



The Boy Scouts Of America Have Lost Their Way

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Earlier in the month, the Boys Scouts of America (BSA) announced that its Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Cub Scout program and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout.



They framed the decision around the notion of “inclusiveness” and expanding family values through better enabling the sharing of common experiences. Critics immediately suggested that the gesture was an attempt to improve the financials by expanding the pool of potential members.

Interestingly, the Girls Scouts of America responded by doubling down on its commitment to “*build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.*”

This week, a story broke in the national press that a cub scout in Colorado has been cast out of his den after he asked a state legislator, Sen. Vicki Marble (R), a pointed question about a gun bill she co-sponsored and her racially charged comments made about African-Americans in 2013. Decent questions for a self-motivated kid who had done his homework and wanted to be prepared for meeting his state senator.

So, what happened to being **inclusive**? I guess, if the BSA doesn't like your questions, you're out!

Pardon the pun, but, I have to wonder has the *Boys Scouts of America* lost their way?

Here's some advice for BSA's leadership from the Board of Directors on down:

1. Press the reset button! Craft a vivid and compelling vision for the *Boys Scouts of America 2.0*. If you want to include everyone, consider changing the name to reflect the new direction.
2. A vision is best presented as a story that people can relate to. From an early age, we have all learned to learn through stories. Present your vision as a story that your people can imagine being part of and personally succeeding through and you will engage them in the process of making that story a reality. *Banning a kid for asking pertinent questions shouldn't be part of the story!*
3. Details about people, the work that they do and how they do it are key parts of the story of every organization and group. After all, organizations are simply comprised of people, doing important things (processes) and using tools to do those things – whatever those things happen to be.
4. A discussion about an organization's social and environmental consciousness helps to draw a more complete picture of what is envisioned. Including those details in your vision story for BSA 2.0 can further assist your people in understanding the "bigger picture" that you imagine for them.
5. Asking people to work in helping achieve the vision is essential to gaining their commitment to the changes intended. As important as it is to tell your vision story in captivating detail, you still have to remember to ask your people to be a part of the changes that lie ahead for them. Clearly, the troop leader in Colorado hasn't bought-in because he doesn't understand the vision for the future.

To close, there's much for all of us to learn from the current goings on at the Boys Scouts of America. It's one thing to change policy. That's fairly easy. Just write it up. It's an entirely "other thing" to do the necessary work required to institute that new policy. If the BSA is about inclusiveness, it better be about including those with opposing points of view. Otherwise, the recent change in membership policy is just another type of money grab.

Reach out to me, if you'd like some help developing a vivid and engaging vision story for your organization.