

# Retention Secrets

- **What are the contributing factors to a high retention rate in a unit?**

- Fun
- Well planned meetings
- Year-round program
- Consistent communication
- Boy-run troops
- Timely recognition
- Outdoor emphasis/monthly outings
- Diverse activities
- Low cost

- **What kinds of fun can happen during a unit meeting?**

- Active: Includes the boys in the activity
- Passive: The Scouts are part of the audience

- **What are the qualities that contribute to fun?**

- Uniqueness
- Engaging
- Challenging
- Physically active
- Purposeful/Learning new concepts

- **Where can you put fun into your meetings?**

- Gathering period
- Opening ceremonies
- Skills instruction
- Recognition ceremonies
- Games
- Closing ceremonies

- **What does it take to make things FUN?**

- Planning
- Preparation
- Enthusiasm
- Inspiration
- Interactivity

## EDGE Training

EDGE is very basic, but it does work. It will help Cub Scouts learn and retain skills also. So it is not only for Boy Scouts and Venturers, but for den leaders also.

### *The EDGE Method*

The EDGE method is a four-step method for teaching a skill:

- Explain
- Demonstrate
- Guide
- Enable

#### **Explain**

First explain what you will be doing. Tell them the steps involved. Visual aids might be helpful for this step. Use questions to gauge their understanding.

#### **Demonstrate**

Show them how to do the skill. Demonstrate the steps using the actual materials. Describe what you are doing.

#### **Guide**

Let them practice the skill. Guide and coach them as they try to do it themselves. This step will take the most time.

#### **Enable**

Enable them by letting them do the skill themselves without any intervention.

**There's other things that experience teaches:** One, when parents come to a meeting, if no one gives them anything to do - *Engage them!* Second, scouts get a lot of peer pressure from other kids in school - *Build on Scout Spirit to sustain them!* One more thing, keep your program exciting. Ask yourself, would you enjoy your unit's program at their age - *Challenge them!* Have a full-time year round program already laid out. Offer new ideas to the boys to keep it fresh. And don't forget to let the public see what scouting has to offer them. If your unit's program is exciting, fun and adventurous, let the public see what your unit offers your community. Also keep in mind, Boy Scouts is a boy-run program. Empower your troop adult and youth leaders, give them suggestions and training to lead meetings with a good program plan for all the members of the troop.

# Retention: Six reasons Scouts drop out and how you can prevent it

*Extreme mountain biking and other outdoor activities can help keep Scouts in the program longer.*

What's the one thing the Scouting program can't live without? Scouts. The Boy Scouts of America offers the premier program for youth, but Scouts need the means and desire to stick around. To help make that possible, I asked your fellow Scouters on Facebook this question:



*What's the biggest reason Scouts drop out of the program, and how can we as Scouters keep that from happening?*

So let's explore both aspects by presenting six problems and your time-tested solutions.

## **PROBLEM 1: Sports and other after-school activities get in the way**

**SOLUTION:** Be accommodating

*"As a Scoutmaster, I have always encouraged balance. Scouting can work with/around band, orchestra, sports and other activities. We're still around after the season is over!" (Ron S.)*

## **PROBLEM 2: Your unit's program has gotten stale**

**SOLUTION:** Don't do the same thing year after year

*"[You need] a program that is boy-led and is dynamic with lots of variety and challenges. Doing a biking trip every summer is still okay, but go somewhere different each time. Don't allow the program to become stale. If the program is strong, boys will want to do it." (Janet J.)*

## **PROBLEM 3: Lack of commitment from parents**

**SOLUTION:** Get Mom and Dad invested from the start

*"I see so many [Scouts] lose interest when their parents aren't involved. My husband and I tell new parents that the success of their boy depends on them. When they see how much good the program is doing and the development of fine young men, they are more likely to get behind their boy and help them through the rough patches. When they make Scouts a priority then they succeed." (Tricia B.)*

## **PROBLEM 4: Poor fit between the Scout and his unit**

**SOLUTION:** Help him find another pack or troop

*"Leaders need to humble themselves, and if a family or boy need a change or the night is not a good fit, let them know about other troops or packs that might work out better. The important thing is that you are here for Scouting." (Eric T.)*

## **PROBLEM 5: Scouting is too expensive**

**SOLUTION:** Fill your year with money-earning projects and low-cost activities

*"The best way to keep kids is have a fun, cheap program." (Kay E.)*

## **PROBLEM 6: It's hard to reach today's kids**

**SOLUTION:** Get your leaders trained

*"Training, training, training to empower our committee members, adult leaders, and everyone so they have the tools and resources to go to." (Kim S.)*

*"Better training, more continuing education, cross-pollination of best practices are all ways to combat this." (Skip T.)*