

League Development

LEAGUE DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective:** To provide District Administrators with insight into growing the program within their District. Additionally, to provide recommendations and ideas on how to retain existing leagues.
- **Approach:** Based on our research, we have been able to identify why leagues and players choose to leave our program. As a result, we have developed premium benefits that we hope will assist in retaining leagues and players.

District ADMINISTRATOR KEY OBJECTIVES

- Grow participation within your District
- Create awareness about Little League
- Retain existing leagues
- Updating local league contact information

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR District?

- STRENGTHS
- WEAKNESSES
- OPPORTUNITIES
- THREATS

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR District?

EXAMPLE STRENGTHS:

- People recognize the Little League brand
- The community is loyal to Little League
- Local authorities and leaders support Little League
- Our District staff is complete— 10 District officers
- We have a great website and social media platforms
- Umpire staff is well trained and are all volunteers

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR District?

EXAMPLE WEAKNESSES:

- We are short staffed; it's me and one more person
- Historically, people prefer another brand in this area
- We don't get along with local government officials
- There is limited space to create more leagues
- We don't have a website or use social media
- Training is scarce in this area

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR District?

EXAMPLE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Local authorities have announced investment in baseball/softball complex
- A Little League supporter is now in the Parks and Recreation department
- One of our leagues made it to a Regional Tournament or World Series
- Our leagues have access to the Little League Grow the Game grant program
- Some of our communities have elections



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR District?

EXAMPLE THREATS:

- Heavy promotion from competing program
- Local officials in favor of different program
- Change in local high school coaching staff
- Local economy
- Imbalance in size and quality of leagues in District

WHERE IS MY District IN FOUR YEARS?

- Before looking ahead, you must understand where your District is today, first.
- A D.A. should be active within their District in order to know it well: learn characteristics, understand the current situations, and develop a plan for the future.

WHERE IS MY District IN FOUR YEARS?

- What do you think determines success for your District?
- How many leagues are in your District?
- How many divisions (Minor BB, Major SB, etc.) on average per league?
- Does your District offer Teenage Divisions? Softball? Challenger?

WHERE IS MY District IN FOUR YEARS?

- What is the total number of regular season seams in your District?
- What is the average number of teams per league in your District?
- How many District staff members do you currently have?
- How many volunteer umpires do you have in your District? And, per league?

WHERE IS MY District IN FOUR YEARS?

Average District in Little League:

- 10-15 Leagues
- 4 Divisions per league (either baseball or softball)
- 300 Total regular season teams
- 25 Teams per League
- 5 Staff members (A.D.A.s)

WHERE IS MY District IN FOUR YEARS?

Take time to think about where you would like to see your District in four years?

- How many leagues? _____
- How many teams/players? _____
- How many volunteers on District staff? _____
- How many volunteer umpires do I have? _____

WHERE IS MY District IN FOUR YEARS?

How many leagues offer the following programs?

- Teenage Divisions: _____
- Softball: _____
- Challenger: _____
- Tee Ball Program: _____
- Implement Coach Pitch Program: _____

GOALS, GOALS, GOALS...

You will notice that all the information collected and written down in the previous sections can now be used to **determine your District goals**. Measuring progress will assist you in growing your District.

GROWING THE PROGRAM

- League Finder
- Target areas of your District that are not currently affiliated with Little League
- Reach out to the League Development Department for resources

GROWING THE PROGRAM

- Encourage leagues to utilize the marketing and player registration information from the League Resource Guide
- Work with other Districts in your state to grow the program
- Be an active District Administrator

GROWING THE PROGRAM

- Provide annual training and development opportunities for the leagues in your District
- Utilize the Little League Urban Initiative to grow the program in urban communities
- Work with local High School, College, Minor League, and Major League Baseball teams to create awareness and develop a positive relationship for leagues

GROWING THE PROGRAM

- Analyze each league in your District to growth opportunities.
- Areas where leagues can focus on for growth
 - Develop and promote Tee Ball and Coach Pitch
 - Develop and promote the softball program
 - Teenage Division Baseball/Softball
 - Challenger Division and Senior Challenger Division.

CLOSING THE DEAL: STEPS TO TAKE AFTER RECEIVING AN INQUIRY

- If an individual contacts you, contact the league development department for a new league packet
- If we forward an inquiry to you, the individual will have already received a packet
- Call/email the contact to introduce yourself
- Offer to set up a meeting

CLOSING THE DEAL...WHY LITTLE LEAGUE?

- Focus on unique benefits
 - Brand recognition
 - Tee Ball/Coach Pitch curriculum
 - FREE Background checks for local league volunteers
 - Little League University
 - Little League International Tournament
 - Service and support –
 - Regional Office
 - D.A. and staff to provide local support.



NEW LEAGUES

- Determine if any other league's boundaries encroach upon the area. Are adjustments possible?
- Meet with the Board to present the Little League program (we can provide a presentation)
- Be available for follow-up and to assist the league in completing the charter paperwork
- Give the league an idea of what to expect in their first year

LEAGUE RETENTION

- Reach out to leagues in your District in the Fall months to discuss their future involvement with Little League
- Allow leagues to express concerns or issues they had with the program during the previous season
- Encourage leagues to share successful ideas with other leagues in your District

PREVENTING LEAGUES FROM LEAVING THE PROGRAM

- D.A./local league relationship
 - Reach out to your leagues early to identify possible problems.
- Explain to your leagues why Little League has the rules it has
- Annual marketing and parent meetings
- The grass is not always greener on the other side

WHO IS GOING TO DO IT?

TIPS:

- Preferably, recruit your staff based on personal, professional background.
- Be sure to assign someone to the position of MARKETING & PR Officer.
- Verify that your Treasurer has basic knowledge of corporate finance.
- Incorporate your League Presidents into your staff/advisory board.