



Creating a Growth Strategy

Scouts Canada, Voyageur Council



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What is Growth and Retention?

Growth and retention are often concepts that are mixed up or used incorrectly when talking about Membership Development. Although they are two very distinct concepts they are inherently related. Without retention, growth would be next to impossible to sustain, and without Growth, retention would most likely decrease due to stagnation. Here are the definitions:

Growth: An increase in the total number of members over the last year.

Retention: The number of returning youth and adults from the previous year. Retention can be calculated as a percentage of the current year's membership.

Recruitment: The active pursuit of members – both adult and youth.

Sustainable Growth: The combination of growth and retentions, resulting in a steady increase in membership.

Growth - Year at a Glance

When it comes to Membership Growth our Scouting year begins far before Sept. 1, we know the realities of membership are that the work truly begins in the Spring. So let's start in....

MARCH

- **Honours & Awards Recognition** – In preparation for a “Year End” (May or June) banquet or special event. Honouring the work of Scouters and Parents will help retain them for next year.
- **Spring Events** – Participate or plan some fun and exciting events for the youth over the next few months. This may be the last big opportunity to impress upon the youth, parents and leaders that Scouting is where they belong next year.
- **Start Working on your Recruitment Strategy for Next Year** – At your Group Committee Meeting – bring out the Growth Strategy Guide and start planning for your Recruitment Drive for the upcoming Scouting year. There is a tool that will help you with setting membership goals for next year and developing a plan to achieve them. It will help you understand your leadership needs early and will assist you in determining your group fees when talking about budget.
- **Select a Pre-registration Date** – March is the time to start preparing for next year's registration and to get ready to take advantage of Early Registration.

APRIL

- **Registration Packages to Groups** – Once you have received your package, review it for completeness and then communicate to the parents and leaders the Pre-registration arrangements.
- **Continue to work on your Group Growth Strategy**
- **School Flyer Information Notice** – it will be during this time that the Council will ask Groups to start firming up their contact information for next year's School Flyer.

MAY

- **Finalize your Group Growth Strategy** – By having a strategy and working together we can achieve membership goals.
- **Confirm Group Contact Information for School Flyer** - Accurate information is key to helping the parents and the community contact you directly about membership.
- **Participate in Scoutrees Events:** This is a great way to get out into your community and show people what Scouting is all about! Have PR materials (i.e., the Area PR Kit) on hand while doing things in the community in case of inquiries from potential members.
- **Hold your Pre-registration Night** – Get your current members to sign up sooner rather than later. People will be soon engrossed in their summer activities and you won't see them until next fall. Not only will everyone save on registration fees, but you will also have a good idea of where your membership stands and the leaders can start their fall planning. **GOAL FOR PRE-REGISTRATION: 50%**

JUNE

- **Send in your Pre-registration Package & Save** – Participating by pre-registering your membership will result in hundreds of dollars of savings. Inquire with your Area team as to when your Registration Reconciliation night is being held.
- **Solidify your Leadership Commitment** - Group Commissioners should review and evaluate the Section programs for past year successes and consider if possible changes are needed. You can also start looking for potential Activity Leaders and Scouters-In-Training to help you out next year!
- **Year-End Banquet (e.g. BBQ)** – A social gathering with the entire group (families included) at the end of the year can help to keep a strong connection to Scouting throughout the summer. Remember to publicly recognize the supporters of Scouting.

JULY

- **Screen New Leaders** – It would be best to have your newest leaders fully screened (including Police Record Check) prior to the start of the new Scouting year. Also keep your eyes open for Summer Training opportunities.

- **Summer Fairs & Events** to promote Scouting (e.g. Canada Day, Community festivals, etc.) are great opportunities to showcase your Scouting programs.
- **Follow-up** with those youth and adults that weren't sure if they wanted to join back in May.
- **Relax** – Recharge those batteries.

AUGUST

- **Set and Advertise your Registration Night** – Sometimes you may not be able to do this until September, but you can get your ad together now. Don't forget the local paper, church bulletins, radio, and school newsletters.
- **Begin Organizing Fun Nights/Open Houses to happen in September, October**
- **Begin Planning School Talks (to happen Sept – Nov.):** Groups can conduct their own School Talks and also work with their Field Staff to deliver them. The earlier you book these the better! Schedules fill-up fast in September.
- **Hold Section Planning meetings** – be sure to invite your new leaders, so that they get involved as soon as possible. Make your programs all that they can be.
- **Invite last year's members to return** – send them an e-postcard from Scouts Canada telling them that you are looking forward to them coming back. Call the parents (especially those who did not early register). Retain - retain – retain.

SEPT

- **Registration Night!** – Make it as easy as possible for the community to come to you. If that means doing a couple of Registration Nights on different days or locations, then you may want to consider it. **Fall Registration Goal: 90%**
- **Volunteer Inventory Sheet** – when parents are registering their kids, give them a completed VI sheet that lets them know the volunteer needs of the Group.
- **Still Need Leaders?** – Try a parent rotation list as a temporary solution. Introducing your parents to the program on a limited basis may encourage them to consider a leadership position.

OCT

- **Conduct your School Talks!** – There is not easier way to get youth excited about your program than getting your Field Executive or volunteer to conduct school talks directly to the youth.
- **Hold an Open House** – Need leaders? It's time for Scouting to open its doors to the community. While leaders run programs for the youth, the staff and group committee speak with the parents about the benefits of Scouting for themselves as well as their children. Promotion works best with School Talks.
- **Bring a Buddy Night** – not as aggressive as school talks, but sometime equally effective. Ask your existing members (both youth and adult) to “bring a friend” to a meeting or two. Why not hold a “Buddy Hike” while the weather is still nice?
- **Apple Day** – Get out in your community and thank them with an apple! Many will show their appreciation with a donation. Have PR materials (i.e., the Area PR Kit) on hand while doing things in the community in case of inquiries from potential members.

NOV

- **Community Support and Visibility** – Remembrance Day is not only an important day to show our appreciation for those who serve our country, but it also is a great opportunity to educate our younger members about the importance and value of “service” to the community. Have PR materials (i.e., the Area PR Kit) on hand while doing things in the community in case of inquiries from potential members.
- **Honours & Awards** – It is never too early to start thinking about recognizing your volunteers. Scout/Guide Week is coming up and some awards take time to process. Don't miss out on excellent presentation opportunities.
- **Participate in Scout Popcorn** – Keep in mind that you are funding the Scouting experience. The efforts to raise funds for Scouting help everyone and raise our visibility.

DEC

- **Go through your Registrations** – Take the opportunity in December to ensure that all of your participants are fully registered and screened.

- **Do Community Service** – Participate in a food drive, have the Pack or Troop shovel some driveways for the elderly, sing Christmas carols. Make people in the community feel good about Scouting.
- **Celebrate Family and Friends** – We don't want to forget what it is all about. Invite some non-Scouting friends to share in your Groups Festive celebration – who knows – you may get a new member or two!

JAN

- **Prepare for Scout/Guide Week** – It is important to prepare and put your best Scouting face forward in celebration of the Movement. It is time to showcase Scouting in the Malls, Schools, and other exciting (and hopefully public) Special events.
- **Friendfest is Coming!** – How do you plan to celebrate Friendfest? Bring-a-buddy night, Kub Kar Rally's with friends, a special hike with families?

FEB

- **Friendfest!** – Although only 4 months of regular program remain, it represents plenty of time for someone (youth or adult) to join and participate. With the reduced fee, the remaining months provide ample time to sample what Scouting is about and promote involvement for the future.
- **Scout/Guide Week!** – Don't hide away. Do everything that you can to show that Scouting is strong and vibrant in the community. Put on a parade, talk to your mayor, tell the papers that Scouting is live and well. Have PR materials (i.e., the Area PR Kit) on hand while doing things in the community in case of inquiries from potential members.
- **Show your Partner Appreciation** – This is a great time of year to thank your partner for their support to ensure you have a long a mutually beneficial relationship.

Growth - Recruitment Plan

Use the following guide to develop a Growth (Recruitment) Strategy for your group to use during your Membership Drive.

A: Identify Your Growth Needs

First you need to identify who you want to recruit into your group (i.e. Beavers, Cubs, Leaders, etc.) Your group should aim to have a balanced membership. This means having an approximately equal number of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and the appropriate ratio of leaders for these youth sections. This ensures that there are feeder sections that will replace the members that move up from their section on a yearly basis.

Use the following table to calculate your Growth Needs:

Youth	Colony	Pack	Troop	Company	Crew		Total
Current (This Year)							
Goal (Next Year)							
Difference							
	Colony (Ratio 5:1)	Pack (Ratio 6:1)	Troop (Ratio 6:1)	Company (Ratio n/a)	Crew (Ratio n/a)	Group Cmte	Total
Needed (for Next Year)							
Confirmed (for Next Year)							
Need to Find							

B: Recruitment Plan Worksheet

By determining what section you are targeting, you can gear your recruitment drive towards them. The age group you are looking to recruit will determine whether a school talk is a good idea, to what grades you should be speaking to, and what sort of publicity items you should be using (i.e., the attention span of the youth and/or what is attention-grabbing for youth that age should be taken into consideration). As well, if your message is tailored to the parents or potential members, you need to take this into consideration as well.

Beavers: Sr. Kindergarten – Grade 2

Cubs: Grade 3 – 5

Scouts: Grade 6 – 8

1. Who is your recruitment strategy geared towards (Beavers, Leaders, Parents etc. Refer to your Growth Needs Assessment Chart)?



2. What recruitment strategies will best target the above people (refer to the “Growth Resources” webpage for idea’s)?



C: Recruitment Plan Timeline & Resources

List the tasks and resources needed to successfully implement the recruitment program (refer to the Recruitment Plan Worksheet):

Task	Resources Needed	Individual	Deadline
1. <i>EG: Booth at Community Fair</i>	<i>PR Kit, pamphlets, stickers, tatoos</i>	<i>Scouter Alison and Scouter Kelly</i>	<i>Sept. 4th</i>
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

D: Publicity Checklist

Publicity Checklist (list here the types of publicity you are going to use to promote your group):

Type of Publicity you will Use	Individual Responsible <i>Council CFE's</i>	Distribution Date <i>Sept. 1st 2009</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Flyers <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Ads in local paper (Paid) (contact your Field Executives to learn more about available Print Ad templates)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Posters/Signs in the community		
<input type="checkbox"/> Brochures (contact your Field Executives to learn more about Free Distribution brochures).		
<input type="checkbox"/> Banners		
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio Announcement		
<input type="checkbox"/> Press Release <input type="checkbox"/> Invitations to an event/sections meeting (contact your Field Executives to learn more about Section/Event Invitation Templates).		
<input type="checkbox"/> Online Ad (i.e., Facebook Ad)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

E: Growth Strategy Budget

Recruitment Program Budget Worksheet

Fill out the following items, if they apply to your Recruitment program. Please remember that a lot of the items you may need (i.e., PR Kits, Brochures) are available for free from your council office.

Expenses:

Publicity (Newspaper ads, posters, signs, printing costs)

- Recruitment Item 1: _____ \$ _____
- Recruitment Item 2: _____ \$ _____
- Recruitment Item 3: _____ \$ _____
- Recruitment Item 4: _____ \$ _____
- Recruitment Item 5: _____ \$ _____
- Recruitment Item 6: _____ \$ _____

Special Event Supplies/Materials	\$ _____
Equipment/Space Rentals (i.e., tradeshow fees)	\$ _____
Travel Expenses	\$ _____
Postage	\$ _____
Food	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
TOTAL ANTICIPATED COSTS	\$ _____

Asking People to Join Scouting!

The number one reason people don't join Scouting is simple – nobody asked them to join! Don't be afraid to ask people if they want to join Scouting – often this is the first step in opening a dialogue on what Scouting is and any questions or inquiries they may have about our programs. Even if they don't say yes right then, they will come away with a more well-rounded knowledge of what Scouting is and they may pass this knowledge onto others.

Selling anything can be a daunting task. Here are some tools to help you when asking people to join.

Personal Assessment

One of the best ways to sell Scouting is talk about why you are involved in Scouting. When you incorporate personal anecdotes into your “sales pitch” you talk more honestly and passionately about what it is that you are selling. Here are some questions you help you remember why you joined Scouting, what hesitations you had (so you can address these with potential members) and why you continue to be involved in Scouting now.

Please ask yourself the following questions:

1. Why did you join Scouting? If you joined for your children, then why did you put your children in Scouting?

2. How have you benefited from being in Scouting? If your child is involved, how have they benefited from being in Scouting?

3. Are there additional benefits that you (or your child) hope to take advantage of during your membership with Scouts Canada?

4. When you were being recruited into Scouting, what finally made you decide to join?

5. What hesitations did you have about joining Scouting?

Prospect Prompter

So now that you are equipped with some ways to sell Scouting – who should you ask to join? This prospect prompter will help you reach out to people in your community and ask them to join Scouting too! Complete this form by filling in the names/address/contact information of individuals you know or with whom you are acquainted who may (or whose children may) be interested in joining Scouting. Use the suggested categories to jog your thinking.

Name and Address of Neighbors (who have Scout-age children)	1.
	2.
	3.
Children’s Friends (Parents Contact info.)	1.
	2.
	3.
Youth/Parents involved in other youth organizations/sports (i.e., hockey, soccer, etc.)	1.
	2.
	3.
Individuals you work with that have Scout age youth.	1.
	2.
	3.

Individuals in your church that have Scout-age children.	1.
	2.
	3.
Family/Friends who have Scout-age youth.	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.

The Do's and Dont's of Recruitment

- Do learn the art of a friendly smile and firm handshake.
 - Do be yourself, but behave in a courteous and polite manner.
 - Do make sure your event is exciting.
 - Don't congregate in a big group at your recruitment event.
 - Do start your event at the scheduled time.
 - Do relay as many positive aspects of the Scouting program you are offering, as you can.
 - Do be positive and upbeat about Scouting and yourself.
 - Don't forget that new parents/youth know very little about Scouting.
 - Do remember prospects names and use them!
 - Do point out any special events your group does and any community work you are involved in.
 - Don't act tired, bored, or flustered.
 - Do wear your uniform and show your Scouting spirit.
 - Don't criticize other members or Scouts Canada.
 - Don't forget that your group won't get a second chance to make a first impression.
 - Do smile!
 - Don't use inappropriate language or Scouting jargon that prospects won't understand (i.e., CJ, Akela, Tenderpad)
 - Do be honest. If you don't know the answer to a question admit it, then find the answer!
 - Do let your prospects do an equal share of the talking in conversations.
 - Do listen to what your prospects have to say.
 - Don't apologize for Scouts Canada's weak points.
 - Do make prospects feel natural and at ease.
 - Don't leave prospects standing alone looking uncomfortable.
 - Do attempt to involve all prospects in a fun activity.
 - Do talk about Scouting's service to the community.
 - Don't wait to be introduced – introduce yourself!
 - Do be friendly when saying goodbye – say something like "See you soon!"
- DO FOLLOW-UP, FOLLOW-UP, FOLLOW-UP!

Below are some Recruitment Resources to help you speak to the benefits of Scouting for youth, volunteers and the community:

- *Measuring Success – The Scouting Way:*
<http://www.scouts.ca/media/documents/GenMeasuringSuccess.pdf>
- *Features and Benefits of Scouting:*
<http://www.scouts.ca/media/documents/p09MAR03.pdf>
- *Program Standards:*
<http://www.scouts.ca/dnn/ProgramSupport/EssentialDocuments/ProgramStandards/tabid/280/Default.aspx>

Evaluating your Growth Plan

A few weeks after your recruitment drive – assess how you did with this questionnaire:

1. What was your new member recruitment goal? (refer to your Group Growth Needs Assessment)

2. Was this Goal achieved/surpassed? If not, by how much did you miss the mark?

3. How did you go about to achieve the goal? (Your recruitment program.) How would you rate the success of this program (1-10)?

4. Would recommend doing this recruitment program again in the future? What would you change about it? What would you keep the same?

GOALS NOT ACHIEVED? There are still ways you can meet your goals in the coming Scouting year! Recruitment is a year-long process. Book more schools talks or hold a Bring-a-friend night! Contact your Council Field Executive for more suggestions – it's what we are here for!