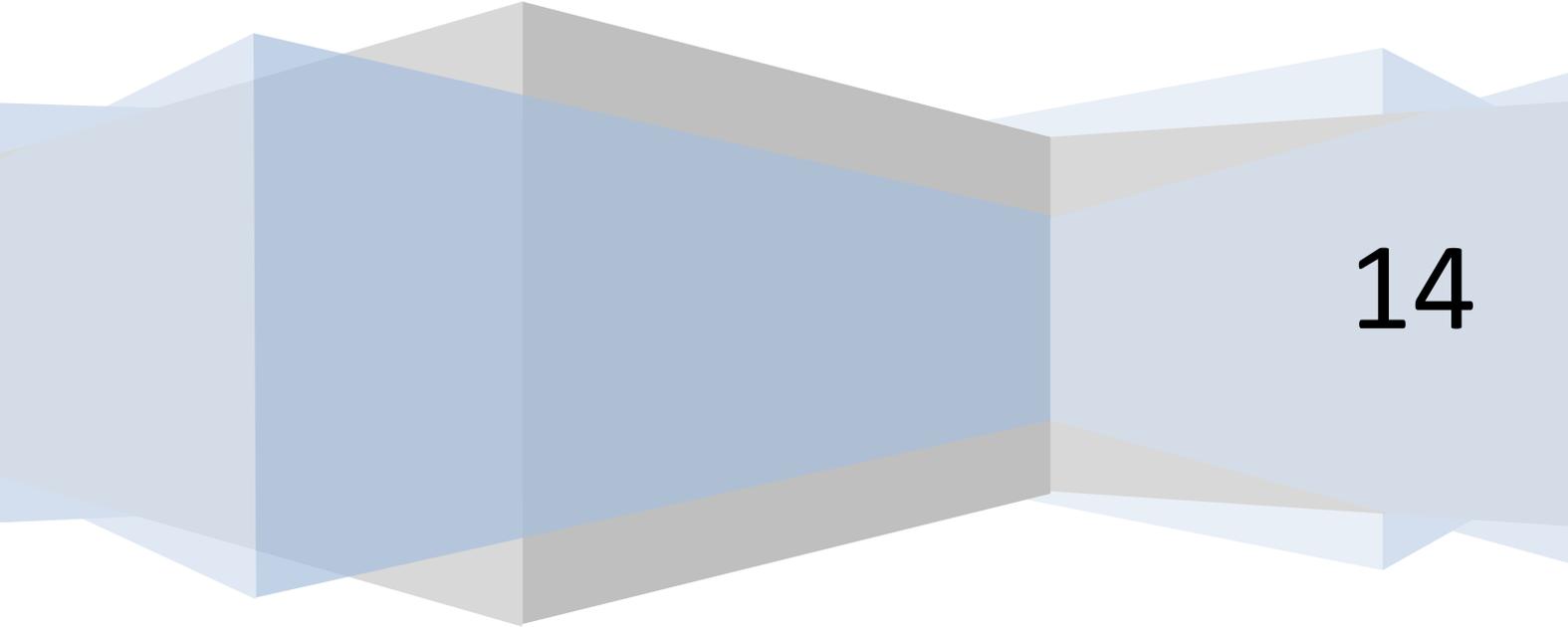


DENVER AREA COUNCIL, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

# Awards as a Motivator

A Thesis submitted in partial completion of the  
degree of Doctorate of Commissioner Science in  
the College of Commissioner Science

Jack L. Beckman



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**APPROVED BY THE EXAMINING BODY**

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# PREFACE

I began this project with the intent to confirm my belief that awards and decorations are as valid and justified in Scouting as they are in the military services. I believe that just as in the military services where outstanding behavior and conduct are recognized, we must also do the same for Scouting volunteers. In both cases, monetary rewards are not possible, so asking for a raise in either case is fruitless. None the less, recognizing those who perform in an exemplary manner is key to reinforcing desired outcomes and achieving the end result beneficial to the program. To this end, both the military and Scouting have devised awards and recognitions for those who perform, and as both are a uniformed entity, intended to be worn or displayed in some fashion on the respective uniforms. In both cases, awards are intended to motivate the recipient for their work and achievements as well as the observer to duplicate those efforts and achievements in their own life. When referring to awards in this thesis, it is meant that the term “awards” is for knots and awards awarded to adult volunteers, unless specified differently.

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## History of Military Awards

Military services through the ages have had awards designed to recognize the skill and bravery in battle. Medieval knights were rewarded with prizes, treasure, horses or land grants to reward their deeds and fealty. Sometimes the spoils of conquest were the reward, which then caused some to turn to plunder and pillage to satisfy their desire for reward. Wise leaders were those who determined that rewards for acceptable conduct to the sovereign or the state were more desirable than allowing plunder, and recognized those who rendered such service with titles, land and positions of favor. In recent history, General George Washington instituted the Badge of Military Merit during the American Revolution to recognize valor among his soldiers, at that time the only award or decoration available to the Continental Army. The Badge was not used again until 1932, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Washington's birth when it was reintroduced by President Herbert Hoover in General Order No.3

([www.va.gov/opa/publications](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications)) as the Military Order of the Purple Heart, to be awarded to members of the army who "perform in singularly Meritorious act" and adds the provision by which it is known today, receiving a wound in battle.

During his Russian campaign, Emperor Napoleon of France said that "a soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon."<sup>1</sup> The need for recognition of valor and service was evident at that time, and is still valid today. The awards of Napoleon's day were sometimes ornate, engraved and carefully crafted medals, bestowed upon officers for battlefield leadership and accomplishment. Later, they were awarded to the private soldier in recognition

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<sup>1</sup> Napoleon on War

of valor and accomplishment. At other times they consisted of a colored uniform trim or ribbon to show favor or assignment to a special unit. In the American Civil War, the honor of carrying the battle flag or National Colors was given to those who had shown conspicuous courage as a reward and was coveted among the ranks, despite the fact that carrying those colors often made the soldier a very obvious target in the battle. In this case, the desire for reward or to demonstrate bravery often out-weighed the danger. The motivation of that award or recognition was useful to the commanders to motivate the troops to go forward into the battle, and not retreat to perceived safety. Today, “the goal of the goal of the total Army awards program is to foster mission accomplishment by recognizing excellence of both military and civilian members of the force and motivating them to high levels of performance and service.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Why Scouts wear a Uniform**

Addressing the question about awards and recognition also prompts the question of “why do Scouts wear a uniform?”. Since the beginning of the Scouting movement, Scouts have worn a uniform. Baden- Powell, being a career military man, wore a military uniform for the most of his life. When he started the movement of Scouting in England, he wanted boys from every social, educational and economic level to benefit. He was quoted as saying: “I see in this, a value far above a mere pernickitiness in dress. A like uniform hides all differences of social standing in a country and makes for equality; but, more important still, it covers differences of country and race and creed, and makes all feel that they are members with one another of the

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<sup>2</sup> Army Regulation 600-8-22

one great brotherhood.”<sup>3</sup> In a society where people are judged by their class or social standing, an element of equality in the organization levels the field and opens opportunity for all. When a Scout or Scouter joins the organization, they start with a plain uniform. From that point, every award, rank advancement, accomplishment or recognition is that person’s. Those recognitions and awards are what the person has done, not what has been given or inherited based on social class or standing. In early 20<sup>th</sup> Century England, such an idea was not common, and even to this day the notion that everyone from every perceived class or economic standing starts from the beginning is a bedrock principle of Scouting. Scouts and Scouters show what they have done, what they have earned and what their Scouting “resume” is. Today, wear of the uniform is also a measure of unit success, and an indicator of individual Scout Spirit.

## **History of Scouting awards**

In the earliest days of the Boy Scouts of America, military veterans were urged into service as scoutmasters. The first scout uniforms therefore resembled military uniforms. It was common for these veterans to wear their military decorations on their modified Boy Scout uniform. A national uniform was not to be developed until the early 1920s. Military tradition dictated that the actual medal from a military award was only worn on ceremonial occasions — at other times, it was replaced with a thin ribbon bar with the same ribbon style as found attached to the medal. This carried over to Scouting, whose awards were medals similar to the military, but were most often worn as ribbons. These ribbons differed from the military style in that, instead

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<sup>3</sup> 27 Years with Baden-Powell

of being the same as the ribbon for the medal, they were all the same - khaki colored, with a woven square knot in the center. The color of this knot was dictated by the ribbon for the medal. The choice of the square knot as the common emblem was made by James E. West, who is said to have chosen it for its use as the knot associated with first\_aid, thereby reminding scouts to continue to be of service to others. <sup>4</sup> Initially, eight new ribbons were introduced and later a ninth, which represented the various national awards available at that time:

- Silver Beaver Award – Awarded at the local Council level for exceptional volunteer service.
- Eagle Scout Award- Awarded to Boy Scouts as the highest rank in Boy Scouts of America.
- Scouter's Key Award – Awarded to adult volunteers serving at unit level.
- Scouter's Training Award – Awarded to adult volunteers serving at unit level.
- Quartermaster Award – Awarded to Sea Scouts as the highest rank in Sea Scouting.
- Silver Buffalo Award – Awarded at National level for exceptional volunteer service
- Honor Medal – Awarded in recognition of unusual heroism and skill or resourcefulness in saving or attempting to save a human life at some risk to self.
- Merit Medal – Awarded to a scout who performed an act of service of rare or exceptional character that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.
- Silver Antelope Award – Awarded at Regional level for exceptional volunteer service.

These awards were first established in 1925 to recognize volunteer service to the National Boy Scouts of America movement. Many years of service had gone into establishing Scouting in America, and recognition for those efforts motivated those volunteers to greater service.

Through the years, more awards for training, service and accomplishment have been added to

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<sup>4</sup> Square Knot Insignia used by the Boy Scouts of America

the program. In an effort to recognize volunteer service at different levels, more than 46 knots or awards have been and continue to be used to motivate and express appreciation for services performed, training accomplished, meritorious or heroic actions or a particular community served.

### **Boy Scout awards and ranks**

Boy Scouts began with rank awards of Tenderfoot up to First Class, to demonstrate a boys skill and prowess in those basic Scouting skills, among which are knots and lashings, tracking, fire-building and swimming. While the subject of this thesis is not the matter of awards and rank for the boys in Boy Scouting, it is important to note that at times the zeal applied and benefits derived from the boys achieving their ranks and awards do not seem to transfer to the adult volunteers in the program. Concern is given to the boys advancement, however, failure to recognize the volunteer efforts of the adults in the program can cause those volunteers to feel that their work is not valued, and they leave the program.

### **Award criteria**

An examination of the criteria for the different awards for adults revealed a determined purpose and progression of standards for awards at each division or part of Scouting. Awards in Scouting have criteria such as conducting a year-round program, achieving a certain level of advancement, attaining a Quality Unit or Journey to Excellence level for a period of time,

attending training and training others; all of which reflect a quality program and retention of boys in that program. The following awards and their criteria illustrate the point.

Cub Scout Den Leader Award – Complete one year as a registered leader, complete basic training for your position, attend University of Scouting or four Roundtables, graduate 70% of your den to the next level, take leadership in planning a service project, have a yearly plan, attend day camp with your den, and hold regular meetings.

Scouters Training Award – complete 2 years of tenure, complete basic training, attend University of Scouting or 4 Roundtables per year, have an annual troop planning meeting, attain Journey to Excellence in each of the 2 years, attend advanced training.

Scouters Key – complete 3 years as a registered adult in position, attend basic training for your position, attend University of Scouting or four Roundtables each year of service as a leader, attain silver level Journey to Excellence for at least two years, conduct an annual planning session and publish the schedule to the parents in the unit.

Commissioners Arrowhead—complete Commissioner Basic Training, conduct regular unit visits, attend 6 commissioner staff meetings, conduct unit assessments of your assigned units, participate in unit recharter and be on time, attend a Commissioner Conference.

Commissioners Key – Earn the Commissioners Arrowhead, serve for 3 years as a commissioner, complete a project and basic training modules.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Guide to Awards and Insignia

These award criteria, when evaluated against the desired program goals, lead the adult to perform the desired steps for a strong program. In short, when an adult volunteer strives to achieve those awards and meet the criteria, they will have a better program for the boys. It is not by accident or mere chance that those criteria have been put in place to achieve those goals. Boy Scouts of America has introduced awards to recognize service in the different levels of Scouting, and has at times retired awards that appear to duplicate others or no longer serve the purpose for which they were intended. The key to understand with these awards is that they are to recognize and motivate volunteers to do those things that improve the program.

## **Importance of Recognition**

On his website [www.cuttingedgepr.com](http://www.cuttingedgepr.com),<sup>6</sup> Kim Harrison states that “*Employee recognition* is the timely, informal or formal acknowledgement of a person’s or team’s behavior, effort or business result that supports the organization’s goals and values, and which has clearly been beyond normal expectations.” His work is focused on the Human Resources aspect of employee relations, however his views directly translate to volunteers. Further, he recognizes that fact that “Appreciation is a fundamental human need. Employees respond to appreciation expressed through recognition of their good work because it confirms their work is valued. When employees and their work are valued, their satisfaction and productivity rises, and they are motivated to maintain or improve their good work”. Further, he notes “People want to be respected and valued for their contribution. Everyone feels the need to be recognized as an

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<sup>6</sup> [www.cuttingedgepr.com](http://www.cuttingedgepr.com), accessed July 28, 2014

individual or member of a group and to feel a sense of achievement for work well done or even for a valiant effort. Everyone wants a 'pat on the back' to make them feel good". In the volunteer world of Scouting, this is especially true. Without a paycheck or monetary remuneration for their work, volunteers need the reinforcement and appreciation of recognition for their time, effort and money expended in support of the volunteer organization. Harrison also states that recognizing employees, or in our case volunteers, is a positive communications tool. Positive recognition sends an extremely powerful message to the person being recognized and to those in the rest of the organization that their work does not go unnoticed.

## **Components of Motivation**

While the spirit of competition exists in many professions and avocations, a notable area is the sales profession. Individuals who are drawn to a profession in sales are generally motivated by the desire to succeed on their own merits, by their own efforts and the rewards sought are designed by their employers to motivate the salesperson to accomplish a sales goal, to meet a sales quota or to attain the next level of recognition. According to Thomas N. Ingram, contributor to the book: Sales Management - Analysis and Decision Making,<sup>7</sup> there are three components of motivation. They are: Intensity, Direction and Persistence.

Intensity has to do with the amount of mental and physical effort put forth. A person can put forth a small amount of mental and physical effort, and will attain the rewards

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<sup>7</sup> Sales Management, Analysis and Decision Making

associated with that effort. In contrast, a person can put forth a great amount of mental and physical effort, and should expect to reap the rewards associated with that amount of effort. When a great amount of mental and physical effort is expended in the quest and little reward is attained, the natural result is disappointment and eventual abandonment of the effort as it is not yielding the desired result.

Direction is the extent to which an individual determines and chooses efforts focused on a particular goal. A sales person may want to attain a certain level of recognition or level of commission, or perhaps a promotion. By focusing on the goal and doing whatever it takes to attain that goal, a salesperson demonstrates the direction component of Motivation. When a Scouting volunteer determines to have an excellent Blue & Gold Banquet, or to reach a desired goal in popcorn sales or to ensure that a high adventure outing is properly resourced and executed, it can be the driving force in that person's life for the period of time required to accomplish that task. At the committee level, a volunteer aligns themselves with the sub-committee that they feel most comfortable in. Membership, finance, program or training are specific directions and efforts which bring the volunteer satisfaction when the goal is attained.

Persistence is the extent to which the goal-directed effort is put forth over time. A salesperson must dedicate their actions and desires to the accomplishment of a status or level of sales goal. It generally reflects a long-term effort toward the desired result. When a volunteer decides that the goal of attaining a percentage of youth advancement, or attaining a certain certification or attaining Wood Badge ticket items, it is dependent on the long-term persistence of the volunteer whether that goal is attained.

In any combination, these three components make up the driving force behind a person striving to attain or achieve a goal. While these components are identified in a Sales environment, and a Sales environment is by definition the pursuit of a goal with the end result of monetary reward, they are just as valid in the volunteer world of Scouting.

## **Individual Motivation**

Motivation is dependent on the person. What motivates one person to long-term dedicated service may not motivate another. Expecting all volunteers to be motivated by the same goal is inviting burn-out and turnover of volunteers. According to Ingram, there are two types of motivators: Intrinsic and Extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation is when the person finds motivation in the job itself. The work is the satisfaction. This type of motivation can change with the person, the circumstances, or the environment. For example, a Peace Corps volunteer usually finds the work itself motivating and rewarding as they are not being paid. They usually find themselves in a remote area with few amenities or comforts and typically perform the work for years at a time. Serving the needs of others and being able to meet those needs provides the motivation for that person at that time.

Extrinsic motivation is external to the job itself. Rewards such as increased salary or bonuses, recognition by material awards, peer acclaim or promotion are extrinsic. Sales persons are usually motivated by extrinsic means; the more they sell, the more they get as

commission or the more recognition they get. Many salespersons will move from employer to employer in the quest for the extrinsic motivations they crave. Volunteers may move from organization to organization in their quest to be satisfied with the extrinsic motivations they desire.

Knowing the two types of motivation and how to apply them to volunteers should be the goal of leadership at all levels of a volunteer organization. The unreasonable expectation that all volunteers are or should be intrinsically motivated fails to account for the individual need to feel wanted and appreciated for their work in areas that may not be the most favored. In other words, a person will do the job because it needs to be done, but they may not enjoy it. An example would be the volunteer who cleans the foul-smelling latrines at Scout camp. The job needs to be done, but it is hardly intrinsically fulfilling. While volunteer work in Scouting can be intrinsically fulfilling, it won't be the long-term solution to keeping volunteers interested. Intrinsic motivation can sustain a person, and may for a limited period of time, but cannot be expected to fulfill every need a person may feel in their volunteer efforts.

## **Timely Action**

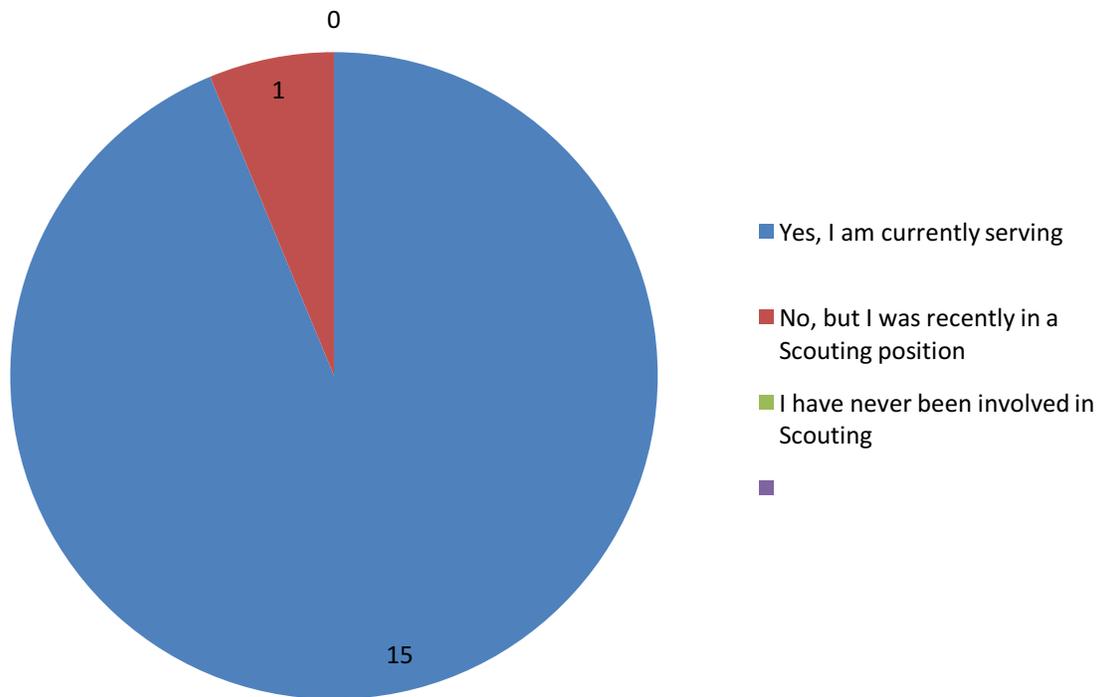
Key to all recognition is that it must be timely, or within a reasonable time to the action or actions recognized so as to be correlated with those actions. Waiting until the recognition is no longer linked to the action reduces the effectiveness of the recognition. Much like the immediate recognition kit in Cub Scouts, which is designed to recognize the Cub Scout achievements toward a rank or goal thereby reinforcing the positive behavior; timely

recognition of a volunteer tends to reinforce the desired behaviors and motivate the person to duplicate, if not increase their efforts in the Scouting program. In contrast, failure to recognize the volunteer for their exemplary work tends to discourage the volunteer and it conveys the message of apathy on the part of the organization. Such apathy can poison an organization, rendering it incapable of retaining volunteers.

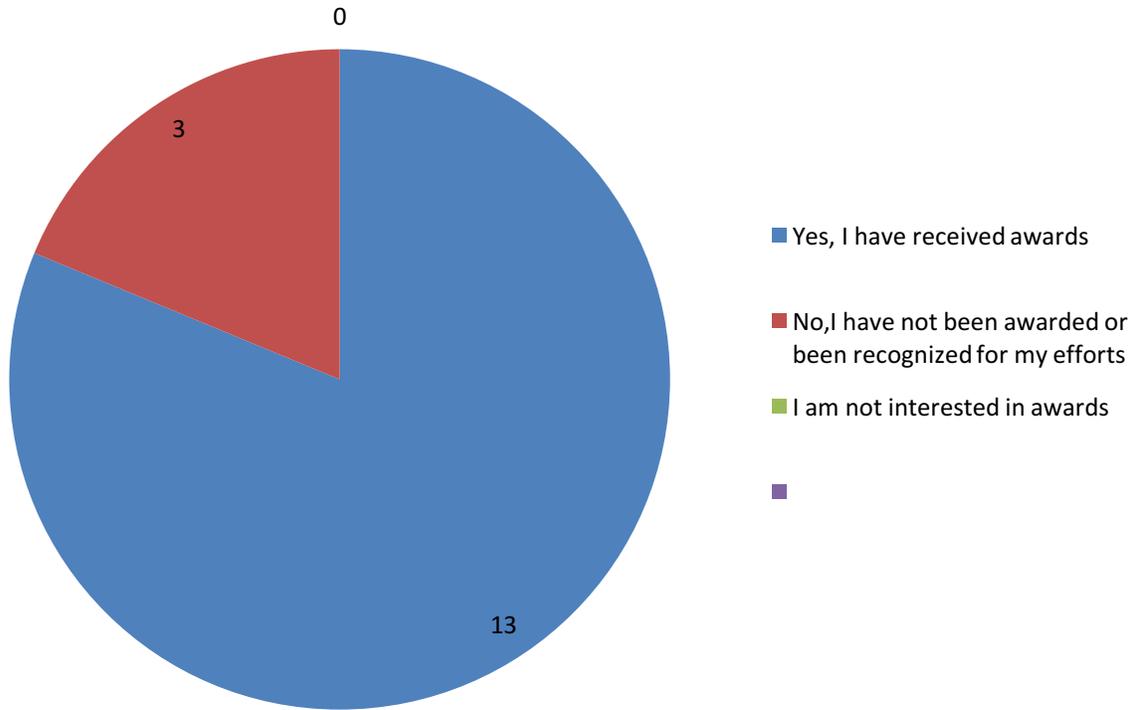
## **Survey**

I composed and advertized a survey to other adult volunteers through social networking and word of mouth. I was able to acquire 16 responses in 1 month. While not a scientific sampling, and the survey does not have a large universe, I believe it indicates the opinions of volunteer Scouters as a group. I have interacted with Scouters from the Denver Area Council and from all regions of the US through attendance at the Philmont Training Center, and I find that the opinions of those volunteers align with the results of this small survey.

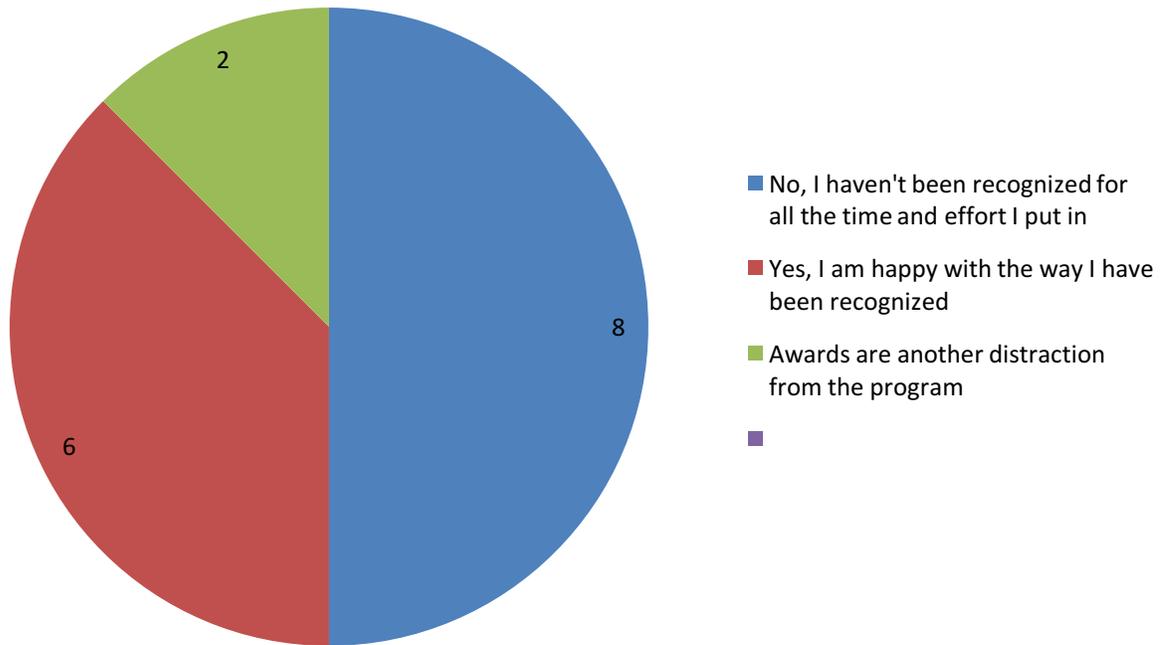
## Are You an Adult Scouter?



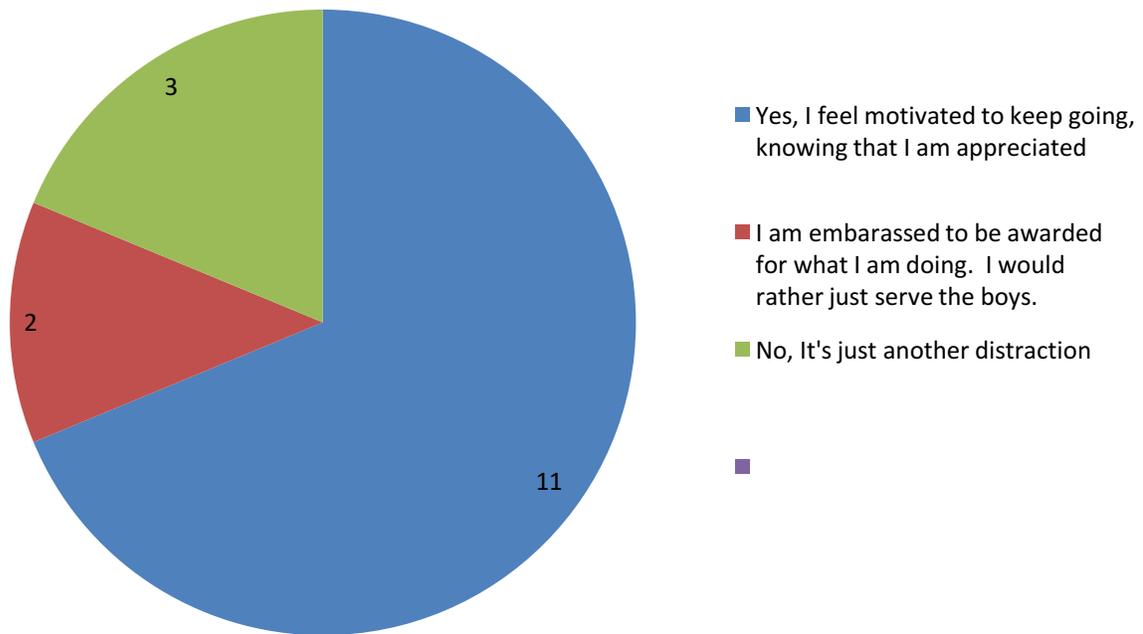
## Have you received any awards for your service in Scouting?



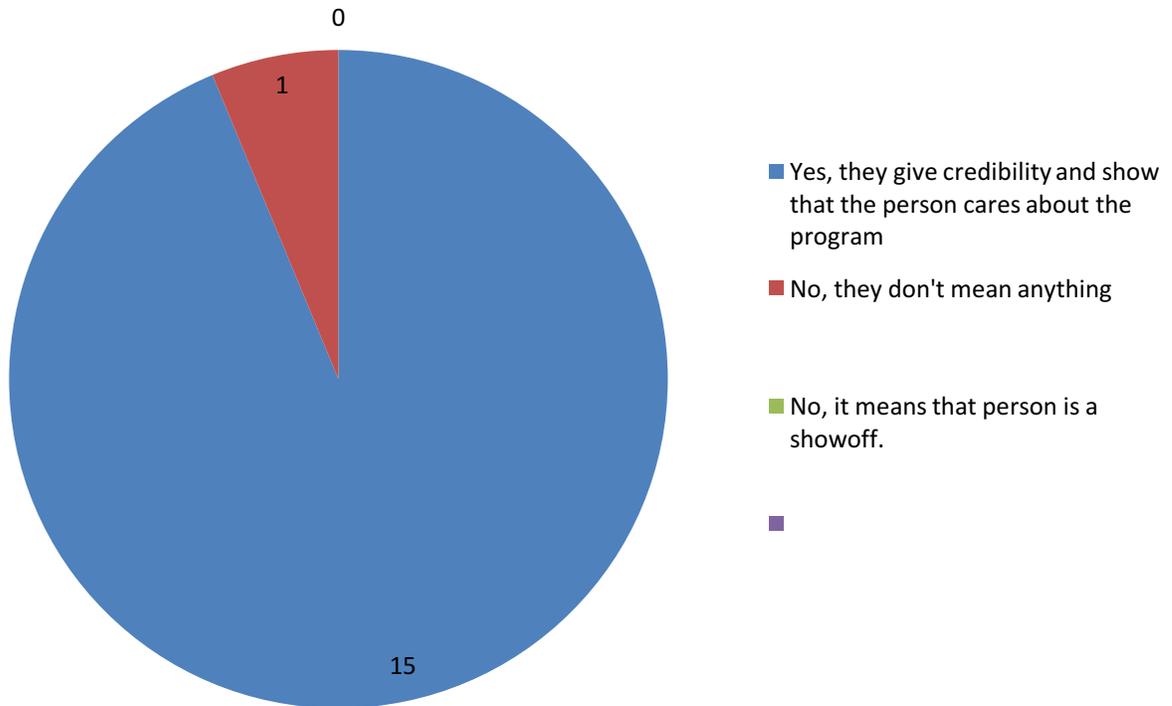
## Do you feel awards adequately recognize your time and effort in Scouting?



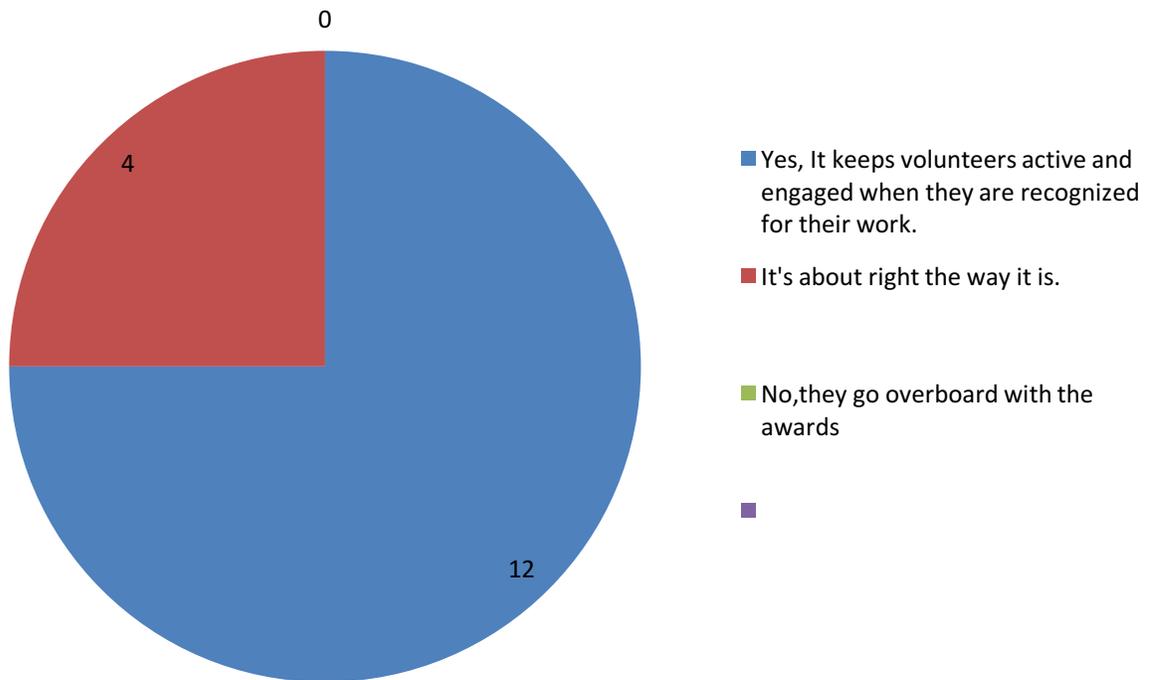
## Do you feel appreciated when you are given an award for your Scouting service?



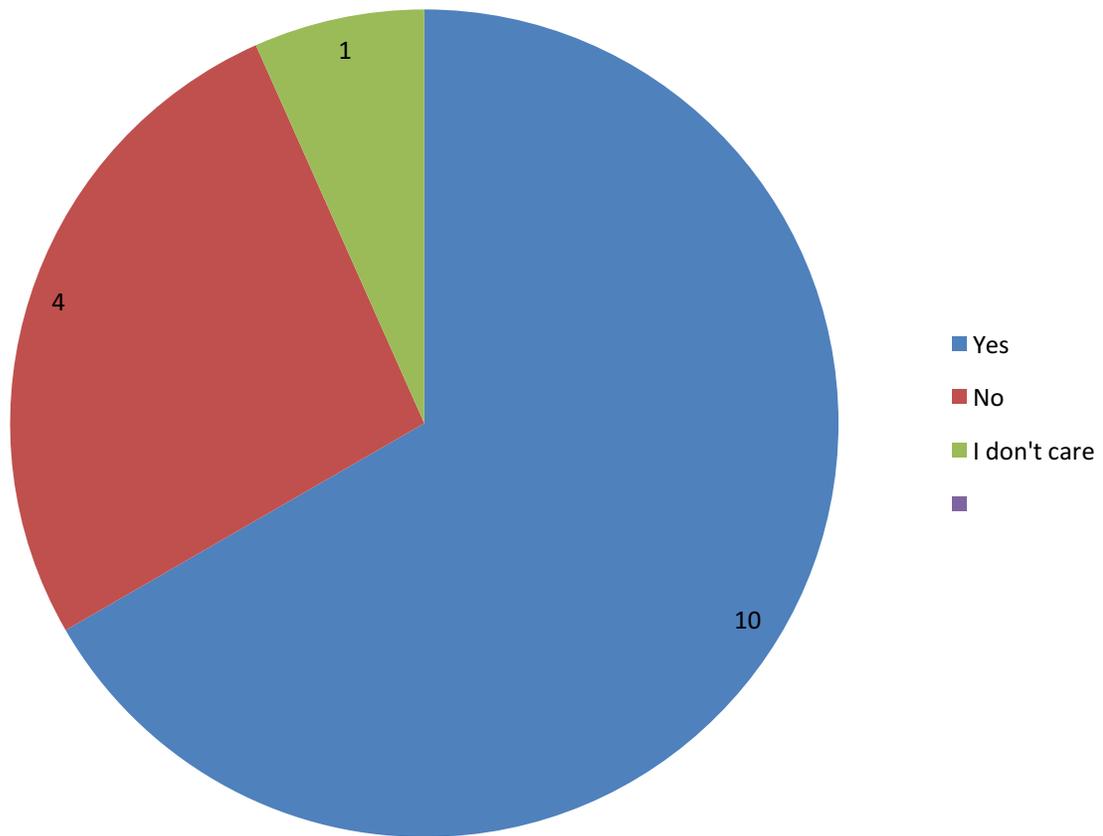
## Does seeing another Scouter with awards on their uniform give you confidence that they are competent and trained?



## Would you like to see more awards/recognition at your unit?



## Do awards motivate you to better service?



## Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations

I started this thesis with the opinion that Awards and Recognition are a motivator to adult Scouters. I researched the matter in the military, Scouting, different historical events and leaders, sales occupations and conducted a small survey to confirm or disprove my opinion. I found many sources to confirm my opinion and none which disproved it. In the US Military, the awards and recognition program is specifically designed to encourage and motivate military members to increased and improved performance. Awards and recognitions in the sales profession are likewise implemented to encourage and motivate sales professionals to increase sales and production, which in turn increase profitability for the employer. Likewise, I see the awards and recognitions in Boy Scouts of America in place for the same purpose. Proper and honest utilization of the awards and recognitions available for the volunteer positions will only increase the level of performance and longevity of the volunteers in the program. I note that the awards must be fairly and honestly awarded in recognition of the completion of the printed requirements for the award or recognition, and not as patronage for friendship or favors. Failure to adhere to the standards of the award is not in keeping with the Scouting values, and using the award as a reward for patronage or favor demonstrates to those familiar with the impropriety to become disillusioned and prone to withdrawal from active participation in Scouting. The intent of the awards must be maintained to be effective as a motivational instrument.

Volunteers must be managed and lead, not driven and harassed. Awards appeal to the motivations of most volunteers, thus prolonging their service and willingness to maintain

membership in a program they perceive as fair and equitable. I want to emphasize the importance of integrity, as much for the perception of volunteers within as outside the program. Those who have achieved must continue to demonstrate Scouting values, especially to those who may have recently joined the program or those still working on progress toward their own goals. Awards and recognitions are effective and must be emphasized as maintaining their positive motivational factors. Volunteers in positions of responsibility for others must be vigilant for opportunities to recognize those whose efforts meet the requirements of the awards available.

I also recommend that a volunteer Scouter, serving on a committee at District or Council or serving at unit level, be designated and empowered to develop a structured awards program framework designed to educate those volunteers at that level in the awards and recognitions available and the criteria for each. The program should include an orientation for each new volunteer to inform them of the program and encourage participation in the process, and thereby state expectations and guidelines involved in the Scouting programs. By so doing, the volunteer is made aware of the standards expected of the volunteer, the acceptable and desirable conduct and behavior, and encouragement from that awards volunteer to continue on in the program.

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