

THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

ONTARIO COMMAND

**TRAINING AND ORGANIZATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

BRANCH OFFICER TRAINING

PHASE 2

PROBLEM SOLVING

LESSON PLAN

FOREWARD

A lesson plan is developed for all training sessions for a variety of reasons. The most important of these reasons is that all those who become presenters of any given seminar will in effect be saying the same thing. Lesson plans are not meant to stifle the creativity or presentation style of the presenter. Rather they are meant to augment creativity and presentation style while ensuring that the same message is sent at all seminars.

This could not be more critical than in the 2nd phase of the Branch Officers Training Seminar. Given the amount of material included in this seminar package and the time constraints that presenters will encounter the lesson plan outlined below is critical to the success of this seminar.

The most important aspects of this seminar are; the material learned during the 1st phase of the Branch Officers Training Seminar and the willingness of the participants to embrace the team concept in problem solving. In fact fundamental to the success of this 2nd phase is the groups understanding that problem solving can never be accomplished well by one person.

The 2nd phase of the Branch Officers Training Seminar is also a full day's seminar. Presenters are urged to use the "buzz group" format for this 2nd phase. The 2nd phase will require participants to lay aside personal beliefs and wants. This 2nd phase seminar will also require more than one presenter. The optimum number of presenters is four (4). One of the presenters (Provincial or District TOD Chairman) may act as a facilitator as well as a presenter. Other presenters can be Provincial Command Officers, District Officers or Zone TOD Chairman. In the event Districts decide to use District and Zone members to conduct this 2nd phase training it is recommended that the Provincial TOD Chairman or a Senior Elected Officer of Ontario Command be asked to attend to help set up the learning experience.

The following points must be made by the presenter (facilitator) to “set up” the seminar.

- 1.....Branch Officers expertise in problem solving is required – use examples of Branch closures, criminal charges against Branch members, financial adversity within Branches.
- 2.....The presenter must make the learning experience positive in the minds of the participants; this can be achieved by assuring participants that team problem solving is essential in achieving team success
- 3.....Presenters will reinforce that the success of this type of training will help to create a more positive atmosphere in Branches as well as a new direction which will attract old and new members.
- 4.....Ask the District leadership to pick approximately 12 attending members to the seminar to act as a focus group at the end of the day. This focus group should be ready to discuss the good and bad points of the seminar. As well they should be prepared to offer suggestions for improvement.

TOOLS FOR THE PRESENTER

BUZZ GROUPS

This format is the most effective way to present this seminar. The facilitator will tell the groups to assemble in the buzz groups. He/she will also ask that members from the same Branch or Zone not sit together and try and ensure that there are equal numbers of male and female participants in each group... Given the location of the training the following points are made;

- 1.....buzz groups should not be larger than 20 to 25 participants.
- 2.....each buzz group will have a facilitator available to ensure that the group stays on track and remains focused on the core seminar
- 3.....each buzz group should be asked to determine a name for their group – this will cause some levity and will enable some members of the group to be more at ease; more importantly it will be the first decision that the buzz group makes for the day.
- 4.....try and ensure that there is adequate space between the buzz groups
- 5.....task the group to have select someone to present their findings to the larger group (the facilitator will ask each group in turn to share their results

and ask for comments from the larger group, in some cases it may be advisable for the facilitator to share the groups results with the larger group)

6.....suggest that the presenter buzz group change with each task

7.....each buzz group will have a flip chart on which to write the groups responses to the assigned task – each piece of flip chart paper used must be numbered and the heading of the task indicated - the flip chart paper may then be hung on the wall near the buzz group for future use (as many as eight (8) flipcharts may be required given the size of the group.

8.....all the flipchart papers developed by the buzz groups will be collected reviewed by the presenters to determine common points and progress of the buzz groups

ICE BREAKERS

Firstly the facilitator for the seminar will introduce the other presenters and explain their role. Senior Officers present should also be introduced and be given the opportunity to speak; remembering that time will be an issue throughout the day. The ice breaker will be used for the whole group as opposed to the buzz groups.

Ice breakers can take many forms; for example

The facilitator will write down 3 points concerning their personal life. Two of the points will be true with one being false. The participants will try and determine which one is false.

Or the facilitator will write three words on the flipchart. The group will then be asked to write three words which best associate with the words on the flip chart. After a couple of minutes the facilitator will ask the group to share their results. Any words similar to the original three will be written on the flip chart.

The purpose of the ice breaker is to put as many of the participants as possible at ease. It is also an excellent way for the presenter(s) to gauge the group with respect to; willingness to take part, pick out the “quiet ones” as well as “talkative ones”

THE PRESENTATION

A District representative may be asked to conduct the Legion opening ritual. While the singing may be eliminated and the flags placed prior if there is no color party, the opening should otherwise be as outlined in the Dominion ritual Manual.

The 2nd phase of the Branch Officer Training seminar is broken down into the following key components. In the interest of time the main group will be given these key points.

The key points associated with problem solving are; critical to this process are these fundamental steps to problem solving; **KEEP AN OPEN MIND;**
KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL; and NEVER GIVE UP!!

- 1.....CHOOSE A TEAM AND A TEAM LEADER; team leader, secretary, scribe; volunteers for team; (who is responsible for ensuring the plan is moving forward, following up on persons assigned actions, overall follow up of the process)
- 2.....WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A LEADERSHIP TEAM; prioritize, key findings
- 3.....REQUIRED/AVAILABLE RESOURCES; required now and long term
- 4.....KEY ELEMENTS TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL PLAN; immediate needs vs. long term needs; what is required vs. what is wanted
- 5.....ROADBLOCKS TO A SUCCESSFUL PLAN;
- 6.....ACTION PLAN; short and long term; time lines
- 7.....IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE; what is realistic vs. what would be nice
- 8.....WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED PERSONALLY FROM THIS SEMINAR (how confident are “you” you can help your Branch deal with problems in a structured way)

The facilitator will explain these key points and provide the group with a brief description of how they are linked to the Branch problem solving team.

The facilitator must ensure that the group understands that these points are the basis for all problem solving activities within any organization and will remain the same regardless of the problem. Further the facilitator must ensure that participants realize that the KISS principle usually works best.

Once the points are understood by all the actual seminar can start. Each buzz group will be given a problem dealing with an actual Branch situation. Obviously names and numbers of Branches must be withheld. The facilitator must ensure that the buzz group basically follows the key points associated with their particular problem.

A tip to the facilitators.....before the buzz groups are assigned their problem or the first thing they should do before they start problem solving is to decide on the following;

- a.....a chairman who will keep the group on track and report back to the main group
- b.....a secretary who can write key points and discussion items on the flip chart
- c.....a vice-chairman who can act in the absence of the chairman

The buzz group must understand that the other buzz groups will play the role of the Branch General Membership when they are reporting their findings.

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER ONE.....Your Branch has had a large amount of money stolen which may very well force your Branch to close and loose the Charter. Develop both a short term and long term financial plan that will allow your Branch to survive.

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER TWO.....Your Branch has burned to the ground. Develop a short term and a long term plan which will accomplish two (2) things; a).....enable your Branch to function in a relatively normal manner as soon as possible; b).....create a plan for your Branch which will ensure economic and Legion survival. (if using 2 groups have one group focus on the problem knowing the “Branch” has insurance and the other group knowing the “Branch” does not have insurance)

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER THREE.....Your Branch is plagued with unrest and inundated with strife and complaints. It is almost impossible to entice old and new members to serve on Branch Executive or the help with the various functions of the Branch. Develop a short term and long term action plan which will create harmony within your Branch.

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER FOUR.....Your Branch has a declining membership and it has become increasing difficult to find people to serve on executive or to help around the Branch. In fact your Branch has become the best kept secret in your community. Develop an action plan which will accomplish the following; a).....enable your Branch to attract new members; b).....establish a volunteer base within your Branch which will allow various functions to become successful and attract the public.

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER FIVE.....Your Branch has no use for the various levels of Legion. In fact your Branch is never present at Zone, District, Provincial or Dominion conventions. The last time a member of a higher level of Legion was in your Branch he/she was treated with disdain and disrespect. Develop an action plan which will create understanding within your Branch regarding the various levels of Legion, their functions and their ability to help your Branch.

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER 6.....your Branch is in a relatively small community with a membership of a 180 members. There are several other establishments in town selling refreshments at competitive prices. As well there are two other halls in town that cater to weddings, anniversaries and other types of parties.

Your membership is decreasing every year and you are finding it harder to get people to join your Branch and then to help out.

Develop a short and long term plan which will see your Branch survive and maintain a Legion presence in your community.

GROUP PROBLEM NUMBER 7.....In the economic situation in your community it is becoming increasingly more difficult to operate your Legion at a profit. There have been several ad-hoc meetings held regarding this problem but no solutions.

As well several key members of the Executive committee are frustrated with the apparent lack of interest from Branch members and are telling people that they will not stand for office at the next election.

Your ladies Auxiliary is having difficulty operating in the kitchen as it stands right now and have asked the Branch to help with renovations to enable the kitchen and the L.A. to operate at a profit.

Develop a short and long term plan which will see the problems described above solved or at least minimized.

Problems numbers 6 and 7 may be used as a second set of problems for the buzz group as they are concerned with different circumstances than problems 1 through 5. If the facilitator decides to use problems 6 and 7 have the buzz groups split up so that different people will have the opportunity to work with others. i.e. have every second member of the original buzz groups move to the buzz group closest to them.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

This portion of the lesson plan will serve to provide a reminder or a drawing together of the information given to the participants during the day. The facilitator will go through each point and expand on them to ensure the “message” gets through.

- 1.....CORRECT CHOICE.....the people chosen for a problem solving team must be able to keep an open mind and keep their eyes on the ball.
- 2.....PATIENCE.....the problem solving team must understand that success may not come as quickly as wanted
- 3.....TIME FRAMES (SCHEDULES).....there must be a concerted effort by the problem solving team to develop realistic, attainable and successful time frames
- 4.....RE-VISITING.....the problem solving team must understand the importance of re-visiting various items to determine their success
- 5.....ACHIEVABLE – ATTAINABLE.....the problem solving team must develop strategies that will be workable and show timely success
- 6.....BUY IN FOR THE PLAN.....as important as developing a problem solving strategy is developing a buy-in strategy for Branch members to accept the teams recommendations
- 7.....OUTSIDE RESOURCES.....who, what, where, when, how; these questions must be answered as part of the finished solution
- 8.....STAY WITHIN BUDGET.....at times this may prove to be impossible; if that is the case a solid, thought out plan as to why and how must be developed
- 9.....LEGALITIES – PERMITS.....again; who, what, where when, how
- 10.....DON'T GIVE UP.....adversity will be the biggest enemy the problem solving team may face

SESSION EVALUATION

Fundamental to the success of any learning experience is the participant's evaluation form. Names are optional; however, brutal honesty is encouraged. Ask the group to try and give examples for any changes they feel should be made. Have the evaluation forms handed out towards the end of the day. Designate a person or place that the evaluation forms can be left.

CLOSING

Thank the group for their participation. Time permitting ask if there are any questions. The facilitator must be prepared to deal with "where do we go from here" types of questions.

A District representative can be asked to conduct the closing ritual.