

Membership Guidebook



THE GRAND LODGE OF OHIO
FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS
MEMBERSHIP AND RETENTION COMMITTEE

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10 STEPS TO LODGE REVITALIZATION

A. Plan, Program, Prepare – Set lodge goals and agenda for the year

- Hold a planning and goal-setting meeting with officers. Consider inviting the ladies to participate.
- Document specific activities and goals each month that your lodge wants to accomplish. Make a lodge calendar for review.
- ***Make sure our lodge is represented at the Grand Lodge Annual Communication!***

B. Attract New Members – Identify men in our community who would meet the qualifications of membership.

Having trouble coming up with names? Try the following tools:

- Target prospects and follow up with visits
- Look for relatives of present or past members
- Look through the local newspaper and look for people who recently celebrated or will be celebrating 25th year wedding anniversaries or even wedding announcements. Both of these events help identify potential “baby boomers” who may find themselves with more time on their hands. These men who now are looking for exactly what Masonry has to offer – a chance to “give back” to their communities, a sense of belonging, fraternal relations, etc. Do not overlook men who have expressed an interest in the past, even those who may have taken the 1st or 2nd Degree(s). Maybe that simply was not the right time or perhaps there were circumstances that interfered with their membership. *(Talk to these men about their potential interest in the fraternity, using your personal experiences and describe what Masonry has meant to you.)*

- 1. Send a letter to your non-Masonic friends.***
- 2. Hold a “Friendship Night” (or Brother Bring a Friend Night).***
- 3. Take advantage of an Awards Program.***
- 4. Utilize the resources of the Grand Lodge of Ohio.***

C. Spice up Lodge Meetings

- 1. Streamline the necessary business portion of the meeting.***

- **Suggestion:** Print, do not read, minutes and financial reports, summarize communications (do not read them verbatim).

2. *Add informational and educational programs to every stated communication.*

- ***Experiment with meals/refreshments before and/or after meetings.***

Experiment with timing of programs, i.e., have your program before dinner, followed by lodge meeting or have the program during the meeting, or afterwards – over coffee/ refreshments.

3. *Your lodge is a treasure chest of interesting programs. Do not always rely on the same brother to provide the program – pass the responsibility around.*

Caution: There is a fine line between encouraging brethren to give a program and making sure it is interesting. Make sure the programs remain interesting. (Remember, a large part of Masonry revolves around self-improvement. However, do not force a brother to speak if he does not want to.)

The program does not have to be Masonic. Have a member come and talk about his profession. You would be surprised how many brothers would find that very interesting. Consider using non-members to provide a program. Other ideas are having a tax accountant come in around tax season, or local police talk about crime prevention.

Perhaps considering a having a hobby night. Allow the brethren to share their hobbies with others.

Do not forget to include wives/families in some of the programs/activities. Contact your District Education Officer for a list of Speakers Bureau topics.

4. *Announce the Agenda of your meeting in advance through e-mail, newsletter or telephone.*

Create curiosity and interest in the meeting announcement. For instance, instead of writing “Brother Mason will discuss Masons and the Military,” write this: “Did you know that there is a connection between Masons and the Marine Corps? Come Tuesday night and find out!”

5. *Take advantage of the Master Craftsman Program to educate current, even long-term members.*

Consider having a program to assist our brethren who have not been to lodge in some time to remember how meetings are conducted.

6. *Have your officers and members visit another lodge for their regular or special meetings.*

This allows the officers to see how other lodges are run, the activities other lodges are involved in as well as lets them meet other masons and spread the fellowship.

D. Family Involvement

Involve the ladies in your planning process. Find ways to involve the entire family in your events (especially Masonic widows).

Some ideas are attending the Shrine Circus together, or a local sporting event. One idea that many lodges have experienced a lot of success with is a wives and widows dinner around Valentine's Day.

E. Community Involvement/Visibility

Is your lodge visible in our Community? Are you necessary?

Below are some projects or ideas to assist in assisting your lodge in becoming more visible and necessary in your community.

Visibility Project 00: To The Worshipful Master

Worshipful,

Masonic membership is on the decline and the Grand Lodge of Ohio is looking for the causes and solutions to that problem. Membership development and retention is something that concerns all Lodges. We will have ideas and resources for retention, but we want to talk to you, the Master, about membership development, because this is one area that you can have a big impact.

The underlying principle that we have based our development work on is that the more that Lodges are visible and necessary in their community, the more that people will seek to be involved in the Lodge.

As Masons, we know that we do not take curtain calls for our charity work; that much of the good work that we do is done in secret. We do this because relief and charity are not special attributes to be celebrated; they are just the way that you are supposed to behave.

We also do not now nor will we ever ask people to join Masonry, but our belief is that if a Lodge is seen as being visible and necessary in their community; living their beliefs and putting Masonic values into action, potential members will seek out the Lodge.

We have and will be creating modules for Lodges, but in our discussions with Lodges around the state and around the country, three things became very clear:

1. Every Lodge, for better or for worse, is the best at something in their District.
2. Every Lodge, for better or worse, has their own unique cast of characters, personalities, assets, and skills
3. Each Lodge is uniquely poised to meet the needs of their community.

Given these three things, it is becoming clear to us that helping Lodges in recognizing and seizing opportunities is just as important as creating these pre-packaged projects.

This is where you come in.

You are in a particular position to affect truly the membership, outreach, and activities of your Lodge. Many activities just need one committed Brother to make phone calls and send e-mails to coordinate activities. It is amazing what a Lodge can accomplish with one Brother who refuses to listen to the voices who tell him, "Oh, we could never do that." It is also amazing what Masons can and will accomplish once the Master sets a goal.

Our challenge to you is to be able to answer the following questions:

1. What, for better or for worse, is my Lodge the best at in my District?
2. What, for better or for worse, does my Lodge offer in terms of people, personalities, assets, and skills?
3. What does my community need and how can we help?

The answer to these questions can help guide you in understanding your Lodge, your brethren, and your community as well as seeing areas where your Lodge can be more connected to your community.

What, For Better or For Worse, is my Lodge the Best at in My District?

If you cannot answer this question just by thinking about it, gather the right Brothers together and discuss this. It may be positive, in that your Lodge is the best at Ritual, the best at raising money, the best at managing money, etc. It could be something negative, in that your Lodge is the best at people not showing up, best at having naysayers, best at gossip. In order to answer this question, you may want to speak with other Masters in your area to get their perception. Sometimes we are too close to the subject.

This question is not meant to cause arguments, although it might. The goal is for you and for concerned Brethren to have an open and honest discussion about your Lodge and what your Lodge has to offer.

What, For Better or For Worse, Does my Lodge Offer in Terms of People, Personalities, Assets, and Skills?

Your Lodge is made of Brothers, each with their own motivations, histories, and skills but united in their desire to be better men and be a part of the Craft. Even the grumpiest Past Master in corner who seems to want to derail or complain about every new thing that the Lodge does wants to be a better man and is committed to the Craft.

So, who are the important people in your Lodge to get something accomplished? Who has great organizational or motivational skills? Who has great contacts in the community? Are there also people that you know will cause problems and how do you handle them?

Who are the people in your Lodge who have similar interests or hobbies? Maybe you have a Lodge filled with farmers, law enforcement, or people who have artistic abilities. Maybe your Lodge has many members with children and grandchildren or has a large number of veterans. Maybe you have several teachers in your Lodge or have members who love to shoot or have studied martial arts.

Again, this question is not meant to cause arguments, but meant for you to get a sense of what your Lodge has to offer, what stands in your Lodge's way, and what your Lodge is interested in being a part of.

What Does My Community Need and How Can We Help?

Your community is unique, even though their concerns may be the same as another. You and Your lodge know your community well because it is your community. You and the Brethren can see opportunities in your community for your Lodge to participate. You can see the opportunities for your Lodge to use your unique talents and assets to be a part of your community.

Are you in a rural small town that would benefit from a community breakfast? Are you in the affluent area of the city that would benefit from an activity for children? Are there many veterans in your area that you could do something for? Are there youth sports teams that you can sponsor? Is there a local nursing home that would benefit from Brothers coming in to play cards or having an ice cream social with the residents? Is there a local school or university that has an activity that you can be a part of? Is there something that people at the gas station say 'Man, I wish someone would do something about that?'

Below are examples that other Lodges around the State and country have done successfully. They are included to get you thinking about things that you can do during your year in the East. The goal is for you look at your community and see opportunities for your Lodge to be more involved.

Some Thoughts

- This is not meant to be insulting, the development and retention of new members is something that we all need to be concerned with. You may have a Lodge with long, established connections to the community. You may be the Lodge that the rest of us aspire to, we firmly believe that the more that a Lodge is involved in a community and seen to be living Masonic values, the more that people will seek to be involved with the Lodge. Even if you have established activities and connections, there may be other areas where your Lodge can get involved.
- Delegate, when you can. You will be busy in your year in the East. You have Brethren who want to help, they just need to be asked and given a task. You have Brethren who want to help you succeed, let them.
- Some activities may need to start small and be built upon in the coming years. The first time you sell hamburgers at the Halloween celebration, you may only have a few customers. That does not mean that they and their friends will not be looking for you next year.
- Time, persistence, and patience can accomplish all things.
- Two of the more dangerous phrases in Masonry are 'But we've always done it this way' and 'That's not the way they did it during MY year.' It bears repeating: it is amazing what Masons can accomplish when they do not listen to the voices that say, 'Oh, we could never do that.'

Examples from Other Lodges

- A Lodge partnered with other local Lodges to visit the local VA Hospital and spend a day playing cards and bring treats to the long-term residents.
- A Lodge brought members to the local Food Bank to help pack boxes of food for the elderly and less fortunate.
- A Lodge gathered loose change from members after meetings to purchase pre-paid calling cards to send to a soldier from the neighborhood that was deployed overseas. Likewise, Lodges have raised money or gathered materials to support one or more of the following armed services charities:
 - **Adopt a Platoon** -- Support the troops through gifts and sponsored mail. www.adoptaplatoon.org
 - **Any Soldier** -- Sponsor care packages to service members in Iraq. <http://www.anysoldier.com/index.cfm>
 - **Army and Air Force Exchange Services** -- Purchase gift certificates for active and hospitalized service members. <http://shop.aafes.com/shop/>
 - **Blue Star Mothers** -- Organizes postcards to troops and care packages, and is currently petitioning Congress for reduced airfares for service members. <http://www.bluestarmothers.org/>
 - **Books for Soldiers** -- Donate books, movies, and more. <http://booksforsoldiers.com/>
 - **Cell Phones for Soldiers** -- Donate your old cell phones, which pay for calling cards for our troops. <http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/>
 - **A Million Thanks** -- Collects emails and letters of appreciation for our armed forces. <http://www.amillionthanks.org/>
 - **Operation Give** -- Donate toys to be given to the children of Iraq. <http://www.operationgive.org/>
 - **Operation Gratitude** -- Contribute to care packages sent to our service members. <http://homefronthugs.com/>
 - **Operation Home front Hugs** -- Contribute to care packages, or adopt a service member. <http://homefronthugs.com/>
 - **Operation Troop Aid** -- Provide care packages for our deployed U.S. Service members. <http://operationtroopaid.org/>
 - **Operation USO Care Package** -- Sponsor a care package for \$25. <https://www.uso.org/OUCP-donation-page-with-partner.aspx?LangType=1033>
 - More information can be found here: <http://www.military.com/spouse/military-life/military-resources/how-to-support-our-troops.html>
 - The Department of Defense also has a resource for their community partners, which can be found here: <http://www.ourmilitary.mil/>
- A Lodge served refreshments at the local high school's Honors Night.
- A Lodge served the meal and allowed a local youth group to hold their end-of-year Awards Banquet at the Lodge.
- A Lodge hosted a target shoot to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project.
- A Lodge handled parking at a local festival, using it as a fundraiser of one of their charities.
- A Lodge sponsored and helped organize a non-denominational community Christmas service.

- A Lodge held a breakfast with Santa/Easter Bunny/Leprechaun/Lincoln for the appropriate holiday.
- A Lodge held a question and answer session at the local library about Masonry and Masonic connections to the town.
- A Lodge hosted a Red Cross Blood Drive in their Lodge.
<http://www.redcrossblood.org/hosting-blood-drive>
- A Lodge hosted a Back-to-School fair where people could get school supplies, information about school, or just celebrate the end of summer.
- A Lodge did a neighborhood clean up where they gathered trash and yard waste and took it to the local dump. The focused on the elderly in their neighborhood who needed the most help
- A Lodge hosted a gun safety/hunter's safety/fire safety course in their common area.
- A Lodge checked coats at the High School Prom and then helped host a safe After-Prom Party.
- A Lodge drove cars and had a wagon in an area parade.
- A Lodge held a Spring bike check and bike safety course for area children.
- A Lodge did a Polar Plunge for Special Olympics.

Visibility Project 1: Informational Table

Overview: This project entails setting up a table at a public event, such as a Farmer's Market, Parent-Teacher Conferences, City Festival, etc. for the express purpose of answering people's questions about who we are and what we do. This project is best paired with a public Lodge Event like an Open House, Pancake Breakfast, or Public Fundraiser. This project is a success if raises the visibility of a Lodge within a community.

Cost: Free to under \$50, depending on the venue.

Brothers Required: 1-2

Materials Needed: Table (if one not provided), Signage, Masonic Objects, and Handouts.

Time: Varies, but ideally should be multiple hours on multiple days.

Procedure:

- Looking in your community, find a public event/forum where vendors or other organizations are promoting themselves. This could be a Farmer's Market, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Community Fair, Church Bazaar, College Organization Fair, etc.
- Contact the organizer and request a table. For many of these events the cost of having an informational table is free, or a nominal charge.
- Gather and set up your materials. We suggest the following:
 - A table, if one is not provided. A folding 6' table is what most Lodges have and use.
 - Signage: A tablecloth or other covering for your table, some people have used a Grand Lodge of Ohio Flag. The goal would be for people to identify you as Masons as they walk by. Some Brothers made a sign that was placed on the outside of a 3-ring Binder or clear stand that said 'Freemasonry-Your Questions Answered'. A sample sign is included in the appendix to this module.
 - Masonic Objects. People will stop and look at objects on your table and ask questions about their meaning and their history. Successful items have included:
 - Pins-Brothers have taken various pins from Masonic Bodies and mounted them on a poster board or piece of colored cardboard
 - Books-Ill. Bro. Hodapp's *Freemasons for Dummies*, Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol*, or other books from your library.
 - DVD Cases/Videos-*From Hell*, *National Treasure*, *Gettysburg*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, *Da Vinci Code*, *True Grit*, are all movies with strong or obvious Masonic Connections. Television shows with strong Masonic connections include *Sleepy Hollow*, *Secrets of the Freemasons* (National Geographic), *Decoding the Templar Code* (History Channel).
 - Pictures-Brother have taken pictures of Lodge events and made a physical scrapbook or a computer slideshow to be displayed at the table.
 - Lodge Artifacts-Brothers have put out a Fez, a Tyler's Sword, and pamphlets from the Masonic Information Center, and other items that people can handle and ask questions about.
 - Handouts-People should be able to take away some information about the Fraternity, including whom to contact for more information. Ideally, they should be driven to a public event like an Open House or a Pancake breakfast. A sample handout is included in the appendix.
 - Items should be arranged in such a way that they can be seen and handled.

- Dress the Part. Dress is what would be appropriate for your community. If your community would respond best to people in tuxedos, wear tuxedos. If your community would respond better to people in bib overalls, wear bib overalls. Decide, for your Lodge, what you would like to represent. Some Lodges have had Brothers wear casual clothes, to give the message that Masons are just regular, everyday people. Some Lodges have worn suits to signify that they are a group of distinction and formality. Nametags are highly suggested.
- Staff your Table. Ideally, two Brothers should operate the table at all times, in case one needs to excuse himself for any reason, but also because you may have multiple people with multiple questions.
- Be Prepared to Answer Questions: We have found that you will typically have four types of people approach your table:
 - Other Brothers-You will find that Brothers from your Lodge or other Lodges will stop by and say 'Hello'. If someone has been inactive, invite them to Lodge or a Lodge Function.
 - 'My Grandpa was a 32nd Degree Mason, what does that mean?'-Many people have questions about Masons in their own life-grandparents, uncles, friends and they want to know more about what this person did. You will not be able to answer if you do not know, but you can tell them that their family member was a good man who believed in taking care of his community and making himself and others around him better. You can also tell them about Masonry, in general, and answer their questions.
 - People with the Wrong Idea-They are out there and they will find you. People will ask you about where we keep the secret gold, if you are secretly a lizard person, and ask why we were behind Ben Affleck not getting an Oscar for *Argo*. They may tell you that we secretly worship Baphomet and that we are going to Hell because we are a false religion. Do what you can to answer their claims with truth and facts, and be polite. Some people are itching for a fight and we need to learn to subdue our passions and keep them within due bounds. Contact the On-Site Organizer if the person becomes problematic.
 - Genuine Interest-There are many men out there who have always been curious but have never known a Mason to ask questions of. There are many men out there looking for an organization that puts their values into action but never knew who to talk to or how to get started. Maybe they always wanted to join but thought that you had to have a family member be a Mason or could only be Protestant, or some other reason. These are the men that we really want to speak with. Answer their questions and highly encourage them to come to an Open Lodge Event.
- Be Persistent-This is a project that works best with multiple presentations. People who see you one week may finally get up the courage to stop by two weeks later. If that isn't possible, even one presentation is helpful in raising the visibility of the Lodge.

- Afterwards-
 - Clean-Up. It should go without saying, but follow the ‘Campsite Rule’-leave the place better than when you found it.
 - Check in with the On-Site Coordinator: Thank them and let them know how your experience was and see if plans can be made for another time.
 - Assess-The Brothers that were at the table should assess:
 - What worked and was successful
 - What didn’t work and needs to be changed
 - Follow-Up Activities, if any, such as phone calls, e-mails, etc.

Final Words-This is a project that is straightforward in its presentation. You will find that many community members will be excited and happy to see you at the event. This is a project that works best if it is done multiple times because the more that people see Masons in the community, the more courageous and more interested they will become in approaching to ask questions. If this is paired with a Lodge Event, you will notice that people who came to your table will come to your Event. Use this as an opportunity to speak with others about your love and passion for the Craft. If you can explain why it is important to you, what you get out of it, and what it means to you, they will listen.

Visibility Project 2: Adopt-A-Highway

Overview: This project entails volunteering to adopt a section of a state route or highway and assisting in the clean up for a period of two years. This project is a success if it raises the visibility of a Lodge within a community and provides an opportunity for service.

Cost: Free. Essentially, the only cost is time and refreshments after the clean up, if you choose to have them.

Brothers Required: 6-10, four times a year. Family members and friends are also encouraged to participate.

Materials Needed: A Meeting Area for Training.

Time: Varies, but clean-up is expected at least once per quarter.

Procedure:

- Visit the Ohio Department of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway website, located here: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Operations/maintenance/pages/adoptahighway.aspx>
- Identify and e-mail your District Coordinator for the program and meet with them to discuss participating in the program.
- Requirements:
 - Volunteer groups adopt a two-mile section or an interchange along a State Route, United States Route or Interstate.
 - Groups who sign up with the program adopt for two years.
 - The DOT asks that groups pick up a minimum of four times each year.
 - Participants in Adopt-A-Highway should be volunteers and not paid to pick up litter. Groups can collaborate with others in adopting, but may not pay another group to pick up litter.
- Materials
 - The Department of Transportation will provide:
 - Safety Training,
 - Trash Bags,
 - Disposable Safety Vests
 - Two signs to be used at the beginning of the two mile section
- Coordinate your Clean-Up
 - Identify Brothers and Family Members who will help with the clean up.
 - Coordinate transportation and meeting times/place.
 - Make the Clean Up a Family Event, Social Event, or Open Event. Offer a meal or refreshments at the Lodge afterwards for those who participated. Offer special recognition in Lodge for those who participated. Work with Brothers to make this an enjoyable experience.

Final Words-This project is highly visible and cost-efficient. People driving on that stretch of road will see your Lodge Name every time they drive on it. When they see your members working to clean up that stretch of highway, it is a very visible example of some of the good work that Masons do in their communities. This is not a project that directly seeks or develops new members, but is one that can be used with interested people. Invite interested people to come and help with the clean up or invite them to visit with the Brothers afterwards with refreshments at the Lodge. This is a low-cost, high-visibility service project that directly benefits your community and your Lodge.

Visibility Project 3: De-Mystify the Lodge

Overview: This project entails finding way to make the Lodge Building more accessible and relatable to the public. This project concerns developing activities to take your Lodge from the old, creepy building at the end of the block to a building that the public sees as being utilized, an enjoyable and accessible place, with ties to the community.

Cost: Varies, depending on the nature of the project. Can be done for very little cost or from donations.

Brothers Required: 1-2 to organize others to participate.

Materials Needed: Depends on the type of project utilized, but most can be accomplished with found items.

Time: Varies, but ideally should be on multiple occasions.

Procedure:

- With the leadership of your Lodge, you should discuss the following question: “What do non-Masons think of our building? If, somehow, our Lodge closed its doors tomorrow and ceased all operation, how long would it take the community to notice? Is this something we need to fix?”
 - So many Lodges are mysterious places located in a corner of the town and the community, at large, does not often see the building being used. On the other hand, they don’t see it being an “enjoyable” place as much as they see it as that strange building where the strange guys meet.
 - Masonic Lodges used to be selling points for a community, seen as necessary as good grocery stores and good schools. Over the years, many Masonic Lodges have gone from vibrant family and community centers to relics.
 - If you are a Lodge concerned with increasing Membership, what are some things that you can do to take the mystery away from your Lodge and make it more visible and necessary in your community?
- Suggestions
 - Instead of a meal before Lodge meetings or as a special occasion, consider a family cookout outside in the warmer months. Bring your ladies, your children, your friends and enjoy fellowship together. Maybe bring a beanbag toss, horseshoes, or some other game for the Brothers and attendees to play. Let the community see Masons with their families in a casual and enjoyable setting.
 - Host a ‘Friends and Family’ night in your Lodge where Brothers can bring in people to tour the Lodge and get more information about Masonry

- Many of the informational pamphlets for Freemasonry talk about the famous Masons such as George Washington, Gene Autry, Duke Ellington and other people who have been dead for decades. If you are lucky, these pamphlets may mention modern Masons like Shaquille O’Neal, Timothy Hutton, or Brad Paisley, but those are hard to come by. As Masons, we are equally as proud of the men who aren’t famous, but stayed in their communities and worked to make them better. Consider as part of your Open House or as part of a community celebration spotlighting the Masons in your community who served and made a difference. Show pictures of these men, tell their story, show artifacts and show their connections to your community. They don’t need to have streets or buildings named after them, they just need to be men who lived the Masonic ideals and put their values into action. Showcase their work to the community.
- Have a ‘Work Day’ at the Lodge to take care of the grounds: weeds, planting flowers, some repair or painting that needs to be done. Many of the materials you may need can be donated by the Brethren or from local businesses.
- For a community event such as Halloween, a 5K run, Easter, or Christmas, involve the Lodge. Hand out candy, water, or small trinkets to help enhance the community event. Maybe have a cookout with the Brethren and their families for the Fourth of July, Veteran’s Day, or another holiday as part of the community celebration.
- Look for a way to get the community involved in your Lodge; a way to show, publicly, Masons living their ideals and putting them into action and that Masons in the community are just that: Men in the community.

Final Words-This project can also help with Retention as it is a way to make a Lodge more active and improve the Lodge Experience. Lodges that are seen to be visible and necessary in their community tend to have fewer problems in attracting and retaining members. The best efforts to demystify a Lodge are the ones that are fun, enjoyable, involve the Brethren, and can be replicated from month-to-month or year-to-year. The best way to demystify your Lodge is to show Brethren enjoying being a part of the Lodge and being with their Brothers and families. Use this as an opportunity to speak with community members about your love and passion for the Craft. If you can explain why it is important to you, what you get out of it, and what it means to you, they will listen.

Guiding Principles-Membership Development

We know that men interested in Masonry want the following things:

1. To belong to an organization with values
2. To belong to a society that puts those values into action through service.
3. To belong to an organization that is both visible and necessary in their community.
4. To belong to an organization that has standards
5. To belong to a spiritual community without the dogma, stigma, or label of an organized religion
6. To understand what it means to be a man, due to waning male influence in the American family.
7. To be a part of a true Brotherhood, because it is difficult to find in today's society.
8. To belong to an organization that is worth taking time away from family or vocation

All of this can be reduced down to the following statement: If a Lodge is seen as being visible and necessary in their community, living their beliefs and putting Masonic values into action, potential members will seek out the Lodge.

For more information or support, please contact your District Education Officers or District Representatives to the Membership and Retention Committee. You can also e-mail membership@freemason.com and we will respond to you within 48 hours.

F. Membership Retention/Utilization

Introduction

Going hand-in-hand with bringing in new members is keeping the members we have. In our survey of Lodges across the state, the Lodges that are the most successful in retaining members provide a worthwhile experience to their members. This can be boiled down to a Lodge providing three things:

Substance-A Lodge that is successful in retaining members provides an experience worth leaving your family and children for an evening. It provides something of substance, whether it is through education, ritual work, a good meal but it provides a more substantial experience than the other alternatives.

Standards-More and more in our society, we do not expect of another. We do not expect that people will live a certain way, behave a certain way, or act a certain way. Many members are looking for a Lodge experience with standards, whether it is in the ritual work, in the education, in the accountability or behavior of the Brethren.

Solidarity-Members want to belong to an organization that is universal; where the things that we choose to divide us like religion, politics, race, etc. just don't matter. They want to belong to an organization where they are accepted, cared about, where they experience true Brotherhood. Superficial connections are as close as your Web Browser; Members want something that can only be found in a Fraternity.

Statement of the Problem

In our society, we have made it easier to stay connected but the level of that connection has steadily decreased. Instead of meeting a friend for dinner, it is much easier to stay on your couch and check their Facebook status. We no longer need to be in proximity to someone to check in with them. Therefore, we have an entire generation that is more connected than ever to the rest of the world, but only superficially.

With our hectic lifestyles, it is difficult to get prospective members to commit the time away from home and family to be a part of the Lodge experience.

So many of the efforts we use to increase retention in the Lodges have been focusing on the wrong aspect. Instead of working on the substance of the Lodge experience, Lodges have instituted pins and titles as rewards, or held special program nights or special dinners. These special events and trinkets are great things and should not be ignored, but, often, they are facilitated or earned by Members who already regularly attend. Lodges concerned about retention would do well to improve the Lodge Experience

Resources

Some people think of Retention Efforts as a straight line, a linear progression of cause and effect and that if a Lodge does “A”, then “B” will necessarily follow. This isn’t completely the truth, and the best way to think of Retention Efforts is like spinning gears. Spending energy on one “gear” will affect the other “gears” in sometimes-unpredictable ways. The gears are interconnected and work together to accomplish the goals of the Retention Machine.

Like any good machine, you need a good foundation. That foundation is a commitment within the Lodge that Retention is something that the Lodge is concerned with and wants to put time and resources into increasing. In the solidifying of that commitment, your Lodge needs to state specifically the problem, specifically state goals, specifically state what you will do and who will be responsible for those tasks, and then hold each other accountable. The temptation will be to assign the giant task of Retention to the Lodge Education Officer or the Past Masters. The Lodges that are the most successful are those that realize that efforts to increase Retention are the responsibility of everyone in the Lodge. The Lodges that are the most successful typically choose 2-5 of the strategies listed in this document that are right for their Lodge and commit to them wholeheartedly. The Lodges that do that soon find changes in their attendance and their participation and then find it easier to add another strategy or different strategies to meet the needs of their changing Lodge.

Once the foundation is laid, we now need to look at the three gears of Retention: Substance, Standards, and Solidarity.

Substance-A Lodge that is successful in retaining members provides an experience worth leaving your family and children for an evening. It provides something of substance, whether it is through education, ritual work, a good meal but it provides a more substantial experience than the other alternatives. What does your Lodge provide that is of substance? Is it just the moral lessons of the lectures? How is your ritual work? How is your Education? Are Stated Meetings just minutes, bills and busy work? How is the culture within the Lodge? Do you have Brothers who are welcoming and enthused to be there or do you have a Lodge full of cliques and Crabby Past Masters? Between the end of the workday and the start of a Lodge Meeting, a man will face dozens of forces competing for his time and attention. What does your Lodge provide to make resisting these forces easier? We live in a ‘Wal-Mart’ society, where we expect things to break and to not last. So many people are looking for something that is built to last. Is your Lodge Experience built to last?

Standards-More and more in our society, we do not expect of another. We do not expect that people will live a certain way, behave a certain way, or act a certain way. Many members are looking for a Lodge experience with standards, whether it is in the ritual work, in the education, in the accountability or behavior of the Brethren. What do you expect of your Brethren? Do you let them off the hook and tell them that they do not need to come to Lodge? Do you put them on the Degree Team or a Committee right away? What do you expect in terms of return work? How do you communicate to the Brethren what is expected of them in terms of morals, actions, behavior and how are they held accountable? Do the standards in your Lodge apply to everyone or do some people get special treatment? We are not better than other people, but we strive to be better fathers, husbands, friends, Masons, and men than we were yesterday. How do you support the Brethren in this pursuit? How do you communicate to a new Brother how a Mason is supposed to act, meet, and behave? How is that reinforced? We live in a ‘Wal-Mart’ society, where we expect things to

break and to not last. So many people are looking for something that is built to last. Is your Lodge Experience of High Quality?

Solidarity-Members want to belong to an organization that is universal; where the things that we choose to divide us like religion, politics, race, etc. doesn't matter. They want to belong to an organization where they are accepted, cared about, where they experience true Brotherhood. Superficial connections are as close as your Web Browser; Members want something that can only be found in a Fraternity. Does your Lodge have a Facebook page? How are meetings and events communicated to Brethren? What do your Mentors do with their Mentees when preparing their return work? If a Brother drops off the map, who checks on them? At Fellowship, is there a culture that is actually accepting of other viewpoints or is your Lodge staunchly one political stripe or another? Does your Lodge do events that are open to families and friends? Does your Lodge hold events relevant to the interests of the Brethren? Do Brethren sit around before or after Lodge to speak to each other and enjoy Fellowship?

Strategies

- Increase the value of membership by increasing the investment into the Lodge itself
- Consider raising dues appropriately to generate income and subsequently increase the value of the Lodge experience.
- Provide recognition to new members as having achieved membership or advancement at their first attended meeting post each degree.
- Recognize new members by personally greeting them
- Encourage Brethren to go out of their way to greet new members upon their arrival for the first year.
- Require officers particularly to greet new members upon their arrival, or consider having the Worshipful Master keep a list in the East of brethren to greet after Lodge is opened.
- Provide a Lodge membership directory to new members
- Create a template, both basic (name and contact) and detailed (name, contact, Masonic and professional credentials), to be optionally filled out by members for inclusion in the directory.
- If possible, include pictures of members in the directory to aid in face/name association for new members.
- Create a membership certificate, or "Lodge Patent"
- Award a notice of membership after the Entered Apprentice degree conferral. This should be on good quality paper.
- Award a "Lodge Patent" after a Master Mason delivers a successful examination. Frame this patent, and list the dates for all three degrees.
- Hold a dinner in honor of the new member
 - Place the new member in a position of prominence at the table (perhaps between the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden)
 - Have the Stewards personally serve the new member
 - • Perform either after the Master Mason Degree, or after any degree as the Lodge wishes.
- Provide name tags for new members to identify them to Lodge members
- Use printed paper name tags in plastic holders, preferably those that do not require pinning then into clothing

- List the highest degree of attainment of the new member, or the number of years of membership
- If not provided, inform new members how they may purchase a high-quality personal nametag from a third party or Lodge-specified vendor. Use a Lodge standard format.
- Provide new members with a “getting started” member manual containing topics of interest
 - What do Masons do?
 - Organizational structure from Grand Lodge to the local Lodge
 - Definitions and meanings of Masonic titles
 - Lodge Family Tree from the United Grand Lodge of England to present, including merged Lodges.
 - Listing of communication portals (Lodge web site, district and Grand Lodge sites, calendars, phone/email listings, etc.)
 - Membership benefits
 - Lodge protocol and etiquette
- Provide regular communications to members
 - Email lists
 - Web sites with a news or blog-style feed
 - Phone auto-dialer
 - Printed and mailed newsletter
 - Personal phone call after missing a certain agreed-upon number of meetings
- Distribute a paper agenda before each meeting
- Provide a well-defined and standard flow of business
- Define a time schedule for the meeting
- Leave room for notes
- Provide upcoming dates at the end of the agenda
- Provide a concise calendar for the year.
- Place on a web site or other push-based feed
- Mail a printed calendar at regular intervals, with information on how to find updates if Lodge attendance is not an option
- Utilize communication outlets to provide updates to the calendar
- Provide interesting and informative educational programs
 - Historical programs
 - Ritual workshops
 - Leadership training
 - Esoteric and speculative papers and discussions
 - Community Interest: Estate Planning, Hunter’s Safety, Self-Defense, Motorcycle Safety
 - Opportunities for Brethren to speak and discuss: Hobby Night, Masonic Connections, A Time that A Mason Helped You, etc.
- Provide a list of delegated responsibilities to the membership
- Define facility responsibilities
- List lecture/charge/ritual coverage
- Define functional roles, such as phone trees or committee members
- Provide incentive to increase dues investment
 - Provide a discount for those who pay two or more years’ dues in one payment
 - Encourage and celebrate the purchase of endowed membership

- Provide recognition for donations above required dues
- Promote renewals of non-attending members by offering prizes or recognition for regular renewal
- Recognize anniversary dates beyond what is recognized by Grand Lodge
- Announce those having birthdays during the first stated meeting of a month
- Recognize yearly anniversaries of initiating/passing/raising of present members
- Seek feedback regarding the Lodge experience
- Annual survey, either on paper or electronically, with optional anonymity
- Report statistics after a predetermined survey period

Risks to Retention

Despite a well-established culture and a well-defined strategy for Lodge operations, there are particular risks to retention, which deserve consideration. Such situations often occur due to an oversight in resource planning or a disconnection/misalignment with the defined culture. It is important to remember the following:

- If a Lodge's culture changes, then the strategy must be redefined to be congruent with the new culture.
- If a Lodge's strategy changes, then the initiatives and activities must be redefined and delegated .

There are eight organizational risk concepts that result from a misalignment of any of the processes that support retention.

“Burn Out” is a retention risk caused by members being asked to do too much too rapidly. This is a result of strategic resource miscalculation. Initiatives or their associated activities must immediately be reduced for members under this risk.

“Cool Out” is when members are asked for nothing. Remember, membership means engagement! This can also be caused by losing track of members. This is a result of a poorly scaled strategy or an unbalanced distribution of responsibility.

“Keep Out” is the inability for members to integrate into the group due to external blocks. This is caused by the presence of cliques, and is a serious cultural disconnect between values and norms. By nature, this typically occurs when veteran members have established close social relationships and is unwilling to admit new members into the discourse. A realignment of the values and norms of the culture is immediately required.

“Pull Out” is a retention risk resulting from members feeling trapped in their participation levels. Members feel they have no control in their level of participation. This is a violation of cultural norms as well as a strategic miscalculation. Control of participation levels must be returned to the member without repercussion.

“Can't Win” is a sense of futility held by a member of a group. This strategic error results from either ill-defined goals or unrealistic expectations leading to emotional detachment. A more realistic appraisal of scope is required to remediate this risk.

“Can’t Lose” is both a strategic and a cultural risk to retention. Strategically speaking the goals and expectations are set too low; culturally speaking the recognition of achievement (or celebration) doesn’t seem genuine and therefore doesn’t bond the member to the Lodge. Goals should be specific, their results should be measurable, their achievement should be possible, the required effort must be realistic, and their timeframe must be well defined.

“No Growth” is a risk resulting from the apparent lack of pathways to personal growth. This strategic error is most often attributed to a lack of consideration for the personal aspect of goal setting and recognition. A well-defined path to personal growth aligned with the strategic initiatives prevents this risk from occurring.

“No Substance” is essentially a sense of boredom, and is a cultural risk to retention. It is frequently characterized by “meeting for the sake of meeting”, and at its root shows a deteriorating or undeveloped cultural framework. It is crucial to cease strategic initiatives long enough to rebuild the cultural framework.

Summary

Retention is everyone’s responsibility. We made a pledge to each other when we took our obligations. Brethren typically leave a Lodge when the experience is different than they expected and their needs for a worthwhile endeavor are not being met. Men are different now than they were decades ago; they are looking for a strong connection, to belong to a group with values and who puts those values into action, and to belong to a group of substance. As Masons, we have these things, but these are gears in our machine that may need some grease and some repair. We need to look internally at the Lodge Experience and ask if we are meeting the needs of our Brethren and are meeting our obligations. If not, we need to have the courage, the strength, and the commitment to change. The Lodges that are most successful with Retention Efforts understand that it is a process; one that takes effort, planning, and a willingness to rather fail at something lofty than succeed at something trivial. The Lodges that are successful understand that it isn’t about chasing numbers; that 50 active, present, engaged, and passionate members is infinitely better in the long run than 200 dues-payers who never come to Lodge. It is the duty of the Lodge to cultivate and to nurture that passionate 50 to ensure the longevity of the Lodge and the health of the Fraternity.

Get new members involved right away.

Get them involved with meetings and other lodge happenings mentioned above.

Contact Brethren who haven’t attended lodge lately.

Let them know they have been missed. Assign them a duty for the next meeting and offer to pick them up. Organize “pick-up service” for those brethren who may be uncomfortable driving. This is especially useful for night driving or poor weather conditions.

Organize a “Telephone Tree” to make contact with all brothers easier.

Have several brothers be responsible for contacting the entire membership. This can be very useful for special meetings and funerals, etc.

Survey your membership, particularly the younger members, for what type of activities they would be interested in.

Think outside the box – it doesn't have to be Masonic related. How about a "cards night," watching sports on a big screen television, etc. Let them give you their ideas and listen to them. Make them feel a part of the process and the Lodge.

Hold a "Rusty Nail" Degree or a "Re-obligation Night."

Publicize the event. Invite members of nearby lodges. In case of a major Rededication Ceremony, the Grand Lodge may like to participate. This can help remind your members why they became Masons and why they maintain their membership.

G. Publicize your Lodge (Internally and Externally)

Appoint a member to be in charge of Public Relations

Internal Publicity

Obtain e-mail addresses of Lodge members. This will provide one more way to communicate with the membership.

Initiate or improve your Lodge newsletter. If your Lodge already has a newsletter, consider spicing it up. Do something radically different in the next issue to generate interest. This could be something as easy as rearranging the contents to adding a new feature to putting in something controversial or using a sensational headline. Have fun with it. One of the negative opinions the uninitiated have of Masonry is that we are a bunch of Stuffed Shirts. Appoint a member to be in charge of Public Relations.

External Publicity

Submit press releases to local newspapers. Local newspapers are always looking for things to fill space. It is very important that the articles are well written and complete. Don't expect the newspaper to edit and/or correct mistakes. Assistance on what to submit and how to write an article is available from the Grand Lodge Public Relations Committee.

H. Lodge Appearance

Don't forget one of the Lodge's best resources of publicity and community involvement is the Lodge building itself. The appearance of your lodge building says a lot to the uninitiated. Are you sending the right message?

Hold a clean up, painting party. Make a fun day/night out of it. Make sure the sign on your building is clean and in good shape. Place highway signs at each entrance to your community. Be sure the sign states the day/time of your regular meetings. This could be (but wouldn't have to be) designed around a major addition to capital improvement to your lodge.

I. Last, But Certainly Not Least – Ritual

- ***Make sure your Lodge can and does provide top-notch ritual in your degrees and meetings.***
- ***Hold a Ritual School of Instruction***

Contact the District Deputies in your area to arrange a time and place for a School of Instruction.

- ***Identify members in your Lodge who are potential candidates to become a Masonic Instructor.***

Finally Brethren, please understand that you and your Lodge are not in this alone. This is a **TEAM** effort! If you have any questions or would like guidance or assistance in any of the steps along the way to Lodge Renewal, contact the Masonic Education Committee. The names and addresses of the current members are listed in the Grand Lodge Officers Directory. If in doubt, contact the Grand Lodge Office, who will refer you to the proper people to assist you.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee shall consist of three members. It shall be the duty of this committee to develop, and disseminate programs consistent with Frontier Lodge By-laws and practice designed to be used by lodges to attract new members. The Membership Committee shall meet at a date and location to be set by mutual agreement, but not later than April 15 of each year to;

- (1) review the activities of the Committees for the previous Masonic year,
- (2) to formulate and coordinate goals, plans and programs for the current Masonic year, (3) consider the budget needs of the Committees and available resources, both monetary and personnel to accomplish the goals, plans and programs to be implemented.

TARGETING CHECKLIST

Identify on paper the most successful strategies you have used to get men to join.

Develop two new approaches, knowing the importance of an invitation.

Write a dialogue of what you can say to the prospect that encourages his joining and which he considers an invitation.

Make a list of how the most successful recruiters in your lodge recruit.

A. Things to develop and review

- Review all of the available research to determine the facts about your future members – i.e., age, education, marital status, profession.
- Review with all members why they joined and what they hope to get out of the organization.
- Contact people who have dropped out and discover why they dropped out and what needs were not met by your lodge.
- Identify the most crucial factors affecting your lodge.
- Develop a list of potential benefits the lodge offers that match the needs and expectations of new members.
- Identify significant negatives and determine the best way to handle any objections.

B. Develop a Team

- Identify the names of men who might have an interest in joining.
- Develop a pool of potential members as large as possible. Make sure this is well defined.
- Tailor a plan for each prospect.

C. Organize Your Membership

- Set realistic new member goals for your lodge.
- Establish new member teams among active members by age group. ***Do Team Development!!***
- Host several young member nights with events that include a sports or athletic competitions.
- Give a report card for the lodge to new members to track lodge progress.

KEY POINTS

SPEAK WITH PRIDE ABOUT MASONRY!

MAKE THE FIRST EXPERIENCE DELIGHTFUL

GET FEEDBACK FROM NEW MEMBERS

GUIDE FOR PREPARING A MASONIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

(Published by the Institute for Masonic Studies of the Masonic Grand Lodge of California)

When developing a Masonic Information Program for your Lodge, this guide outlines the most useful parts of many successful programs and can assist you in many ways. Although it is a proven format, you are not required to adhere strictly to its contents. Some of the benefits of a Masonic Information Program include:

- Correcting misconceptions among both Masons and Non-Masons
- Educating Masons – allowing each one able to speak to non-Masons about Masonry
- Dispelling the myth of secrecy by inviting non-Masons to see our Lodges
- New members

While some Lodges are fortunate enough to have members that are both knowledgeable Masons and gifted speakers, this is not so in every Lodge. If your Lodge does not have such a member, or for any reason, desires to have a speaker from outside the Lodge, the Institute for Masonic Studies is happy to provide a qualified and experienced speaker well versed in what Masonry is and what Masonry is not.

A. What the Masonic Information Program is About?

The goal of this program is to draw aside the “Cloud of Doubt.”

- To educate the Mason
- To inform the non-Mason
- To convey new knowledge
- To dispel some of the popular myths about Freemasonry

There is but one purpose of any Masonic Lodge, and that is to make Masons. To do this we need two components: knowledgeable instructors (while every Mason should be able to explain the basic principles of Masonry, not every Mason feels comfortable doing so) and good men who desire to become Better men.

A well-planned and executed Masonic Information Program can provide both the knowledgeable instructors and the good men desirous of becoming better men. Many non-Masons are flooded with misconceptions about Masonry. Often, what we do not know, we fear and/or distrust. To inform the Mason and non-Mason alike about what Masonry is and what Masonry is not is the goal of Masonic Education.

B. How to Plan a Successful Masonic Information Night

Please read the entire guide before planning your event so that you can understand and anticipate the steps to a successful program. Attempting a Masonic Information Program without proper preparation may fail to present a correct impression of our Fraternity.

Your Masonic Information Night should be a special event in your Lodge and not combined with your stated meeting or any other closed event. However, holding an Information Night in conjunction with a public event such as a scholarship presentation, a civic recognition (e.g. retirement of a public figure), or live entertainment by a local talent could enhance attendance. Having the Lodge serve, a special dinner (roast beef, steak and/or rib BBQ, or even a pizza night) has also been proven to enhance attendance.

THE PROGRAM

I – MANAGEMENT

As with all Lodge events, the first steps will be taken by the Worshipful Master. These steps are:

- Include the Masonic Information Program in his yearlong calendar.
- Provide a budget for the event.
- Appoint a capable and enthusiastic Brother as the chairman for the event (provide this Brother with a copy of this guide).
- Emphasize early and frequent notices to the members about the event to encouraging participation.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE

Appoint a Master of Ceremonies for the Information Night – this may be the Brother appointed to chair the event. If the MC is different than the chairman, provide him with a copy of this guide as well. The chairman should secure any additional speakers that will participate in the event. The chairman should also secure any and all supplies, equipment (e.g. PowerPoint projector), and paraphernalia necessary for the event.



TWO MONTHS BEFORE

Put a notice in the Trestle board (Lodge monthly newsletter). The Master should also ask the Chairman or the MC for a report on the progress of the event at the Stated Meeting. You will improve your attendance if you mail a special flyer to the members and have the telephone committee do follow-up phone calls. Newspaper articles and radio spots are also effective. If no one knows about the event, no one will show up.

ONE MONTH BEFORE

Put a large notice in the Trestle board. The chairman or MC should again make a report at the Stated Meeting. The Master and Chairman should offer to assist any of the Brothers with a method of inviting their friends and neighbors to attend the event.

THE MONTH OF THE EVENT

The Master should again encourage the participation of the Lodge. The chairman should take reservations (if there will be a dinner served), and prepare the final arrangements. Allow for those members that show up without reservations – the ones who state, “You know I always come.”

II – SUPPLIES

All supplies should be at the Lodge two weeks before the event.

The LEO can order informational pamphlets through the Ohio Grand Lodge, Masonic Service Association of North America, and any additional information that would be of interest to both Masons and non-Masons. The three-book set *Masonic Education Manual for Candidates* is available and very informative. It is most important to have plenty of applications available.

III – GET THEM THERE

The primary factor in your success is the attendance of both Masons and non-Masons. The men should understand that their ladies are a very important part of this program and that they are most cordially invited. It not only makes a sociable foursome, if a member and his lady invite a non-member and his lady, it creates a foundation of understanding on the ladies’ part that may remove a barrier from the guest’s ability to join. Members of concordant bodies, such as Eastern Star and our youth groups might be asked to assist in the preparation and serving of the dinner. Masonry is a family affair. What better way to display this fact than having members of the Masonic Family present. All Lodge officers should be present, and should greet the members and guests as the evening progresses. Lodge officers should also bring at least one non-Mason. The example shown by the Lodge officers will be reflected in the support you receive from the rest of the Lodge membership.

IV – BEST FOOT FORWARD

- On the day/night of the program, have the Lodge building and Lodge room clean and illuminated for effect.
- Tables should be properly set and decorated.
- A nametag for everyone is a nice touch.
- Welcome your guests and make them feel comfortable. All guests should be met at the door by a greeter and introduced to the key members of the Lodge.
- If unaccompanied guests arrive, assign a member to be the guest's host for the evening.
- Preparing the Lodge room by having the flag in its proper place, the chairs set up with officers' aprons, (jewels are optional), and the altar with the closed Holy Writings, and other paraphernalia helps dispel the cloud of secrecy. (It is not necessarily recommended to light the lesser lights, or to put out the rods – as the Lodge is not open and the rods are distracting if the presentations are given in the Lodge room.)
- Have a supply of the current "Trestle Board" (Lodge Newsletter) and other printed Masonic material suitable for non-Masons placed in a convenient location.

V – HOW MUCH

How much and who should you charge for the dinner? This question is very dependent on your lodge finances, the potential cost of the dinner, the number of attendees, etc. Some suggestions are:

1. The members pay for their dinner and the guests do not, or
2. The Lodge pays for members who bring potential members and their guests, or
3. The Lodge pays for the entire night.

VI – HOW MANY

On the day/evening of your program, assign one of the junior officers the duty of counting the total people present. Divide the count into Lodge Officers and their wives, members and their wives, Masonic Family members and their spouses, and non-Masons and their wives (eight categories should equal the total count). This information is extremely valuable in helping measure the success of your program and in determining future needs.

VII – FINALLY

A special thank you for the efforts of our members in providing this chance for our speaker to talk about Freemasonry, to enlighten the uninformed or misinformed and to contribute to the furtherance of Masonic Education among the Brethren. Our goal has been accomplished if each member and guest leaves with increased knowledge and pride in the Masonic Fraternity. Each of us must do his part in order for Masonry to exist.

A POTENTIAL SCHEDULE THE LODGE COULD USE...

(all times are flexible)

6:00 p.m. Doors open to Dining room and Lodge room
Social

6:30 p.m. Assemble in Dining Room
MC – Introduce Worshipful Master
Master’s Welcome
Invocation
Pledge of allegiance

6:45 p.m. Dinner Served

7:00 p.m. MC – Purpose & Schedule of Program
Introduction of Officers, Past Masters, and dignitaries (who in turn introduce their guests)
Introduction of Members who have brought guests (who in turn introduce their guests)

7:15 p.m. MC – Attendees enter Lodge room for the program

7:30 p.m. MC – Introduces Speaker for the program
Address by Speaker (be sure to save time for questions and answers)

8:15 p.m. MC – Invites attendees to return to the dining room

Desert is served

Attendees are encouraged to continue conversations with the members and/or speaker. Use your good judgment as to when to close off the evening.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR SPEAKERS ADDRESS

- Welcome, Self-Introduction – Resume if not given by MC
- Introduce Wife
- What Freemasonry is not
 - Not a Religion
 - Not a Secret Society
- What Masonry is
- History
- Prior to Grand Lodge of England
- English 1700 era
- Revolutionary era
- Masonry today
- The first degree charge contains a good explanation of our way of thinking

- Three Principal Tenets – Brotherly Love, Relief, Truth
- Cardinal Virtues – Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice
- Tools and implements – present day use
- Square, Level, Plumb, maybe the others
- Our members
- Who they are – Famous and Unknown
- Who they are not
- Requirements – Male, Over 18, Belief in a Supreme Being, Good moral character, Petition, Own Free Will, Fees, Recommenders, Referrals
- Procedures – Investigation, Balloting, Receive Degrees
- Masonic Family
- For men – Scottish Rite, York Rite, Shrine, and others
- For Women – Eastern Star, Amaranth, and others
- For our Youth – Rainbow for Girls, Job’s Daughters, DeMolay
- Masonic Charity
- Questions
- Thank you

Will Rogers, a famous Brother of the Fraternity said:

***“To be successful you have to do three things:
 You have to know what you’re doin’
 You have to love what you’re doin’
 You have to believe in what you’re doin’”
 Only then, will more good men have the desire to become better men.
 So Mote It Be!***

RECRUITING - LOCATING, ATTRACTING & RECEIVING MEN INTO THE CRAFT

A. What you as the leader need to know

It is your job to discover ways your lodge can locate attract and receive men into the Fraternity.

Who are our targets? Men ages 35-55

(Remember, if there is an opportunity to bring in men outside of this age range, DO IT!)
From a survey of 1000 men in the age group 35-55, almost all of them expected to be asked to join an organization.

Why this age range?

This age range is generally more interested than men who are in their twenties, or older than 55.

What next?

1. Identify on paper the most successful strategies you have used to get men to join.
2. Develop two new approaches, knowing the importance of an “invitation.”
3. Write a dialogue of what you can say to a prospect that encourages his joining and which he considers an invitation.
4. Make a list of how the most successful recruiters in your lodge recruit.

B. Things we know about men who might join Masonry

Not all men are interested in joining Masonry or any other group. Favorable interest is only shown for about 25% of the men surveyed. Of this 25%, only 2% show definite interest, and the other 23% may be interested.

Results from the Survey: Who is more likely to join Masonry?

1. Men between the ages of 35 and 55
2. Men with college degrees
3. Single men were more interested than married men.
4. Professional men were more interested than blue-collar workers.



What do we know about men who might join Masonry?

1. 75% said any organization that excluded their wife as a member was unappealing.
2. 70% said they objected to a dress code.
3. 72% said they found memorizing materials not very appealing.
4. 88% found any organization that was racially exclusive unappealing.
5. 93% said they wanted to be invited to join.
6. 92% said the quality of leadership of an organization was important in their decision to join.
7. 92% said the charitable efforts were important to joining.
8. 88% said an image as philanthropic or charitable was important. Of these, 89% included outdoor and sports image.
9. 88% said modest fees for joining were important.

What role do you as the leader have in reference to this information?

The key role of a leader is to determine which factors are the strongest and to encourage the membership to use these positive features and benefits to help sell the organization. That is what your key recruiters do on a daily basis. Ask them for ***HELP***.

Things to develop and review

1. Review all of the available research to determine the facts about your future members.
2. Review with new members why they joined and what they hope to get out of the organization.
3. Contact people who have dropped out and discover why they dropped out and what needs were not met by your lodge.
4. Identify the most crucial factors affecting your lodge.
5. Develop a list of potential benefits the lodge offers that match the needs and expectations of new members.
6. Identify significant negatives and determine the best way to handle any objections.

Key things to stress

1. Stress the benefit of meeting new friends, enjoying the company of other men, and making new connections with like-minded men.
2. Stress the role a wife can enjoy as a partner with her husband in many Masonic events and programs, and how important the family is to the Fraternity.
3. Show the things your lodge has done in the community, and let potential members know about their opportunities to participate.
4. Demonstrate excellence in leadership, and show him how he can be a leader also.

C. Where are the men who we want as members located?

Potential members are all around you!!

Potential members come from every walk of life. They are your friends and neighbors, and also friends of friends. They include your doctor, dentist, lawyer, accountant, and service personnel, married and single men.

Key points for development

1. Potential members from professional ranks can bring important leadership skill that can be an asset to the lodge.
2. Men with whom you have a relationship are your best prospects.
3. Location can have an effect on the interest in joining.
4. Rural lodges may have more success in appealing to potential members than urban lodges.
5. You will make more headway if you appoint a Membership Development Team.

Development Team

1. Identify the names of men who might have an interest in joining. They do not need to be interested at the time.
2. Develop a pool of potential members as large as possible. Make sure this is well defined.
3. Tailor a plan for each prospect.

D. What role does your current membership play?

Older active members may have a very small circle of friends and acquaintances outside of the lodge. This may limit them as messengers about the organization. The key to meeting and exceeding membership goals is getting the younger members to get their friends involved. Involve and activate your new younger members. Get names of prospective members from all the members of your lodge. The most productive will generally be the names derived from your younger members. Activities and social events geared toward the younger membership should be encouraged. These programs may not be the favored programs by your older membership. As a result, your role as leader will be more important than ever.

Organize your membership

1. Set realistic new-member goals for the lodge.
2. Establish new member teams among active members by age groups. Do team development.
3. Host several young member nights with events that include a sports or athletic competitions.
4. Give a report card for the lodge to new members to track lodge progress.

E. What do we mean by Membership Development?

Masonry depends on people joining. Some of this is voluntary and unsolicited, and the rest is through good membership development. No lodge will survive if they do not pay attention to member needs. Develop and retain membership by encouraging participation. With an increase in membership comes an increase in the importance of the organization. As a result, customer relations and membership development are important steps in the development of great leadership behaviors.

1. Provide new and existing members benefits based on their personal needs.
2. Develop programs to meet these needs.
3. Their satisfaction ensures they will remain a member and recommend the lodge to others.

F. Developing the skills and attributes of our current members

What can we do to develop this man called a member?

1. We need to know why he joined.
 2. We must develop programs to meet the expectations of members. If food and social events are the reason for your membership, then build more programs around these activities. If it is ritual that drives your lodge, do more in this end.
- Remember, lodge leadership has many alternatives that are closely related to the needs and expectations of members. If we make our membership happier with the organization, we will keep these members and they will want to bring in more members.

Things to try:

1. Put information about members on the computer in an easy-to-use format so that when you need information, it's at your fingertips.
2. Ask every new member why he joined and what expectations he has from membership.
3. Ask members to do something that is in his area of interest.
4. Involve the member with men who have similar needs and interests.
5. Communicate at least 5 times with a new member within the first 6 months of membership.
6. Call new members if they do not happen to attend lodge.
7. Make each new member feel comfortable when attending lodge.
8. Develop communications that are directly related to their spouse.
9. Involve the family in lodge and make sure they understand about our organization.
10. Make a big deal out of every member who joins!

G. What role might incentives play?

Offer incentives to lodge members

Incentives for existing members who develop membership and help maintain current membership is important. Top-line signers are very important to increasing membership. Properly used, incentives can encourage a man to encourage a friend or relative to ask more about Freemasonry and joining.

1. Develop a presentation that informs members of the lodge about the consequences of doing nothing on membership development. Most lodges are half the size they were in 1980 by 2001.
2. Show what the finances of the lodge would be with half the membership.
3. Consider developing lodge incentives that reward members who get new petitions and who provide guidance for new members.
4. Publicize the recognition for your active membership development people.

Recognition in lodge is essential!!

H. What have we heard about one-day Classes?

One-day classes are a way to bring in new members who would not normally commit to the time of doing all of the degree work in lodge. Membership can be substantially improved through the utilization of one-day classes. These are conducted by the permission of the Grand Master.

Benefits

1. Reducing the amount of time it takes to become a Master Mason for men who normally would be too busy to participate. This is sometimes appealing to businessmen and other professionals.
2. Reduces the amount of work needed to be done by the candidate for the degree.

Downsides

1. Masonic education is cut short. When members go through one-day classes, the lodge needs to add to their Masonic education.
2. The lodge may not be ready to receive these new members. Pursue these members and get them back and involved. If you do not do this, these names will end up with your retention committee.

Lodges often take advantage of the one-day degrees when needed. If members of the lodge are advance through this method, develop a plan for Masons who have gone through one-day degrees, paying particular attention to their Masonic orientation and making them feel welcome and comfortable while attending lodge.

I. Who says we can't "recruit" new members?

Get used to it. If our organization is going to survive, we will recruit by making good men aware of our fraternity and answering any questions they may have before asking for a petition. ***Remember, this is not a secret organization. We are an organization with secrets.***

Try these strategies:

1. Get your lodge in the news. Lodges who make positive news and are active in the community, especially in the local schools, attract the interest of men who are looking for an organization in which they can feel proud.
2. Go where the boys are. If you decide, you want younger men, sponsor a softball team, or become active with the PTA. The more people you come into contact with, the more potential members you will know.
3. Let others know what you do in Masonry. Speak with pride about Masonry, and how wonderful a group it is with which to be involved.
4. Remember to let your best friends know about Masonry. Include your son and his friends and parents. Do not forget to ask if they have ever thought about joining Masonry.

REMEMBER – SPEAK WITH PRIDE ABOUT MASONRY!!

J. What can the Lodge do to create wider appeal?

The community needs to know more about Masonry. They need to know what Masonry stands for and how to join. Your lodge needs to have a connection to the community. Instant appeal can be achieved with sponsoring programs for kids.

Get your lodge involved with local schools and projects that benefit kids. Fathers are there with their children. Male teachers will be there. Impressive work gets positive attention. Our appellant body-sponsored charities are good examples.

K. What to do when no one knows your name

Masonic recognition today is not what it was in yours gone by. Everyone used to know about the Masons and what they did. Today, only about 8% of the heads of households know what Masons do and who they are.

Things to do:

1. Improve signage on your building and grounds. Get your name on the welcoming sign and roads into your community.
2. Join with other volunteer groups on a major project and make sure you get credit for your participation.
3. Do something good and positive in the community on a consistent basis.
4. Meet with local reporters on a regular basis. Take their advice, and let them know about what your lodge is doing.
5. Develop a lodge handout that explains who you are and what you stand for. Make it available throughout your community.
6. Ask your lodge membership to let others know about your lodge's role in the community.
7. If your lodge can afford it, buy awareness advertising in the local paper.
8. Let people see the square and compass. Advertise on cars, windows and other locations.

Press coverage considerations

What the press considers news may be entirely different than the lodge. Before you get coverage in the local press, you have to understand their needs for readers and advertising and take your lead from what they tell you.

1. Identify a community writer or two from the local press.
2. Put together a packet of information about Masonry and your lodge in particular.
3. Arrange to meet the writers for lunch. Discuss with them your ideas about coverage in their paper and ask them what will be of interest to their readers. Take note of how they speak of advertisers and readers even if you are concerned only about your image.
4. If they offer additional assistance, take it. (They could also develop into a new member.)

L. How can you make a new Mason's first experience DELIGHTFUL?

Masons have tried to find better words to describe the benefits of joining Masonry. No word says it better than **DELIGHTFUL**. If a new Mason's first experience is delightful, they will pass this good feeling on to others and recommend or endorse the activities of the lodge. Members become delighted with their decision to join when a combination of the following occur:

*Time is not wasted, Fellowship is real,
Events are fun, Food is good,
Value is received, Cliques disappear.
Joining is easy, Friends are supportive,
Meetings aren't boring, Leaders know their jobs,
Wives like what we've done; Pride is a result
Make sure to ask new members "How are we doing?"
Report the results to the lodge.*

The Military

Description: This text is designed to give you ideas for reaching out to military organizations (Reserve and National Guard) within your community. The concepts are general enough to work with any service organization i.e. Army, Air Force etc.

Goal: The goal is to create opportunities for military members and veterans to understand what Freemasonry is all about and help them understand the benefits of membership.

What's in it for them: The chief reason a military unit would be interested in Freemasonry is that membership is the military's concern as well, but in a different way. Reserve and National Guard units rely on the local community to provide both employment and a sense of belonging to unit members. Both are required for a strong and stable military unit, but all military organizations struggle with this. Freemasonry offers an opportunity for a male service member to gain a sense of purpose and belonging within the community, while giving opportunities to network within the community with may increase opportunities to gain employment. These concepts are vital to both organizations.

Concepts: Below are several actions to be taken with reference to a local military organization. Again, the chief goal of these actions is simply to create opportunities to make connections with military members.

Commanding officer drip campaign: Send a letter to the commanding officer of your local military unit asking for time to present Freemasonry to the members of the organization. Military organization names, addresses and contact information are public and readily available on the World Wide Web.

Example letters in Microsoft Word format have been provided.

Sponsor a unit: Along with the many regional or national programs listed in this guide, arranging deployment support for a local military unit makes a more personal situation and allows military members to get to know brethren. Examples of deployment support are:

- Hosting a family member dinner,
- Creating a parents night out program,
- Sponsoring a holiday party for deployed families,
- Any other event or idea to make life easier on the parent left behind during a deployment.

Leverage your veterans/current military: There's nothing worse than trying to connect with a veteran when there is no frame of reference. Military members have unique circumstances. Leveraging your veterans and current military members to build relationships is a best practice.

Meet the military night: Sponsor a day for military members to come and make a presentation or talk about their military experiences.

Grand Lodge of Ohio College Outreach Program

First thing everyone must understand is most Candidates brought in from the College/University will not stay. That doesn't mean you shouldn't reach out and form those connections. It truly is for the betterment of the Craft as a whole. That also combined with the enthusiasm younger members bring will make the effort all worth wild.

First, things first. You should lay the groundwork beforehand. The Lodge needs to establish a Website and Social Media (Facebook, Twitter) Its essential all information is current. The Website does not need to be super flashy but can't have outdated information on it. The Lodge's contact info must have an email address. All initial communication will be by email. Someone must be set to respond within 24-48 hours. The younger generation expects a timely response, instant if possible. They will also be looking for you at 3 am and your probably not taking phone calls at that hour.

Now you need a committee of younger members to be the Lodge's College Outreach. First rule for the committee is ask what the younger members want and do it. Don't make any assumptions. Time has changed so much and continues to change every day. We must be flexible.

Second, you need to plan an Open House at the Lodge and invite in young men from the local College/University. This can be a standalone event or you can start with a Campus Sponsored Event whose sole purpose should be to make your presence known. You'll find that most young people know about us and are seeking more information. Either way I suggest offering food. The way to a poor College student's heart is thru his stomach.

You must be willing to try different options. These are all suggestions were making. They may work they may not. But if you try nothing you will gain nothing. As with any positive advancement all it takes is a spark to get a fire going.

Your goal should be to build this relationship. I can assure you when this takes off you'll have more Degree work to do then you ever imagined. You figure most Lodges have 20 stated meetings per year. If you bring in just seven new members that's 3 Degrees apiece that equals 21 separate meetings. You'll be very busy. What a terrible problem to have.

Now not only must your committee focus on College Outreach but also on retention. You will have to improve meetings to suit those new members. Again, I'm not saying we have all the answers but the Grand Lodge Committee on Membership is working to provide proven suggestions and recommendations. We know some will work and some won't. Each Lodge is different but failing to try anything will result in nothing changing. We look forward in hearing what works and what doesn't. We will strive to provide whatever support possible. It may start out slow. Maybe get a Fraternity to use your Lodge for their next Initiation with Grand Master approval. Show your support on Campus. Support an event or just let them know you exist. Between the movie industry, best-selling books and the History Channel young people know who we are they just need to know where to find us.

Finally, our goal should be to show Freemasonry in a positive light and promote that good men still exist. The younger generation is looking for mentors and men they can look up to. They also want to associate with good men who share their virtues and value tradition. We are what they want and need in their lives they just haven't found us yet. We shall complete them and they will support us. Our friendships and our fellowship is our greatest treasure. Let us not judge those who are not yet Brothers.

Only our trust in God, the faith in our Brothers and the charity given to mankind as a result of our actions matter within the Lodge. So Mote It Be.

10 REASONS TO BECOME A MASON

A Masonic Lodge is:

1. A place where you can confidently trust every person and trust your family with them also.
2. A place where, within moral and civil guidelines, free thought, free speaking and the spiritual growth of man, can grow into its fullest potential.
3. A place to meet outstanding individuals from all walks of life that a person would not otherwise have had the opportunity to know and call brother.
4. A place to be a part of an organization, which has for its principal tenets – Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.
5. A place that provides self-development opportunities, leadership training and experience, and a place to improve public speaking skills.
6. A place you can go to seek support as well as give it.
7. A place where moral virtues are taught and through these teachings a regular reinforcement of the moral virtues is experienced.
8. A place to spend time with a group of brothers, who by acting as good men, make me want to become a better man. Not better than others, but better than I would have otherwise been.
9. A place to become better equipped to serve Church and community.
10. A place to meet with established members of the community and to become a part of the community.

WHAT DO YOUNGER MASONS REALLY WANT?

Timothy Bonney, MPS, from his web-site [Freemasonry Resources](#)

I have been a Master Mason for just three short years. I turned 40 this year, and by all demographics, can still be considered a younger Freemason.

During the time I have been a Freemason, I have been told by many older experienced Freemasons that we have to make it easier for young guys to join. I've been told that the decline in membership is partially due to it being too hard for young men to find time from family and work to Freemasons. So, we have to make it easier.

No one seemed to have ever asked any younger Masons if *easier* Freemasonry is what they really want!

So, in the pursuit of making it easier, we have offered One Day Classes. We have loosened the rules on proficiency in the first lecture. We've kept our dues low to accommodate men who may not have the funds to pay higher dues. In many lodges we have been less rigorous in our examination of new candidates by investigating committees. You seldom hear about a black cubed being dropped because, after all, don't we need the members?

But, there has been one basic problem with all that I have been told by long-experienced Masons about what younger men want. None of them seemed to have ever asked any younger Masons if *easier* Freemasonry is what they really want! And, in fact, I have come to believe that easier Freemasonry is not what younger men who want to join our fraternity are wanting at all! My own experience is echoed in the stories I hear from Masons under forty.

Younger Masons do not want Freemasonry handed to them. They want to earn it!

have me.

I became a Freemason in great part because of the witness of my Grandfather to the value of Freemasonry. When he died, I attended his Masonic service and was impressed by the men in dark suit, white gloves, and white aprons who paid tribute to my Grandfather. At that funeral, I promised myself that someday I would be a Mason if such a fraternity of honorable men would

More than a decade passed before I acted on that promise. During that time, I read every web page, book, and article I could find on Freemasonry. I read about the history, philosophy, and ethics of the Craft.

When I petitioned Phoenix Lodge, I was informed that I could receive my degrees in a One Day Class. But, I thought about my Grandfather and requested that I received my degrees in the usual way. I wanted to experience the full initiatory experience my Father, Grandfather, and Great-Grandfather had experienced. I wanted to memorize every word of the ciphers given to me. I did not want my mentor to cut me any slack.

As I have seen young men come into the Craft I have seen that they want many of the same things I wanted. Young Masons do not want anyone to make it easy for them. Younger Masons that I have talked to believe that we need to make it harder and not easier to receive the degrees. Younger Masons want to read and learn about the philosophy and teaching of Craft Masonry. They do not want Freemasonry handed to them. They want to earn it!

We want the Freemasonry of our Fathers and Grandfathers. We want to be challenged, stretched, educated, and trained. We want the opportunity to take our rough ashlar and begin to smooth them.

In my own professional life I have made a study of young adults. While my study involved young adults in a church setting, I had opportunity to write some course material for use by churches for young adult ministries.

Much of what I learned about young adults applies to Freemasonry as much as it does church. Young people are searching in our society. They are searching for meaning, depth, and focus to their lives. They are searching for a philosophy and ethic that will help them to live a better life. They are searching for growth and self-improvement. In short, they are searching for what Ancient Craft Freemasonry in its purest form offers them.

If older Masons really ask young Masons what we really want, I believe you will find that we want the fundamentals of the ancient and honorable Craft of Freemasons. We want the freemasonry of Anderson's constitutions. We want the freemasonry of our Fathers and Grandfathers. We want to be challenged, stretched, educated, and trained. We want the opportunity to take our rough ashlar and begin to smooth them. We want to be Freemasons in the fullest sense of the word!

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING PETITIONS

The Process:

- Lodge receives a petition to join from a candidate, having completed it and had the petition signed by a member **personally acquainted** with the candidate.
- The Petition will be read in a regular stated meeting. The **W:.M.:** will then appoint an Investigating Committee, each a member in good standing in the lodge.
- Each member of the Investigating Committee will meet with the candidate and become personally acquainted with him. They should become familiar with his family life, church membership if applicable, and any other pertinent facts that may influence his selection to the lodge.
- The members should then report as a committee at the next stated communication. The report may be returned with a favorable or unfavorable report.
- The **W:.M.:** will order the ballot spread on the proposed candidate. The balloting process will follow as provided in the bylaws.
- The **W:.M.:** will declare the result of the ballot. In the case of a favorable ballot, the **W:.M.:** will direct that an EA initiation date be set for the candidate.

Note: It is recommended and encouraged that one or more of the members knowledgeable of the candidate personally escort the candidate to his initiation and that the members serve as mentors during the candidate's Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason Degrees. Such support will demonstrate our sincere interest in the candidate, make his Masonic ritual more meaningful and will help to assure that the candidate becomes active and involved.

RETENTION CHECKLIST

1. What do young Masons want from Masonry?

A. Ask your new members

2. Establish a Membership Retention Team

A. Set out goals (Lodge Activities)

B. Coordinate with Lodge Officers

3. Build a relationship with new members

A. Include them in all activities and ritual

B. Make sure they are included in business meetings

C. Assign a mentor to each new member

4. Lodge Activities in and out of the Lodge Building

A. Ritual

B. Education

C. Community involvement

A. RETENTION OF NEW MEMBERS

1. What a leader should know

It is important to know your customers!

It is more important to know about those who will be your future customers! Sometimes we call them prospects, but by any name, they are critical to our future! First, we must understand in some detail who these “prospects” are. Learn as much about them as you can before they join. By taking this course of action, you can structure your programs for membership development and retention to the needs of your members. You may also discover that your future members will want benefits from joining that are different from your current members. You probably won’t have to change your lodge, but you will need to accommodate these needs.

Don’t let old ways of doing things get in the way!

A leader who considers building his membership by attracting new members to his lodge will discover they bring few negatives as new members. Renewing the lodge by rekindling the interest of inactive current members means “an unhappy” member may be rejoining and you should be prepared to handle the consequences.

2. What are their attitudes toward joining?

Actually, we know a great deal about these men who might join. Research shows the following six behaviors about men:

1. 75% said they had little or no interest in joining.
2. 90% said they had no time.
3. 90% said they would not join a secretive organization.
4. 85% said they would not join an organization that would not allow women as members.
5. 95% said they did not want to wear a special uniform.
6. 0% said they wanted more ritual and memorization in their lives.

We have a very difficult task to appeal to men of quality and *we had better do it right!* Some real benefits men want in their lives that may represent an opportunity for leaders who know how to use them are:

1. The vast majority (85%) of those interviewed wanted more friends.
2. Nearly 100% said they wanted to make new connections.
3. Nearly all married men interviewed wanted better time with their family.
4. 80% wanted to have some role of importance in their community.
5. 60% wanted more opportunities to lead.

3. What are men joining and why?

Try this: Establish a membership development team

Research clearly indicates most men are not joiners, so we are competing with other organizations (such as Elks, Eagles, Lions, etc.). We must not only work hard to recruit, but we must work smart.

Lou Harris surveyed 1,000 youthful men at random for the Imperial Shine and found:

1. 76% said they were not involved in clubs, civic organizations or societies.
2. 24% said they were involved (college graduates were twice as involved as high school graduates).
3. 6% said they were involved with fraternal organizations.
4. 47% of men age 35 – 55 had a problem finding the time to be involved. Of these, only 8% said they had no problem finding time.
5. 29% of men polled had trouble finding enough time for their jobs.



4. How do men who might join use their free time?

USA Today poll:

Use of free time:

1. Reading 46%
2. Watch TV 24%
3. TV Sports 12%
4. Active Sports 9%
5. Hobbies 6%
6. Other 3%

Clearly, time (meaning the efficient use of time or time not wasted) is a promise you will have to make to men who might join.

From the beginning of recruitment, we should:

1. Build time-related questions into the home visitation or investigation.
2. Make men aware the time required at the beginning is longer than time for meetings.
3. Make sure every meeting and every event uses time effectively.

Ask yourself:

What is the difference between “perceived free time” and the amount of time a man will commit to something he really enjoys?

5. What are new-member expectations?

Men who do not belong to any organizations are looking for the following:

1. New friends, the opportunity to meet and make new friends and connections.
2. A role for their families, not as members, but as participants.
3. A role in the community and the feeling of pride that comes from this type of involvement.
4. An opportunity to lead and become leaders in the organization they join.

You may believe that pursuing these four points will make your Masonic Lodge more like a social or civic club, but if you overlook what our future members NEED, you will not achieve the gains in membership that your lodge needs, Guaranteed.

Make your lodge a warm and welcoming place where it is possible to meet new friends and where the special kinds of fellowship Masons are capable of offering are not only possible but also the reality. You won't believe what satisfaction this will bring to all of your members.

6. What role does your leadership play?

So far, we hope we have made the point that there is nothing more important during your years in the leadership of your lodge than to look after your current future members. Installing this as part of the culture of your lodge could be your greatest contribution. First, you need a plan with goals and strategies for the next several years. It could look like this:

Membership Goal Strategies Goal –

Year 1 Goal –

Year 2 Goal –

Year 3 Goal –

Second, you need a team who will implement the actions in your plan.

Third, you need benchmark targets against which you will measure results or take corrective actions.

Fulfilling those three key ideas over several years will help eliminate disruption and confusion. It's also clear that if you are the Worshipful Master or the Senior Warden, you will not be in the office when your three-year plan is complete. Hence, the importance of installing team leadership is crucial. Your goals should include four to five first-class events for each year.

7. How do we make the joining process more appealing?

Try these four steps:

1. **Improve engagement:** This means make an attempt to amaze and delight the new member with the quality of the experience of becoming a Mason. We engage people at a personal level by caring for them as human beings and paying attention to their interests and needs.
2. **Better communication:** More communication doesn't necessarily mean more paper. It means answering his questions openly and candidly, sharing the goals of the organization and explaining the important role the new member can play. More people who left the Craft wonder what the organization was all about.
3. **Know his expectations:** When we understand what a man wants from his membership, his expectations, we can come in a whole lot closer to providing these solutions than if we try and guess what will make him happy. All men who join appear to want to make new friends and connections. The effective leader will make this possible in the lodge.
4. **Increase follow-up:** We hear so often that once a man becomes a Master Mason the lodge has nothing more to do with him. How sad. This is precisely the best time to begin involving the man in his Fraternity in such a way that it brings joy and satisfaction to his life.

8. How much value do we offer?

The question should read: “How much should Masonry be worth?” Instead, we’ve added the concept of value because that’s what you need to think about. Men, who join, look at the initiation and the annual dues and weigh the amount versus the value they get from their contribution. Are we able to say we offer more for less, or do we offer less for less? A few Masons may not appreciate this comparison of the Fraternity to organizations like AAA Auto Club or American Express, but these organizations offer more for less and so should we.

9. Why is first impression so important?

Try this:

Develop a list of first impression benefits you would like a new member of your lodge to sense when he first comes into your Masonic Temple. Conduct a first-impressions audit of your lodge through the eyes of the new member. Develop a list of recommended changes and a plan for achieving them during a specified period. Form a plan to correct conditions causing bad first impressions.

10. What role does the spouse play in men joining?

What role does the spouse play in men joining? It will not surprise most men to know that wives play a critical role in the joining process. As importantly, that role has changed over the years from one of virtually no voice, to a 21st century role where the words partnership and parity more often describe the wife’s role in a man’s joining behavior.

When a man comes home from a meeting, his wife asks, “What happened?”, and he responds “Nothing or Not much, just a business meeting,” the wife’s next question will be “Why are you going to these meetings if you’re bored and nothing happens?”

Try this:

1. Explain in precise terms the amount of additional time it takes at the beginning to both the man and to his wife.
2. Pay close attention to the wife and family early in his membership.
3. Check all lodge activities and events to see that they do not waste time.
4. Offer degree work only at an extra meeting.
5. Aim at having meetings end early.

Five reasons former members gave for leaving the Fraternity:

1. Masonry takes too much time.
2. It was not what I expected.
3. I was bored. Nothing ever happened in the lodge.
4. Lodge was a very unfriendly place.
5. The lodge leadership was not up to the tasks at hand.

Get more PR for the lodge. Get more involved and have a greater relevance in your community. Get more involved with the family.

11. Summing it up

1. Men who join have very little time for the joining process and no time to be wasted.
2. Men who join have expectations for joining and if you know what they are, you can do something about meeting them.
3. Men who want to join will need to have the wives' "approval" of their membership.
4. The more concrete benefits we can offer a man for his membership, the more value we create. As the leader, creating value is your job.
5. The positive first impression he receives is like money in the bank.
6. Communicating with him can make all the difference in the world.
7. Fellowship and new friends are at the heart of the reasons why most men join.
8. When you demonstrate good leadership, you are meeting two of his goals for joining, evidence of good leadership and an opportunity to lead.
9. The Promise Keepers and other organizations are targeting the same men we need to look at for Masonry.
10. What a man does not know about the organization can hurt you.
11. As the leader of the lodge, membership development and membership satisfaction are your two most important jobs.
12. Because the goals for membership development and retention will take more than one year, you will need a multi-year plan.
13. By developing a multi-year plan for membership, you are more likely to achieve your goals.

SUSPENSION CHECKLIST

1. Survey all Lodge members who have been suspended for the last five years

- A. List from Lodge Secretary or Grand Lodge Office.
- B. Telephone or personally contact them.
- C. Ask why they left the Lodge.
- D. Ask what the Lodge could do differently to have kept them.

2. List of changes Lodge needs to make to keep the current members

- A. Coordinate with Lodge Officers to make the changes

3. Invite the suspended members back after you have made the changes

4. Give Petition for Reinstatement after suspended members visit your activity

INTRODUCTION TO LEADING CHANGE

A. What you as a leader need to know

Just as the manager of a store and the employees are responsible for the customers they gain, so are they responsible for the customers they lose. In some retail stores, losing a customer is a cause for dismissal. As the leader of the lodge or Masonic organization, you need to know that losing a member is your responsibility as well. It may not be your fault, but it is clearly your responsibility.

B. What can we learn from men we've lost?

One of the right things you can do as the leader is to examine a list of those men you have "lost" over the last five (5) years and assess the reasons why they may have left your organization. Some answers may be simple: They moved to a different state. The more difficult findings will include that they left because Freemasonry "was not what they expected."

Key Idea:

We won't make all Masons happy when we say this, but you may want to concentrate only on your last five (5) years of inactive or "lost" members. After a few years of inactivity, members are in reality lost to the organization and the resources committed to renew their membership could be spent more productively in gaining and retaining new members.

Try This:

1. Ask the Grand Lodge for a list of the names and addresses of all members who have joined over the past three years.
2. Determine which of these have become suspended.
3. If your list is not too long, contact each personally by phone and determine why their interest has waned.
4. Develop an action plan for each who gives you any sign that they might be interested in renewing their interest and becoming active once again.
5. Inquire and make a list of all the reasons why the member let his membership lapse.

Key Idea:

1. The vast majority (66%), indicate that Masonry was not what they expected. When asked to explain in more detail, they said they were not prepared for the initiation, it surprised them and they were uncomfortable. The initiation was very uncomfortable for many.
2. They said that no one had told them what to expect and this made them uncomfortable and even embarrassed.
3. To learn the ritual took too much time away from their family or job.
4. The meetings they did attend were too long and boring. "Nothing happened." They were disappointed at the lack of effective leadership. Members were "cliquish" and aloof.

Try This:

Before you can begin to take corrective actions, you need to get over the "shock" of reading a list of circumstances that can be very damaging to the lodge. What these members were saying is that most of the early stages of their membership were filled with negatives. Now it is true that your lodge may have handled these issues and made the appropriate changes, but if you have not, you should use this information as a place to begin your study of why men leave after joining. Consider:

1. Developing a more comprehensive explanation of the initiation and discussing it with the candidate before he experiences it.
2. Meeting with the candidate after each degree and handling his concerns at that time.
3. Asking him frequently during the first six months of his membership, "How are you doing and what questions do you have?"

C. What do we do with this boredom thing?

Let's consider this one carefully because it is at the root of many of the difficulties the lodge is facing and the solution rests squarely with the leadership of the lodge.

Boredom comes from repetition and from sameness - characteristics of too many lodges in North America. Interestingly, the leaders of the lodge do not see this in the same light as the member because they are at least involved in some actions related to the lodge. Members, on the other hand, simply sit out there and take it.

The degree work, which admittedly does not occur at every meeting, even when it is done very well, becomes old hat and uninteresting to the men sitting on the sidelines. It may be interesting for those on the degree team, but for the members it is a time of sameness and some men may even doze off. The evidence is clear that it does not create sufficient appeal to keep men coming back to the lodge.

Key Idea:

The solution, therefore, must lie elsewhere. Here are the key ideas:

1. Every lodge meeting - special and stated - needs to be planned around an agenda that offers interest and involvement to members.
2. Good fellowship prior to the meeting is essential.
3. Programs that delight members are key to their interest.
4. Regular assessments of how well you reduce boredom help.

Try This:

1. Appoint an active member to a lodge program team and work to develop a yearlong agenda.
2. Test each suggested program against some quality measurements to see if it will "delight" your members.

D. What are the telltale signs of losing interest?

You might think this is obvious, "he stops coming to meetings!" But there are some telltale signs some men display before this occurs.

Early in the process, during the time he is receiving his degrees, he will appear increasingly less attentive, resist making friends and appear removed from the process; sure signs that he is questioning what he has joined. He will be late for scheduled classes or miss more than others. He may become removed from the group and appear shy. He will show little interest in advancing to the next degree and may have to be "pushed" a bit to make the commitment. He may drop out of sight after the initial degree-then you'll clearly see something's wrong. During the first several months after he has completed his degree work, he will avoid attending meetings, show no interest if he does and not volunteer for activities sponsored by the lodge. If he's married, his wife will not make appearances at lodge events and he will not make new friends among the members. He will not respond to phone calls, answer letters and may say things to his friends about his decision to join. After the first year, more than 80% of all new members fail to return to meetings and remain active in their lodge. 80% is a huge number and should be of concern to every Masonic leader. Something is happening that is serious and damaging to the lodge. In fact these men are all but lost to the lodge and may never return. Think about all of the time and effort you put into locating this man and making him a Mason only for him to vote with his feet that Masonry is not for him and to disappear forever.

Key Idea:

1. There are right things you can and should do at each of these three stages.
2. Failing to take action puts all membership development at risk.
3. A man begins his dissatisfaction very early in the joining process.

Try This:

1. Assign a mentor or big brother to each new member for a period of up to one year.
2. Ask each new member frequently about his continuing interest and satisfaction.

Pay attention to what he tells you. Probe for additional details. Ask his wife if you're not sure.

E. What role does the cost of membership play?

Masonic leaders are often tempted to consider the costs of Masonry as a burden to joining. Among the early strategies, some leaders consider reducing the annual dues to some lower level hoping to reduce or eliminate the objections that *it costs too much to be a Mason*.

The facts, however, do not support this either among those men who are members or among those who are considering the organizations. Therefore, any attempts to increase new membership and improve retention by financial methods are most likely ill advised.

The facts are that it costs less to be a Mason for a year today than it does to get your newspaper delivered to your home for a month! Therefore, reducing the cost is not as significant a strategy as increasing the value of membership.

Perpetual memberships, so popular among some jurisdictions and in many lodges may offer what appears to be a benefit to the member, but this one-time payment often fails to take into account the costs of inflation and the increased costs of lodge operations in a declining membership.

Key Idea:

The solution to declining membership, to the difficulties of locating and enrolling new members, and in retaining new members once they have joined is not related to the costs of membership in the Masonic lodge. Look elsewhere for a strategy.

Try This:

1. Review the date when invoices are sent to the home. If it's right around the holidays, consider changing the mailing date.
2. Consider increasing the dues by adding value.
3. Do an analysis of the consequences of perpetual membership and determine ways to cover the increased costs to the lodge over the average life of the agreement.
4. Develop a programmatic plan for the lodge and a budget and seek the support of the lodge to increase dues to support its implementation.

F. What steps can YOU take when the signs first appear?

Some people say members who are unhappy with the organization, vote with their feet. They simply don't come back. There's probably a lot of truth to this statement.

Unhappy members don't support a volunteer organization. So what steps can you take if and when you learn the member is unhappy?

The right course of action for the leader of a lodge to take is to never let your customer - your member - get to the stage where he is unhappy. The other areas in this Guide have been directing you to take the kinds of steps to insure his satisfaction is high from the very beginning. Here are six ideas you might want to try:

1. From the very beginning make sure your new member understands the organization he is joining, what Masons stand for and where he fits into the lodge he is joining.
2. Make him very comfortable with the routine of lodge, the words and grip that will be part of his recognition, the protocol of lodge and the way he addresses lodge and Grand Lodge officers.
3. Make sure he is at home and comfortable - never looking lost. Introduce him to a man his age and help him make new friends.
4. If he misses a meeting, ask a friend to call him and find out why. If he's new to the area, call him yourself.
5. Demonstrate your interest in meeting his needs by finding out what they are.
6. Ask him to help in your lodge with something you have planned. Asking him to show an interest in the chairs may not be a right move this early in the process.

Key Idea:

Even though he has joined of his own free will and accord, this does not mean we can ignore his needs. As a member, he needs the nourishment of a sapling tree until his roots are fixed firm into the organization.

Try This:

Consider developing a mini-action plan around any of the six points mentioned above and implementing these activities in your lodge.

Lodge Mini Action Steps

- ***Make sure your new member understands the organization he is joining, what Masons stand for and where he fits into the lodge he is joining.***
- ***Make him very comfortable with the routine of lodge, the words and grip that will be part of his recognition, the protocol of lodge and the way he addresses lodge and Grand Lodge officers.***
- ***Make sure he is at home and comfortable -never looking lost.***
- ***Introduce him to men his age and help him make new friends.***
- ***If he misses a meeting, ask a friend to call him and find out why. If he's new to the area, call him yourself.***
- ***Demonstrate your interest in meeting his needs by finding out what they are.***
- ***Ask him to help out in your lodge with something you have planned.***
- ***Asking him to show an interest in the chairs may not be a right move this early in the process.***

G. How can we enlist others to save the man?

There are probably only three people who can effectively make a difference with a man who has begun to lose interest in the Craft. In reality, none of them will be really effective if the man has decided he doesn't want to be a member.

Let's begin with who can make the most immediate difference. You. As the leader of the lodge, you have the ability to make his membership meaningful, interesting and exciting. You and your members working together can overcome almost any objection. If he is moving, working the night shift, totally without resources or other conditions, you probably will need to consider other arrangements. But if he is too lazy or too bored, you can overcome these objections. This handbook is filled with the "how's" to do this.

His friends can make a difference. His recommender, his buddies, those he has met since he joined and others with whom he is close in the lodge can take him aside and be helpful in resolving his concerns. It may be as simple as needing a ride or help explaining the organization to his wife and family.

His family: wife, children, father, mother and relatives who understand the organization and support his involvement can answer his questions and support and encourage his involvement.

Key Idea:

The important consideration is that his continued interest and involvement needs to be "of his own free will and accord." Just as it was when he joined. Pressuring a man to come back to lodge or asking others to bring pressure will not be as effective as learning of his concerns and needs and taking actions to increase his satisfaction.

Try This:

1. Try to determine the single most important reason for his loss of interest and activity.
2. Speak with a close friend or his wife to see where you may have missed an opportunity you can still salvage.
3. If you don't know where to begin, consider saying to this member, "Look, it seems we may not have handled your membership well up to this point. What is there that I can do personally that will make a difference in your decision to leave."

H. Summing it up

It may sound negative to end this Handbook with a section on losing members. But every enterprise that has members or customers has to have a contingency plan to handle those situations when a customer or member no longer appears satisfied and supportive of the enterprise. We have offered leaders of Masonic lodges the following key ideas and suggestions:

1. As the leader of a Masonic organization, membership retention is your responsibility.
2. Members who leave the organization can provide valuable insights into the reasons why the organization is not fulfilling the expectations.
3. Boredom and "sameness" are critical concerns in many lodges and the leader has to take action to eliminate both.
4. The effective leader can tell when a member is not satisfied by observing his behavior – principally his attendance and aloofness.
5. The Imperial Shrine has research that clearly defines reasons why men become dissatisfied and fail to renew their membership!
6. Cost of membership - particularly the annual dues - is not in and of itself reason for most men to let their membership lapse.

7. The effective leader can learn a great deal by having a one-on-one with his members.
8. Taking actions when the first signs of dissatisfaction appear is critical to changing his direction.
9. Other members should be asked to solve retention issues.
10. Phase II research completed by the Masonic Renewal Task Force gives vital information about why men are not happy with their membership.
11. One-day classes present opportunities and challenges.
12. Time plays a critical role in member satisfaction and interest.
13. Members who have been inactive for years should be approached very carefully.

We can learn about members by watching how businesses handle customers. Lost members can create significant bad will.

DELINQUENT MEMBERS

The increasing numbers of Masons being suspended for non-payment of dues each year is alarming. While we must actively work on procuring new members, we must also be careful to see that once they have joined the Fraternity, they will not become disenchanted and show up on the suspension list after a few years. The Lodge Chairman assigned to RETENTIONS should obtain from the Secretary a list of all Members who are in arrears. This should be done shortly after the beginning of each year.

A letter from the Master of the Lodge to those Members on the list to advise that their dues are in arrears and to encourage remittance of same. A follow-up letter from the Master of the Lodge could be sent to those who have not yet responded after a certain period of time.

For the Members who have still not responded, the most successful method is PERSONAL CONTACT – either in person or by phone – Although the Master, other officers of the Lodge, or a Past Master, could contact the Member, perhaps it is best for his petition signers (if possible) or a member of the Membership Committee. Preferably a Member who is acquainted with him should make contact. In some cases, a Brother is unable to pay his dues because of financial reasons. In these situations, the Lodge could remit his dues as provided by the "Millennium Fund." Remember, the Masonic principals of brotherly love, relief and truth should not allow a member to be dropped from the roles for non-payment of dues. The names of those who are in need of assistance must be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

These are but some guidelines the Lodge Membership Committee may use to assist them in retaining their members. Additional dues notices may be sent, as well as developing a letter to send to the Brothers who signed the delinquent member's petition.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE



Any town Lodge #
F.:& A.: M.:
123 W. Miller Ave.
Any town, OH 12345

Date

Address

Dear Brother (First name),

I am writing this letter to ask you a favor. It is a small one by our measure of requests, but one that may be a major issue for you. We are asking for you to return to the lodge.

For whatever reason, a number of brothers no longer attend. Whether it was some personal issue with a member, inability to see a benefit, or just boredom, we ask you to give us another chance. The lodge membership and internal appearance has changed a lot in the last year or two. We are finishing up a repainting of the interior walls and have just completed replacing the old tiled floors with a beautiful hardwood floor. Our membership is rejuvenated and recharged with some new, young blood in the lodge. We have dinners at least once a month, recently held a movie night, and are trying to come up with innovative ways to make the meetings more enjoyable by including an educational section in the schedule.

If you have a specific reason for not returning to the lodge, please take a few minutes and fill out the enclosed questionnaire to let us know why. If we sense a common reason for losing attendance, we will make it our goal to correct that problem to get you back and to keep others coming. Do not let your "loss of the word" be a reason for not coming back. We will be happy to schedule a "rusty nail" meeting to help refresh everyone's memory. Also, transportation will be arranged for anyone who needs help getting to the lodge. We meet on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Try it again twice before making your decision to give up on the lodge.

Freemasonry is more than membership and paying dues. It is the opportunity to exchange ideas and gain friendships through the fellowship gained by sitting in the lodge. We miss your input and support, and look forward to having you return.

Fraternally Yours,

(Worshipful Master's signature)

Membership Questionnaire

Name : _____

Date last attended lodge: _____

Reason for no longer attending:

- Too busy with current work
- No means of transportation
- Disagreement with lodge members
- I am not comfortable learning language and floor work
- Meetings were not productive
- Was not getting anything more out of membership

Other (please explain) _____

Thank you for taking the time to return this survey. We hope it serves to make Any town Lodge # a better place.

Let's Go To Lodge Tonight

My brother, let's go to Lodge tonight;
You haven't been for years.
Let's don our Lambskin Apron white
And sit among our peers.

We'll meet the Tyler at the door
and though he'll hesitate,
we'll hear him say just as before,
"Come in or you'll be late."

So come! Pass up that picture show,
or your wrestling bout or fight;
Switch off that TV set! Let's go!
Let's go to Lodge tonight.