



# Scouting is not a Business

Scouts Canada has taken to treating Scouting like a business, but this approach is wrong for a voluntary Movement.

It's true that Scouting does share some characteristics with a business. Both must not spend more money than they receive. Both must ensure that their resources are used to help the organization achieve its purpose. But here Scouting and a business diverge. The purpose of a business is to make money for the shareholders. The purpose of Scouting is to achieve the Mission of Scouting, which is the development of young people through the game of Scouting.

When a business needs something, it pays someone for it. In Scouting, we count on donations of money, equipment, and volunteer effort. Let's take the Scout camps as an example. Recently, Camp Everton in Ontario upgraded its drinking water supply by installing two UV systems. This would normally cost about \$10,000. However, installation work and several lamps were donated, resulting in a final cost of less than \$3000. At the same camp, the floors of two of the cabins were in poor condition. \$6000 worth of repairs were donated for free by a local flooring company. The work was personally overseen by the owner of the company.

Of course, donations such as these only happen when Scouting has goodwill in the community. The donor must believe in the mission of the association to which they are giving and that their donation will be used to fulfil that mission. Scouts Canada's current practices are squandering this goodwill in the community.

The work of a business is accomplished by efforts of the employees. The Board of Directors directs the employees through the CEO. If an employee doesn't like the direction being taken by the business, they can find another job. Ultimately, many employees are happy to be a cog in the machine as long as it pays \$25 an hour.

Scouting works nothing like this. Scouting depends on volunteers. Volunteers are driven not by their performance bonus but by being inspired by the young people and their knowledge that they are doing good works. Volunteers will not tolerate being treated as a cog in the machine. They want to be part of a Movement; part of a team of valued people working together on an equal footing to make Scouting happen.

Scouts Canada's top-down structure cuts the vast majority of the membership out of the decision-making process. The volunteers are not treated as equal partners in Scouting. They are expected to obey what they are told to do. Because of this, volunteers have left in record numbers.

A democratic Scouts Canada would be committed to the Mission and to involving all the volunteers in achieving it. It would make the most of being a voluntary non-profit rather than being a poor business. Help build a democratic Scouts Canada: Join SCOUT *eh!*

Find out more: <http://ScoutEh.ca/> [info@ScoutEh.ca](mailto:info@ScoutEh.ca)

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