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## Setting the Hook

How to keep the delegates you have

One of the secrets to building a successful delegation is to have high retention numbers. If kids are coming back year after year, you don't have to focus as hard on recruitment and you have a cadre of people to help you explain program areas and other aspects of the MLC.

**Tip #1: Make things fun.** If people are having fun, they'll want to come back for more. A good way to have fun is to bring a little cheesiness to your delegation. This can be anything from contests where the winners get cool nicknames to giving everyone huge gold chains to wear at conferences to creating a yearly theme for your delegation.

Do fun activities with your delegates as well. Not every fundraiser has to be about everyone making a ton of money. They can also just be about having a good time. Throw a potluck holiday party and have Secret Santas. At the end of the year, hold an awards dinner and play a slideshow.

**Tip #2 Make delegates feel like they are wanted.** When delegates feel like they matter and people really care about them, they will want to come back. This can be something as simple as having the delegation officers/advisors remember delegate's birthdays to taking a few minutes during the drive to Camp Roberts and just chatting a few delegates up. A few delegations have a big sister/brother program that pairs returning delegates up with new delegates and acting as mentors.

Work on identifying delegates who don't have a bunch of friends in your delegation or aren't really part of your delegation's social groups. Identify one or two people in that group to reach out to that delegate.

Above all else, do your best to reduce any rudeness or exclusionary behavior in your delegation.

**Tip #3 Be clear and be fair.** At the beginning of the year, sit your delegation down and clearly explain your rules/expectations (it's also good to review this prior to every event). This will help reduce misunderstandings. After you communicate your rules/expectations, make sure you treat everyone equally and don't play favorites. If delegates feel they are being treated unfairly and that others are being held to a different set of rules, they won't want to return.

**In conclusion,** do your best to make your delegation something that everyone will want to be part of. This will go a long way to getting people to come back year after year.