

RETENTION:

Families drop out when they don't get what they expected.

Most common reasons given for leaving:

Poorly-run Troop program...

Lack of trained leaders (leader did not know what he was doing)

Solution: Get your leaders to Three Peaks Training!

Very little spiritual emphasis (especially former BSA Troops)

Solution: Involve your Chaplain and Troop Ministry Liaison

No annual calendar plan in place, or no "buy-in" into program planning

Solution: Use the NEW "Tools for the Trail" Annual Planner!

Incorrect methods (Troops "doing it their own way")

Solution: Read through Trail Life Essentials, and get connected with a DSA

No Summer Adventure (or not enough outdoor adventure)

Solution: Again, get your leaders to Three Peaks Training for help!

Canceled or constantly rescheduled activities

Fundraising issues...

Too much emphasis on fundraisers the first few meetings after joining

Solution: Plan and hold just one fundraiser for a few weeks (concentrated effort). See the NEW "Tools for the Trail" Annual Planner for how to make this happen

Lack of money to carry out the things we planned. *Solution: see above*

Lack of reasons to fundraise—no goals; no annual Troop budget in place

Solution: Hold your annual Troop-wide planning session and calculate the price tag for a full year of fun and adventure. See "Tools for the Trail" Annual Planner for the "how"

Wrong leaders...

Doesn't know his stuff; doesn't lead well

Solution: Get your leaders to Three Peaks Training!

Old-timer (stayed in the same position too long)

Solution: Succession planning—agree upon a transition timeframe for every position—and write it into the position description!

Dictator/one-man show. *Solution: see above*

Conflicts between leaders within Troop

Solution: Read through Trail Life Essentials; conduct a Bible study on “unity”

Not following TLUSA model

Solution: Attend Three Peaks training, and get connected with a DSA

Lack of communication...

Not enough info given to new families

Solution: “Welcome to Our Troop” letter; immediate onboarding by a member family; Trail Life Connect LMS

“No one ever called us after we joined to tell us what’s going on”

Solution: Hand out personalized “Welcome to Our Troop” letter at Open House

Trouble understanding where to find Trail Life resources we need

Solution: Trail Life Connect LMS will walk them through the most useful resources

Cost...

Higher than expected—or not explained well

Solution: Communicate the price tag for a full year of fun and adventure (planned earlier) at the Open House joining event—but communicate the solution as well (an effective fundraising plan)

Misunderstandings about how Trail Life USA works...

That it’s “pay as you go” (happens in Troops that don’t budget or fundraise well)

Solution: See above

That there’s no support (levels) beyond their Troop—they are “on their own”

Solution: See “What Your Area Team Provides”; connect with a DSA or Point Man

That this is a “drop off” program (parents don’t need to be involved)

Solution: Explain the importance of family involvement at the Open House

That adult-led Troops are ok

Solution: Get your leaders to Three Peaks Training!

Scheduling conflicts...

Too many other activities going on (sports)

Solution: Remind everyone of the “why”: developing the next generation of Christ-followers. Where will this be most likely to happen?

Meetings on wrong night, or too far to travel

Solution: Contact a local New Troop Organizer and start a new venture!

In Summary: Biggest positive impacts for Troops to retain members

Focus on the first few weeks each fall...THAT’S when Trailmen and their families are most likely to drop out:

Call (on-board) new families *within a week of when* they join

Follow TLUSA methods—and explain these to potential members at your Open House

Hold outdoor events—specifically, camping weekends soon after joining—in late September (as an individual Troop) and in October (at an Area Camporee)

Start the Troop properly (have a Core Team on board, trained and committed *before* adding program leaders or youth—doing this backwards NEVER works!)

Insist on training for all leaders—with follow-up to make sure they complete it

Engage with your Troop Ministry Liaison (to use their Troop as a ministry of the church)

Connect with your Direct Service Advisor (in-person coach assigned by Point Man)

Area Teams play a crucial role by making sure Troop leaders are trained, coached by a DSA, and have multi-Troop (Area) activities planned to supplement their Troops’ program. Ask for help from your Area support team!

What else do members want?

The annual Thriving Troop Surveys tell us...

*What **parents** want for their sons: godly friends, time with son, positive role models, fun activities, camping/outdoor events*

*What **parents** want for themselves: Communication, organized meetings, to understand advancement and program methods*

*What **boys** want: more games, more action, less talking*