

The Scouting Now Story

Before *SCOUTING NOW: An Action Plan for Canadian Scouting* was developed, Scouts Canada was an organization that was rooted in the past.

The programs we delivered were sound, but some of our approaches were outdated. We had made small concessions to the changed world (by creating a website, for example) but we were largely operating from a model designed for a very different society than the one we lived in, and our membership was dropping as a result.

The Action Plan was developed as a response to the need for change, yet it recognized that sweeping, immediate change would be met with resistance and created the risk of losing valuable aspects of the program (and valuable volunteers) in the process.

So instead, the plan was a call to action, but action made of incremental steps, of what Professor Gareth Morgan calls 'the 15% solution' - a series of 'small but significant actions that leverage change.'

These changes were grouped under five key action items:

- Making it Easier for New and Current Volunteers
- Enhancing Our Image, Profile and Expertise
- Enhancing Organizational Capacity
- Achieving Meaningful Youth Involvement
- Recruiting Members and Finding New Volunteers

The steps contained within each item were clear, definitive and achievable. Some of them involved researching and creating a plan; others involved direct action for change.

With the combined efforts of volunteers, Scouts Canada staff, and professional consultants, the majority of these items have come to pass, and the renewed energy of our organization is the proof that they worked.

Our organization has grown in each of the past three years, something that has not occurred since the 1970s; and we can see change all throughout the organization.

Our volunteers are better trained, they have easier access to program materials and clear direction about our delivery standards, and we have a better system to let them know we appreciate them.

We have a new uniform, a new brand, increased funding sources, and we have a new website to invigorate our online presence.

We have a new public appointments process that has garnered us new, enthusiastic volunteers for key positions, we have new ways for our members to get involved in decision making, and new ways to ensure our leadership structure is working as it should.

We have increased our youth leadership training, focused the roles of our Youth Commissioners, and found more ways for youth to gain international experience.

We have explored different ways to expand our membership and our volunteer base by examining new ways to get people involved in Scouting, and we've strengthened our connections to other community Groups, re-establishing ourselves as Canada's leading youth organization.

We started as an organization rooted in the past, but we did not uproot ourselves. Instead we allowed those roots to stay firm while encouraging the growth of branches reaching into the future.

Scouts Canada is a living, vibrant organization with a bright future. In the Action Plan, we said that the work ahead of us was just the beginning. With the majority of that work behind us, we can look forward to the next stage of a change as these programs and ideas take root and grow.

For the past 2 years we have all been on an adventure together. When we started the Action Plan in 2009, we were an organization living out a legacy. With the work we've done since then, we've created our own. It would be easy for us to dismiss our efforts as 'all in a day's work' as volunteers and staff often do, but that would not acknowledge the scale or scope of what we have accomplished.

In two short years, we've turned Scouts Canada from an easily ignored, slow-moving, old-fashioned organization, to a fast-flowing, attractive, energetic movement that embodies the spirit of the youth that drive everything we do.

We have engaged our partners, our Board, our staff and our National Leadership Team, the youth and their parents, and members of all kinds, to join us as we change course and create an organization that can keep growing and keep responding to the needs of our world.

We have found ways to support our volunteers so they have a great Scouting experience in which they receive almost as much as they give. Those Scouters will automatically turn that experience into great Scouting adventures for our youth, ensuring that the cycle continues.

We have created a new brand that speaks to the needs of today's youth, and we've found lots of ways to let them know about it. We've made Scouts Canada into an organization that can compete for families' recreation time, and make it worth their while.

We've brought our entire organization onto a single plan, with a single focus: to support leaders to deliver a fantastic program. Everything that every staff member and volunteer does supports that idea and we're ready to meet any challenges that we encounter in delivering on that promise.

We've created new ways for youth to get more out of Scouting. We're involving youth at every level, and we're training them well. We've giving them new opportunities to represent Scouting at home, and all around the world. More than ever, we're helping them to 'Be Prepared' to take a leadership role in their lives, and in our society.

And we decided not to be satisfied with our traditional ways of finding and keeping members. We're reaching out to new groups and partners every day. We're finding ways to meet the needs of youth who are at-risk and youth who are just busy. We're working to keep them connected to Scouting because we need them, and because they need us.

In 2009, the SCOUTINGNOW Action Plan challenged us to make Scouting better. We have risen to that challenge, and we continue to rise to it. 2011 finds us both focused and responsive, with structures in place to help us continue to grow and continue to evolve with the youth we serve.

Thanks to your hard work, Scouts Canada has once again taken its rightful place as the leading organization for youth in our nation. Right now, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for helping that come true. Today, we celebrate our accomplishments. Tomorrow, we get back to work and take Scouts Canada even higher. SCOUTING NOW was a call to action. We have answered that call and reversed our trend of declining membership.

With our reenergized brand as an organization that shapes future leaders, we cannot allow ourselves to stagnate again. It is up to us to keep responding to the needs of youth, and to change as those needs change.

Our fundamental values and the Scout Method will always remain the same, no matter how our delivery methods and external appearance might change, and if we remain conscious of that, we can stay the relevant, vital organization we are today.

The document before you is an important record of the hard work we have undertaken over the past two years and the tremendous results of that work.

We're not out of the woods yet, however. Many of the items completed in this report are only stage one of a long, exciting process of creating our vision for the future of Scouting in Canada. Included in that document is also a list of follow up steps, to ensure the continued success of this mission.

We can make that vision come true if we continue to work together for change, and for Scouting.