

# Some Retention and Recruiting Best Practices

## RETENTION

1. WEBELOS to Boy Scout Transition
  - a. Strong Troop to Pack relations (Troops need to be aggressive)
2. Boy Scout Retention:

When asked 'what are the most important reasons why a young man has not joined Boy Scouts', the top 5 responses were:

- a. Too Busy 54.2%
- b. Friends not in Scouts 44.9% - *Peer to peer recruiting*
- c. To focus more on sports 41.0% - *recruiting after season is over*
- d. Never thought about it 28.0% - *ask to join*
- e. Never been asked 28.3% - *ask to join*

Get new Scouts to Summer Camp in their first year

3. Cub Scout Retention:

### Takeaway Actions to Implement Best Practices

- a. Handbooks for All Cub Scouts
- b. First Den Meeting Within 7 Days
- c. Earn/Receive Bobcat Rank 60 Days
- d. Frequent Communication to Parents
- e. Den Chief for Every Den
- f. Leader Orientation, Selection, and Training
- g. Annual Unit Program Plan
- h. Fun Pack meetings

4. Crew Retention and Recruiting:

A Boy Scout doesn't have to give up membership in his troop to become a Venturer. In fact, the BSA encourages him to be a member of a troop and crew — the best of both worlds. Contrary to popular opinion, the Venturing program does not have plans to take the boys out of your troop and into its crews. Actually, it's quite the opposite. Venturers can be mentors, help with service projects and help strengthen your unit. Clearing up this misconception and explaining the ways Venturing can help, not hurt, your Boy Scout troop is the subject of the April 2015 ScoutCast.

**Scouter Jim Ganley shares the secret to a successful Venturing Crew**

By Mark Ray

**Where do your members come from?** A lot of the boys in the crew were Scouts or are also Scouts. Over the years, we've drawn some Girl Scouts in, we've drawn some sisters of Scouts in, and we've drawn a few boys in who weren't Scouts. We're independent of any other unit, although we do try to play nicely with others.

**How do kids hear about the crew?** Mostly by word of mouth. We recruit from among the camp staff as well; a lot of the kids in the crew are also on the camp staff, so we have that network we can draw from. For our last open house, I ran a Facebook ad targeted at Gardner and the surrounding towns, and we got two walk-ins off the street. For the first time trying that method, we seemed to get a pretty good response.

**Some crews suffer when key members leave for college. How do you handle that?** It's a challenge. One of the conversations we have with the kids every year is that we have to keep bringing in new kids if we want to keep this going. We've been successful at that. If we get three or four new kids a year, then I'm happy.

**The crew holds only one meeting a month. Why?** When we started, we decided that one meeting a month was about the limit of what was manageable for this age group. They've all got jobs, many of them are playing sports or doing band, most of them are AP students and things like that. They've got a lot of demands on their time.

**What does your outdoor program look like?** Most months we do a weekend activity: backpacking, kayaking, the occasional bike trip, some rock climbing. Those are usually Friday to Sunday, although some months it might just be a day. Every other year or so we will do a larger trip.

**What have those trips included?** We've been to Philmont. A couple of times we've done a weeklong bike trip. One year we chartered a sailing schooner and did four days of sailing in the Gulf of Maine, which was great. For the summer of 2016, we're working on a tour of national parks in the Southwest: the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion and that area.

**Trips like that can get expensive. How do you handle fundraising?** We've had mixed luck with fundraising, although for the 2016 trip, we're pushing the fundraising a little harder. A lot of our kids have part-time jobs, so they're paying for stuff from their earnings. In some cases, they've told us, "I can earn more money by working than I can selling popcorn or doing another fundraiser."

**Do you rely much on outside consultants and outfitters?** Not often. I have a tremendous group of adults. One of our Advisors is an outdoor-education professor, so he brings a lot of that kind of stuff to the table. Several of us have worked in various positions at camp. I'm a COPE director and a climbing director; I've been to camp

school for those kinds of things. One of the other Advisors is a very serious kayaking enthusiast. Between him and his family, they have about 15 kayaks that they make available whenever we want them.

**What's the secret to success in Venturing?** When I talk to people about this, the one thing I tell them is that you have to let the kids run the show. I think it's at least as much of a shock for people coming out of a Boy Scout troop into a Venturing crew as it is for a Cub Scout parent going into Boy Scouting, in terms of the level of "hands-off-ness" of the adults.

**Do issues arise because Venturing is coed?** In my experience, it's not that big a deal. We've never had a problem. If you've never had to deal with it before, I understand where you could be nervous, but it's easier than you think it is.

**It sounds like your kids know how to behave.** They do. We have what we call rule No. 1 in the crew. Rule No. 1 is, "Don't give me an excuse to make more rules." They're all on the edge of adulthood; they know how to behave. I think Venturing is the opportunity to give them the freedom to act like adults in a controlled, safe environment. You let them make decisions, and sometimes that means they make bad decisions. Sometimes that means they fail and fall on their face. But it's a safe environment, and we can make it into a learning experience when that happens.

## 5. All Programs

Since 1959, at least two-thirds of the pilots and scientists selected as astronauts were Scouts. What's more, an astronomically high *half* of space shuttle missions (67 of 135) included at least one Eagle Scout.