

Annual District Retreat Template

Purpose: The purpose of a District Retreat is three fold.

1. To develop fellowship among the members of the District Committee so the Committee as a whole understands the role of every other member and can support each other through their subcommittees.
2. To review the past year's calendar to make sure all events and activities were well placed throughout the year.
3. To establish the needs of the Committee and the needs of each subcommittee and develop work plans and goals to move the District forward into the next year.

Who is invited?

All members of the District Committee, District Members-at-large, Key 3, and any others the committee deems necessary to accomplish its goals.

Tools to bring:

1. Positive Mental Attitude (PMA)
2. Calendars
 - a. Current council
 - b. Current district
 - c. School district(s) this year and next year if available
 - d. Band
 - e. Sports
 - i. Baseball
 - ii. Swim team
 - iii. Football (High School, College & Pro)
 - f. Religious
3. Job descriptions
4. Backdating calendars
5. District Executive's S.M.A.R.T. goals
6. Council's 5 year strategic plan
7. *A Self Evaluation Guide for Successful District Operation # 34207E*
8. District Dump (see ScoutNet)
9. Journey to Excellence per program area
10. Flip Charts,
 - i. Charts that talk,
 - ii. photo copies for all in attendance
 - iii. pens
 - iv. pencils
 - v. calculators
 - vi. Stick it notes
11. Everyone should be encouraged to bring a laptop (if possible)
12. Lists to bring
 - a. Ongoing Prospect lists for Finance, Membership, Program and Unit Service
 - b. Chamber of Commerce member list
 - c. Service Club rosters
 - d. District Event rosters

- e. Community gala attendee rosters
- f. Community supporters
- g. Other volunteer organization rosters
- h. Other lists of people you have access to

Outcome:

- 1. A review of the District Calendar
- 2. Work plans for each subcommittee for the year
- 3. Identification of potential persons to help staff underserved subcommittees
- 4. Written succession plans for all positions
- 5. Goals for each Committee
- 6. A more united volunteer staff

Suggested guidelines to follow:

Gathering	Host
Welcome, introductions and Vision	District Chairman
Layout purpose and expected outcomes	Event Coordinator

The following sessions are in a round robin format. **DO NOT** encourage each committee to present its full day presentation all at once. People need to “shift gears” in order to stay alert and presenting on one topic for an hour or more will not be conducive to listening. Give each committee time needed to present then go to the next committee and repeat through each of the sessions. Watch your time.

Suggested line up of speakers

- a. Finance
- b. Membership
- c. Program
- d. Unit Service

Informative session: 60 minutes (15 minutes each)

- 1. Who our Committee is
 - a. Introduce each team member and briefly describe what they do
 - b. Explain briefly what this committee does
 - c. Give background on this committee’s strengths and weaknesses as related to manpower and its ability to carry out its duties.
- 2. What the needs are of this committee to be successful
- 3. What anticipated results will come from the retreat as well as in the coming year

Evaluative session: 120 minutes (30 minutes each)

- 1. Give summary of the past years’ accomplishments and struggles with real statistical information
- 2. Go over *A Self Evaluation Guide for Successful District Operation # 34207E* per department
 - a. SHOULD BE COMPLETED PRIOR AND BROUGHT TO RETREAT
 - If this booklet has not yet been completed, take time now to fill out each committee’s section or if time is short, you can complete this during the meal or on break
- 3. Discuss needs for improvement in coming year
 - a. More staff

How do we identify them, from where and who recruits them (goal should be to have a specific course of action by the end of the conference)

b. Better unit buy-in

District committee teams making unit visits each month encouraging and promoting every other committee's needs and agendas. Each committee should put a plan in place with dates as to when they will visit 25% of the units by, 50% of the units visited by, 75% of the units visited by and 100% of the units visited by.

c. Revamped approach to duties

Think outside the box. "That's the way we've always done it" does not need to be the reason we keep doing things the same way. Having thought about this ahead of time, bring some ideas to the conference. Be creative. Search out best practices from other districts and councils.

d. Do volunteers need to change positions? Do something different? Expand their volunteer horizons? **This is not an open forum discussion topic**. Suggestions about ANY other volunteer should be done privately with the District Chairman and District Executive. You would not want people openly criticizing or commenting on your performance. They need to be shown the same respect. This topic does need to be addressed to the group with these instructions.

e. Other ways to improve your committee

BREAK 15 minutes

GAME 30 minutes

Suggested group games below

MEAL 60 minutes

Suspect / Prospect Session: 90 minutes (20 minutes each)

1. Using district dump and other lists that were brought to the conference, identify prospects to recruit
2. Assign an area of wall space to each of the 4 functions of the district for stickies to be affixed to
3. During the rest of the day, every person will write suspect's / prospect's names from a list or they happen to think of that could support the district and how they might support the district onto a sticky and put it up on the wall for review under the heading of that district function.

Ex: Bob Smith is a banker and can help raise money; would go under the finance wall.

4. During the course of the conference everyone reviews all the stickies and take them for further recruiting for their own committee (the goal is to have everyone suggested to be targeted for recruitment and asked by a certain date (i.e. 30 day post retreat) so that the district committee can continue to build momentum after the retreat). Follow up with each person that took a sticky for the purpose of recruiting a prospect should be done by their committee's chairman within the predetermined time frame.

5. Be sure the person recommending someone puts their name down so they can go help recruit the prospect

Calendar Review: 30 minutes (group discussion)

1. Evaluate each activity and event for relativeness and timing of year
2. Jot down notes in preparation for the official calendar planning session
 - a. OR if you find you have time, go ahead and do your next years' 18 month calendar.

BREAK 15 minutes

Breakout by committee for the next session

Goal Setting session:

60 minutes (15 minutes each)

1. Discuss the coming year's goals

The District Executive will share with each committee the District's proposed goals for the next year. They should be in line with the District Executive's S.M.A.R.T. goals, the Council's Strategic Plan and with Journey to Excellence.

2. Using historical data come up with aggressive yet realistic goals per committee.

The District Executive will have historical information to share as well as each committee's chairman should have data as well to use.

As this agenda will be distributed well in advance of the retreat, if any committee has specific needs or need specific data to ensure the best use of their time, they should contact the District Executive well in advance so he / she has enough time to compile the needed data.

3. Use the Journey to Excellence as a base line for goal setting. Preferable to use the "Gold" standard

4. Discuss the needs to accomplish the goals

Goals for the next year should be challenging, aggressive and attainable. Don't sand bag.

Example 1: Day Camp had 125 youth attend which is 15% of our registered Cub Scouts and 400 or 45% of our Boy Scouts went to a week long camp. Journey to Excellence Bronze level is a minimum 17% attendance for cubs and 45% boy Scouts. We did not achieve this measure.

Our Goal for the next year is to increase the attendance of Cub Scouts to 30% and increase Boy Scout attendance to 60% to achieve the Silver measure.

The plan to do this is as follows. (From here each District will write their own success plan for this criteria).

Example 2: Membership last year was 3.2% over the prior year and 1.4% increase in market share. We achieved the Silver Measure.

Our goal this year is to increase membership to 5.5% and maintain our market share to achieve the Gold measure.

The plan to do this is as follows. (From here each District will write their own success plan for this criteria).

Do this type goal setting for every criteria each committee has.

Each person in the committee needs to write a personal and position related Succession Plan (see attached example below). Every position needs new people at some point in time or else we run the risk of falling into a rut. If the Plan is for a volunteer to hold a position for 1 year or 5 years write that into the Plan. The Plan does not need to be more than a paragraph per person or position. In order to grow as volunteers we need to be able to master a position and then mentor our successors as we are being mentored in our new position.

Everyone comes back together

Review Session:

90 minutes (20 minutes each)

1. Each department will discuss their commitments for recruiting and overall goals to the assembly and will turn plans into their respective chairman so that goals and dates planned to achieve those goals are added to the district's calendar and/or work plans.

2. Commitments are also taken down using the "work plans" to generate momentum for the next District Committee meeting.

3. Prospecting from the Suspect / Prospect session are ranked for a sales pitch from top to bottom (for more help and recruiting and organizing prospects see *Selecting District People #34514B*).

GAME

Suggested group games below

30 minutes

MEAL or CRACKER BARRELL

Open ended

Fellowship

Dismiss

Suggested group games

The below games should NOT be distributed along with the agenda to the retreat participants. These are supposed to be a surprise and the URL's given below will give away the goal and purpose of the games. Please ensure you are very familiar with each game you choose to use and have all the necessary items to accomplish them. Having a "Games Master" will make this much more fun and less stressful for the event chairman. You are of course to come up with your own games. It is recommended they all be specially team building games.

1. Kim's game

(Collect or print off the computer all the leader knots. Place them under a blanket. Teams have 1-2 minutes to review knots then cover them up with a blanket. Team must then list on paper all the knots they saw by proper name.) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim's_Game

2. Shave the balloon/water balloon

(Using a straight razor, shave the shaving/whipped cream from the balloon without bursting the balloon. Deliberately nicking the razor will add to the "fun")
http://www.jubed.com/youth_ministry/view/Shave-the-balloon

3. Scout Jeopardy

(Come up Scouting with answers based on the game show format)
<http://www.scoutorama.com/jeopardy/>

4. Build the tallest structure

(Use straws, golf tees, rubber bands, and other things that can be stacked, stuck together, and other trinkets totally unrelated to each other to build the tallest structure. Teams will compete on height not quality and no hands allowed during final judging.)
http://www.teampedia.net/wiki/index.php?title=The_Tallest_Tower

5. Hoola Hoop Frenzy

(Get 5 hoola hoops and place them 1 in the center and 4 at the corners of a 25X25 foot area. Place the 90 tennis balls [or a lot of small balls] all inside middle hoop. Team members at each of the four corners must collect all balls and bring them back to their hoop. Carry one ball at a time. They will end up going to other team member's hoops to get their balls also to bring back to their team's hoop. The first team to have all balls in their hoop wins. The only way to win this game is for all 4 teams to bring their corner hoops and place on top of the middle hoop and put all balls in the middle hoop.) We ALL have to work as a team and not just look out for our own team by taking from another team.)
http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_frenzy.htm

6. Balloon Frantic

(Challenge participants to keep all balloons (1+ per person) in the air. This gets the group moving and cooperating. Once they've got the hang of it, make it harder by adding in more balloons or placing restrictions e.g., no hands to keep balloons up. Ask participants to keep juggling the balloons, but to sort them into colors) <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/gamesballoons.html>

Possible venues:

Private ranch
Private residence (large)
Hotel
Country Club
Community Center
Large Church

Suggestions for Success:

1. Secure a secretary to take notes of all sessions or tape record and transpose later
2. Secure a quartermaster to take care of all food needs
3. Secure a games/COPE facilitator
4. Keep to a strict timeline. Adjust sessions as needed, but keep all speakers on track.
5. Take group picture for publication
6. Backdate this event. Be prepared for all presentations.
7. Work in advance with chairmen of each committee to be fully prepared for sessions
8. Secure RSVP's at least 2 weeks in advance.
9. Send out agenda 2 weeks in advance.
10. Try to get food and games donated
11. Have District Executive capitalize on questions to explain why BSA does the things it does (whatever that may mean to the original question)
12. Consider baby-sitting service by BSA or GSUSA members for parents with childcare needs
13. If possible, plan on a minimum 15 month calendar and as much as 24 months.
14. Keep the atmosphere light but with a sense of determination.
- 15. Though this template is slated above as a 1 day event, this activity could be a weekend overnighter or a single night overnighter. This is template totally flexible to the needs or restrictions of the District and its individual situation. The District Key 3 should evaluate the several possibilities within the District and make the best use of its time and resources.**