

A tip or two from Chief Keokuk

As we ramp up for Spring Campouts, our thought should be: “Who will be our next Tribal Chief?” I wanted to write something profound and inspiring about this and realized that I already did! Kidding aside, here is an oldie but a goodie from the Spring of 2004. It’s is a worth a second read, or at least a first.

Tribal Chiefs: Event Promoters

For communication between people, we can’t solely rely on email. Although I can’t imagine life without email, it’s not always the best tool for Tribal Communication. When promoting a Federation Event, or a Campout, or a Tribal Activity, there is no substitute for face to face contact between a Tribal Chief and his Tribe. There is also no substitute for the effectiveness of a simple phone call.

A Tribal Chief once told me, “My tribe knows the date of the outing. If they want to go, they’ll contact me. I’m not chasing them to sign up.” This is the worst possible attitude for a Tribal Chief. It spells low attendance.

Imagine a sales representative for a Fortune 500 company taking the same approach. “My clients know my products. They know how to reach me. If they want to buy, they’ll contact me.” It’s a silly approach for business, and an equally ridiculous approach for our business. Yes, the Prairie Trail Federation is a business enterprise.

We are in the business of community and fellowship. We are in the business of fostering understanding and companionship between father and child. Serious business this is. Don’t take it lightly.

Our sales representatives and communications directors are the Tribal Chiefs. It is the obligation of the Tribal Chief to be a catalyst and lead and inspire the Tribe into activity. As a Tribal Chief it’s okay to be persistent and contact your tribal members to promote activity: Tribal Outings, Federation Events and Campouts. Use all means available, computer to computer, phone to phone, and face to face.

As Tribal Chiefs you should be the one to talk about all Federation Events in your Tribal Meetings. Here’s a great tip from Smoke Signals Editor Tony Foley: “Consider registering for events together as a tribe. Even though the event calls for individual registration, you can still send in your money as a tribe, just as you do with campouts. There’s strength in tribal presence at an event. It’s a lot more fun when a whole group from your tribe participates.” Good idea, Tony. Thanks.

And if your Tribe is so big that you feel it’s unmanageable, then delegate. One giant tribe I know has one dad just collect registration money for campouts, another dad takes ownership of promoting and signing up tribal members to attend Federation Outings, a third, organizes and assigns tribal meetings. It’s the magic of ownership!

Who Is Your Next Tribal Chief

With these things in mind, who do you want to be the next chief of your tribe? If you pick a yo-yo chief, then you’ll have a yo-yo tribe. If you select a dad who is serious about fun, then you’ll have a successful tribe, meaningful meetings, good campouts, attendance with friends and family at Federation outings and, most importantly, meaningful time with your child.

--John C. Lorenzen, Federation Chief Keokuk