

Knights of Columbus Retention Strategies

The following retention strategies were used by councils in District #27, to help enhance the retention of their members during the fraternal year 2020-2021:

1. Enclose a letter from the Grand Knight with the first dues notice, explaining the amount of time and effort that retention committee members have to do each year attempting to contact council members who delay paying their dues. This year a council had 41 percent of their members that had not paid their dues at the time the second dues notice was mailed. Within two weeks of mailing the second notice, 25 percent paid their dues. Many members who received their third dues notice had been Knights for two decades, or more.
2. Have the retention committee meet a week after the second dues notice is mailed. Have the members select the names of whom they will contact. Contacts should be people they have sponsored, ones they know well, or who they think will likely respond to them when they are contacted.
3. Contact methods should be phone calls, texts, or emails, followed up with U.S. mail if the member doesn't respond using the other three contact methods. Retention committee members should record the date and time of day or night that contacts were attempted or successfully made. It's good to vary the time when contacts are attempted. If the first attempt is in the evening during the week, a second attempt should be during the day on a different day of the week. The third attempt should be on a weekend, either during the day or in the evening. This may increase the probability that a member is reached. When a call connects to an answering machine or voicemail, leave a message explaining who called, when the call was made, and the purpose of the call.
4. If a retention committee member is unable to make contact with a person on their list after three attempts, they should give the name and contact information of that person to another retention committee member who should attempt to contact them. We found that some people are more likely to respond to a different committee member because they may feel more comfortable talking to them, or they might be embarrassed and don't want to talk to someone they know well.
5. When the phone number, email, and physical address of a person are unavailable or determined to be incorrect, retention team members should use various search engines to locate the person. There are many free search engines available. With the help of the State Retention Chairman, Bill Stump, we selected two free search engines that provided us the most success. They were TruthFinder and PeopleFinders. Besides being free, they are user friendly.

6. We found that the most recently available and highly successful method to have members pay their dues was for their council to have an online payment method. If they elect to use this method, it is recommended they have their dues automatically paid on an annual, recurring basis. When non-paying members were contacted and told they could pay their dues online, approximately 72 percent elected to do so. Of that 72 percent, 63 percent chose the recurring option. The online free payment method that three councils elected to use is called Givebutter. This online method is also designed so people can donate money to various council activities, like the Drive for Developmental Disabilities, Wheelchair Mission, and the Baby Bottle Campaign. Councils also used Givebutter so people could pay online during carryout fish fries. After the third dues notice was mailed, one council had 18 members that had not paid. When they were told they could pay their dues online, eight members used the online option.
7. When people say they no longer want to be a member of the Knights, the retention committee member needs to discuss with them the programs that the Knights offer and the advantages that they have as members, especially insurance. If the member still wants to withdraw, the retention committee member should ask the member to send them a signed statement or email, saying they no longer want to be a member of the Knights of Columbus. If a member no longer attends Mass at a Catholic Parish, a statement should be provided by the member stating so. If the member doesn't provide a statement, a letter should be requested from their priest saying the member does not attend Mass. That statement should then be forwarded to Member Management at Supreme and to the State Retention Chairman, along with supporting documentation stating that the member wishes to withdraw. The reason this is important is that a Knight must be a practicing Catholic, so a membership removal that occurs due to the member no longer being a practicing Catholic does not count against membership quotas.
8. Whenever councils find a successful way to retain their members, they should pass that information on to other councils so those councils can consider employing the same practices.