and are promoted as a "mixer" or "networking session" in the late afternoon are popular. Tours or social

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activities on weekends, with children invited, may draw attendees from your younger members. Picnics, or ball games with sea service personnel have also been successful. Meetings focused on recognizing and supporting your youth groups, or the sea service personnel on adopted ships, units or stations are also popular with younger members.

The following guidelines are germane:

- Select 3-5 goals (maximum 5) and design your schedule of activities to align with your goals.
- Make sure your activities are interesting to the members you are recruiting to energize your council. Provide a **Member Interest Survey** to tell them what the council does and to recruit volunteers.
- Identify new leaders and get them involved. Most people (including yourself) will work hard for a short period if they can see the end and know a replacement is available to take over when they finish their commitment.
- Build a large Board of Directors - include members from all your target groups. Select people for their expertise - financial, administrative, accounting, business expertise, education, etc. Successful councils often have more than 30 Board Members!
- Consider letting the younger members conduct an activity program separate from your "traditional" program (e.g. speaker at a dinner or lunch meeting). Let them take ownership of scheduling these activities, but invite everyone.
- Establish a website and an email communication process. The younger members want to communicate in this manner and will take the lead to set these processes up. Young people in your youth programs may want to take on a project to establish a website (perhaps as a school project for extra credit).
- Encourage everyone to become a recruiter - if everyone recruits one new member, your council will double in size!
- Recognize success - especially your members who come up with innovative programs, or are successful recruiters.

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- Tune in to your membership – ask them what they want to do and then deliver.

Step Five – Measure and Report Progress. Generally, people will work to achieve goals, so determine how to measure your goals and then report results to your membership. Make sure you **celebrate success!**

Measurement Primer

When goals are established, a measurement must be selected to determine progress towards meeting the goals. Remember:

"A goal without a measurement is a wish!"

Here are some principles that should be followed to select measurements. We use an acronym for effective measurement: **MOA.**

M – Measurable. Obvious, isn't it, but most of us have worked on a task or project that wasn't measurable, at least in the traditional sense. Physical measurement (time, distance, volume, cost, energy) is familiar to us. To be measurable, anyone can take the measurement and get the same results, as long as we're using the same tool and have the same level of training or experience.

O – Observable. If a measure is observable, we have a common understanding of what is being measured. What are some outputs that are not observable without further definition? What about "good", or "quality"? What do I measure if you ask for "a quality product with good functionality"?

A – Attainable. Leaders must not expect the impossible when setting goals. Remember the *Go Getters Creed*: The difficult we do right away; the impossible takes awhile.

Yes, people will agree to an impossible task and then do nothing. The leader needs to avoid this situation by being sensitive to MOA.

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Establish the Council Energizing Strategy

Getting started requires that we plan to energize the council, using the ideas discussed in this workshop. If you are a "one person energizing team", start with recruiting new, young members and expanding the Board of Directors using those new members. New Board members can then be asked to take responsibility for one additional goal. Keep in mind our **Rule of 3-5 Goals**.

Exercise

Purpose: *To prepare a Council Energizing Strategy.*

Action:

1. *Identify who is available for the energizing team.*
2. *Organize an energizing team meeting and complete the following tasks:*
 - *Set 3-5 goals for the energizing effort.*
 - *Determine how to measure each goal.*
 - *Establish the leader for each goal (the individual who accepts responsibility for working to meet the goal).*
 - *Select target groups for recruiting new members.*
 - *Establish your strategy for contacting the target groups; schedule additional training/workshops, if needed (for example, Recruiting Community Affiliate Members).*
 - *Complete the planning worksheet (Action Items), including the time allotted to complete each action item.*
3. *Schedule periodic follow-up meetings (at least monthly) to track progress. Reallocate resources or change deadlines, as necessary. Rigid plans are more likely to fail!*

Limit: *This exercise should take one - two hours and should be conducted after this workshop.*

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What actions do you plan to take?	Who will help you do it?	When will it be done?	How will training be completed?

We hope you have enjoyed this workshop. Please complete an evaluation form before you leave so we can continue to improve these workshops. Thanks for you interest!

The End!