



Membership: Big Ideas

Session Length: 120 minutes

NEXT Conference Objectives:

1. Delegates should gain an understanding for how to recognize problems; determine innovative, alternative solutions; and implement those solutions in an effective manner.
2. Delegates will leave with tools and resources that will assist them in moving their respective lodges forward.
3. NEXT Staff members will solicit feedback on best practices that can be shared across the country.
4. NEXT Staff will identify areas within our organization that are/or could be potential threats and weaknesses.

Training Information:

Delegates will be organized into crews of 15 - 20 and assigned a Crew Guide. The Guide will stay with their crew all day and may be used to assist with and/or lead sessions. Guides will take time to review key concepts during the day with their delegates. Delegates will be introduced to the LeaderX concept on Innovation Day. All sessions should demonstrate/include the LeaderX model of *Explore, Dream, and Discover*.

Session Objectives:

At the end of this session, the delegate will have:

1. Identified membership problem areas.
2. Thought critically about the multifaceted problem of membership.
3. Learned best practices from represented lodges to drive increases and retention in membership.
4. Given input to policy changes that the National Committee is considering adopting to foster an environment of membership growth and create relevancy.

Session Needs:

1. Handout Materials
 - a. none
2. Resources for Reference
 - a. Guide for Officers and Advisers
 - b. 2016 OA JTE Petition
3. Technology
 - a. Whiteboard/Chalk Board
 - b. Paper and Pen for each Crew Guide

SESSION NARRATIVE

- I. Introduction 5 minutes
 - a. Trainer Introduction: introduce yourself to group.
 - b. Purpose of the Session: The purpose of this session is two-fold:
 1. We are going to talk about some OA membership problems areas and learn some best practices from the lodges in the room to deal with these challenges.
 2. National is currently examining several membership policies and practices and trying to determine whether they are helpful or they hinder membership growth and retention. You will be given the opportunity to weigh in on these topics and your comments will be shared with members of the National Committee.

- II. Explore.....50 minutes

The crews in attendance will discuss membership problem areas and share any best practices utilized by their lodges/chapters for each topic. A total of 10 minutes will be allotted for each topic discussion.

The trainer will present each problem area topic while the crew guide will moderate each in-crew discussion. At the end of this session, each crew will share with the entire group the best practice that the crew believes will be most effective in combating each of the trends discussed.



a. Membership Impact [allow 10 minutes for this discussion and then move to the next topic]

Trainer Instructions: Read the following to the group and then give them 10 minutes to discuss in their crews. Write the *italicized statistic* below on the whiteboard/chalkboard to reference later.

Membership Impact: A positive growth in membership is a strong sign of a lodge's overall program and lodges are supposed to annually experience positive growth in membership over the previous year. In 2015, slightly more than half of our lodges experienced a membership growth. This means that *almost half of our lodges declined in membership last year.*

Crew Guide Instructions: Moderate a crew discussion about Membership Impact allowing about 5 minutes for discussing how each lodge represented is performing and 5 minutes for sharing best practices. Ensure that the crew selects the best practice that the crew believes will be most effective in combating membership decline to share with the entire group at the end of this session.

When possible, allow the conversation to unfold organically, however, the below topics can be used to jump start the discussion in the event of a lull:

- How are lodge dues collected?
- How difficult is it to transfer membership for Arrowmen who move to your area?
- How well attended are lodge events?
- Quality of lodge events.

b. Membership Retention [allow 10 minutes for this discussion and then move to the next topic]

Trainer Instructions: Read the following to the group and then give them 10 minutes to discuss in their crews. Write the *italicized statistic* below on the whiteboard/chalkboard to reference later.

Membership Retention: Membership retention is the percentage of current OA members that return the following year and continue their membership in the organization. In 2015, the nationwide membership retention was 75.4%. This means that *nearly 25% of Arrowmen did not continue as members last year.*

Crew Guide Instructions: Moderate a crew discussion about Membership Retention allowing about 5 minutes for discussing how each lodge represented is performing and 5 minutes for sharing best practices. Ensure that the crew selects the best practice that the crew believes will be most effective in combating arrowmen not continuing as members to share with the entire group at the end of this session.

When possible, allow the conversation to unfold organically, however, the below topics can be used to jump start the discussion in the event of a lull:

- How much are lodge dues and does this impact retention?
- Do new Arrowmen leave the Ordeal weekend feeling positive about the OA and well informed?
- Are leadership and other opportunities to be involved plentiful?

c. Unit Elections [allow 10 minutes for this discussion and then move to the next topic]

Trainer Instructions: Read the following to the group and then give them 10 minutes to discuss in their crews. Write the *italicized statistic* below on the whiteboard/chalkboard to reference later.

Unit Elections: Unit elections give Scouts the chance to recognize their peers who best exemplify Scouting's principles with election into the Order of the Arrow. Lodges are supposed to conduct unit elections in all troops and teams within their council. Of the 43,028 troops and teams in the nation at the end of 2015, only 22,349 of these held OA elections in 2015. This means that *almost half of the troops in the nation did not hold an OA election last year.*

Crew Guide Instructions: Moderate a crew discussion about Unit Elections allowing about 5 minutes for discussing how each lodge represented is performing and 5 minutes for sharing best practices. Ensure that the crew selects the best practice that the crew believes will be most effective in combating troops not holding OA elections to share with the entire group at the end of this session.

When possible, allow the conversation to unfold organically, however, the below topics can be used to jump start the discussion in the event of a lull:

- How are units contacted for elections?
- How does the lodge communicate with units?
- How do you make sure the lodge election team shows up?
- What do you do if the unit does not want an election?

d. Ordeal Completion [allow 10 minutes for this discussion and then move to the next topic]

Trainer Instructions: Read the following to the group and then give them 10 minutes to discuss in their crews. Write the *italicized statistic* below on the whiteboard/chalkboard to reference later.

Ordeal Completion: Ordeals bring new members into the Order of the Arrow. Candidates are eligible for their Ordeal after being elected and are traditionally invited to the Ordeal through a “call out” ceremony, although the “call out” is not required to complete the Ordeal. A strong ratio between the number of Scouts elected and those that undergo the Ordeal indicates that the Order of the Arrow is viewed as an excellent outlet for leadership development, cheerful service, and outdoor adventure. In 2015, 42,441 Scouts were elected to the Order of the Arrow, but 10,073 of these Scouts did not complete the Ordeal. This means that *nearly 25% of the Scouts elected to the OA last year did not complete their Ordeal.*

Crew Guide Instructions: Moderate a crew discussion about Ordeal Completion allowing about 5 minutes for discussing how each lodge represented is performing and 5 minutes for sharing best practices. Ensure that the crew selects the best practice that the crew believes will be most effective in Scouts being elected to the OA but not completing their Ordeal to share with the entire group at the end of this session.

When possible, allow the conversation to unfold organically, however, the below topics can be used to jump start the discussion in the event of a lull:

- Number of Ordeal opportunities offered?
- Are Ordeal opportunities offered at convenient times?
- Ordeal Cost.
- Does the lodge provide assistance to those who cannot afford the cost of Ordeals?



e. Brotherhood Completion [allow 10 minutes for this discussion]

Trainer Instructions: Read the following to the group and then give them 10 minutes to discuss in their crews. Write the *italicized statistic* below on the whiteboard/chalkboard to reference later.

Brotherhood Completion: Brotherhood conversion is the rate of eligible Ordeal members who seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members. Brotherhood conversion is essential for lodges to build a strong pool of Arrowmen to pull from to fill chapter and lodge leadership positions and to run a successful lodge program. Without a strong active base of experienced Arrowmen, lodges are forced to have to “reinvent the wheel” each year. The national Brotherhood conversion rate for 2015 was 33.5%. This means that *over 65% of Ordeal members in 2015 eligible to seal their membership in the Order did not become Brotherhood.*

Crew Guide Instructions: Moderate a crew discussion about Brotherhood Completion allowing about 5 minutes for discussing how each lodge represented is performing and 5 minutes for sharing best practices. Ensure that the crew selects the best practice that the crew believes will be most effective in combating Arrowmen not becoming Brotherhood to share with the entire group at the end of this session.

When possible, allow the conversation to unfold organically, however, the below topics can be used to jump start the discussion in the event of a lull:

- Brotherhood at Summer Camp.
- Communication.
- Brotherhood Cost.
- Explain Brotherhood at their Ordeal to ensure new members realize there is another step.



III. Dream.....30 minutes

National is currently examining several membership policies and practices and trying to determine whether they are helpful or they hinder membership growth and retention.

Instruct participants to pretend that their crew is the National Order of the Arrow Committee. Each crew will discuss several policies and decide whether the policies should be changed in order to foster membership growth. Crew Guides will moderate each discussion and ensure that all comments are recorded so they can be share with members of the National Committee.

Trainer Instructions: Read the first policy question below to the group and then give them 5 minutes to discuss in their crews. Then read the next policy question and give 5 minutes to discuss. Repeat the process until all policy questions have been discussed.

1. Currently Scouts elected into the Order of the Arrow have a one-year period from election to complete their Ordeal [GOA, page 23]. Should this timeframe be longer and if so, how long?
2. Currently, unit elections may only be performed by the lodge of the council where the unit is chartered [GOA, page 22]. Should an adjacent lodge be allowed to perform elections for nearby out-of-council units, if both lodges agree? Should unit elections be allowed to be held at summer camp, even for out-of-council units?
3. Currently, a lodge may not call out candidates from a visiting out-of-council unit unless the unit leader presents a letter from the home lodge chief and lodge adviser, requesting the call-out and identifying the members to be called out [GOA, page 23]. Should this restriction be lifted and lodges be allowed to call out members of any unit without restriction?
4. Currently Scouts may only take their Ordeal in the lodge that serves the council in which their unit is chartered unless special approval is given [GOA, page 23]. Should we consider allowing a duly elected candidate to attend an Ordeal in any lodge regardless of where they were elected?
5. The term “ordeal” is used to indicate the first level of OA membership and is also widely used for the event where OA membership is conveyed. Should we stop using the term, “ordeal” in one or both of these instances? If so, what term or terms should be used instead?

Crew Guide Instructions (for all policy questions): Moderate the crew discussion for all topics and write down all input provided for each policy question. Turn in the written input to the Trainer at the end of the session. This input will be shared with members of the National OA Committee.



IV. Discover.....30 minutes

Call on each crew to share with the entire group the best practice that their crew believes will be most effective in combating each of the trends that are written on the whiteboard/chalkboard:

- Almost half of our lodges declined in membership last year
- Nearly 25% of Arrowmen did not continue as members last year
- Almost half of the troops in the nation did not hold an OA election last year
- Nearly 25% of the Scouts elected to the OA last year did not complete their Ordeal
- Over 65% of Ordeal members in 2015 eligible to seal their membership in the Order did not become Brotherhood

Move this portion of the session along as fast as possible. If you are running short on time, do not call on all of the crews to share a best practice for every membership problem area.

V. Wrap-up/Feedback.....5 minutes

- a. Remind participants that without members, we do not have an organization which is why it is so critical that we do all that we can to address the membership problem areas discussed in this session.
- b. Thank the crews for their attendance and encourage them to continue to share best practices with each other throughout NEXT.