

Membership Handbook



Grand Lodge A.:F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska

**Provided
by the
Grand Lodge Membership Committee**

April 2004

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GRAND LODGE **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Sec. 1-328 -- MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE --The Membership Committee shall consist of five members. It shall be the duty of this committee to develop, and disseminate to lodges, programs consistent with Grand Lodge Law and practice and the Ancient Landmarks, 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.

2006 MEMBERS

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Area 1, Subarea A

158	Samaritan	102 W 4th, Chadron, NE
177	Hay Springs	256 N. Main, Hays Springs, NE
183	Alliance	123 W. 3rd Street, Alliance, NE
195	Arcana	201 W 2nd. Street, Gordon, NE
234	Zion	Main Street, Hyannis, NE

Area 1, Subarea B

201	Scottsbluff	1434 10th Street, Gering, NE
263	Mitchell	1315 18th Ave., Mitchell, NE
265	Robert W. Furnas	22 1/2 E 16th Street, Scottsbluff, NE
271	Oasis	105 Webster, Morrill, NE
285	Camp Clarke	526 Main, Bridgeport, NE

Area 2

95	Garfield	West Highway 20, O'Neill, NE
136	Long Pine	Main Street, Long Pine, NE
164	Atkinson	110 E Union Street, Atkinson, NE
192	Minnekadusa	236 N. Hall Street, Valentine, NE
221	Wood Lake	Main Street, Wood Lake, NE
224	Silver Cord	404 N. Wilson, Ainsworth, NE

Area 3, Subarea A

204	Plainview	211 N. King Street, Plainview, NE
218	Bloomfield	106 E. Main, Bloomfield, NE
219	Relief	Coleridge, NE
248	Laurel	2nd Street, Laurel, NE
251	Wausa	102 Hampton Street, Wausa, NE
291	Diamond	345 E. Third Street, Orchard, NE

Area 3, Subarea B

83	Corinthian	226 Main Street, Wakefield, NE
114	Wisner	916 Avenue F, Wisner, NE
120	Wayne	911 Lincoln Street, Wayne, NE
41	Northern Light	1100 Ivy, Stanton, NE
55	Mosaic	907 W Norfolk Ave., Norfolk, NE

Area 4, Subarea A

5	Omadi	124 E. 19th Street, South Sioux City, NE
220	Magnolia	101 Main Street, Emerson, NE
274	Olive Branch	317 Main Street, Walthill, NE
27	Jordon	102 N. Lincoln, West Point, NE
91	Oakland	333. N. Oakland Ave. Oakland, NE
236	Golden Rule	210 S. Clark Street, Allen, NE

Area 4, Subarea B

241	George Armstrong	110 S. Main Street, Craig, NE
31	Tekamaha	301 N. 13th Street, Tekamah, NE
222	Landmark	Main Street, Herman, NE
21	Washington	1245 Calhoun Blvd., Blair, NE
52	Hiram	305 W. Eagle Street, Arlington, NE

Area 4, Subarea C

34	Acacia	931 F. Street, Schuyler, NE
119	North Bend	1041 Locust Street, North Bend, NE
15	Fremont	350 E 23rd Street, Fremont, NE
72	Hooper	117 N. Main, Hooper, NE
132	Scribner	450 Main, Scribner, NE

Area 5, Subarea A

1	Nebraska	2424 S. 135th Ave., Omaha, NE
10	Solomon	102 S. 14th St., Fort Calhoun, NE
11	Covert	2424 S. 135th Ave., Omaha, NE
102	Waterloo	300 Hopper St., Elkhorn, NE
310	Victory	110 N. Spruce, Valley, NE
326	Centennial	2424 S. 135th Ave., Omaha, NE

Area 5, Subarea B

3	Capitol	2823 N. 83rd Street, Omaha, NE
288	Omaha	2823 N. 83rd Street, Omaha, NE
290	John J. Mercer	5903 Maple Street, Omaha, NE
327	Shiloh	2823 N. 83rd Street, Omaha, NE

Area 5, Subarea C

184	BeeHive	2411 "I" Street, Omaha, NE
268	Geo. W. Lininger	202 S. 20th Street, Omaha, NE
281	Florence	8223 N. 30th Street, Omaha, NE
302	Mizpah	1124 S. 48th Street, Omaha, NE

Area 5, Subarea D

6	Plattsmouth	513 Main Street, Plattsmouth, NE
2	Western Star	1104 Central Avenue, Nebraska City, NE
325	Bellevue	1908 Franklin St., Bellevue, NE

Area 5, Subarea E

39	Papillion	101 W. Centennial Road, Papillion, NE
112	Springfield	385 Main, Springfield, NE
328	Miloma	4905 S. 131st St., Omaha, NE

Area 6, Subarea A

314	Craftsmen	2545 B Street, Lincoln, NE
300	Liberty	1635 L Street, Lincoln, NE
297	Cotner	1542 N. 56th, Lincoln, NE
256	Hickman	4641 Cooper Ave., Lincoln, NE
19	Lincoln	1635 L Street, Lincoln, NE

Area 6, Subarea B

54	Lancaster	1635 L Street, Lincoln, NE
110	Pomegranate	508 Silver Street, Ashland, NE
94	Bennett	4641 Cooper Ave., Lincoln, NE
210	East Lincoln	2700 S. Street, Lincoln, NE

Area 6, Subarea C

227	North Star	2610 N. 48th, Lincoln, NE
229	Comet	119 W. Elm, Ceresco, NE
250	George Washington	4430 N. 70th, Lincoln, NE
320	College View	4641 Cooper Ave. Lincoln, NE
59	Wahoo	445 N. Linden, Wahoo, NE

Area 6, Subarea D

30	Blue River	115 B Street, Milford, NE
37	Crete	1105 Main, Crete, NE
111	DeWitt	303 E. Fillmore, DeWitt, NE
64	Blue Valley	208 W. 4th, Wilber, NE
194	Highland	420 Sheridan, Cortland, NE

Area 6, Subarea E

97	Euclid	105 N. Clinton, Weeping Water, NE
57	Mt. Moriah	281 5th Street, Syracuse, NE
209	Canopy	108 E. D Street, Elmwood, NE
287	Union	340 C. Street, Palmyra, NE

Area 7, Subarea A

32	Platte Valley	1600 S. B St., North Platte, NE
135	McCook	322 Norris Ave., McCook, NE
174	Culbertson	18 Taylor, Culbertson, NE
228	Bartley	600 Commercial, Bartley, NE

Area 7, Subarea B

173	Robert Burns	402 Bailey Street, Stratton, NE
180	Justice	621 Chief Street, Benkelman, NE
198	Purity	545 1/2 Broadway, Imperial, NE
216	Palisade	102 N. Reynolds Street, Palisade, NE

Area 7, Subarea C

61	Thistle	810 N. Washington, Lexington, NE
167	Elwood	305 Smith Ave., Elwood, NE
293	Monument	652 Main Street, Arapahoe, NE

Area 8, Subarea A

44	Harvard	108 W. Beach, Harvard, NE
50	Hastings	411 N. Hastings Ave. Hastings, NE
264	Franklin	1401 J. Street, Franklin, NE
317	Mid-West	411 N. Hastings Ave. Hastings, NE

Area 8, Subarea B

53	Charity	6th & Seward, Red Cloud, NE
77	Nelson	77 E. 4th Street, Nelson, NE
121	Superior	311 N. Commercial Ave., Superior, NE
128	Guide Rock	Main Street, Guide Rock, NE

Area 9, Subarea A

4	Nemaha Valley	Main Street, Brownville, NE
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9	Falls City	1622 Stone Street, Falls City, NE
14	Peru	618 5th Street, Peru, NE
40	Humboldt	332 E. Square, Humboldt, NE
108	Table Rock	Table Rock, NE
162	Trestle Board	Main Street, Brock, NE

Area 9, Subarea B

35	Fairbury	515 1/2 E St., Fairbury, NE
43	Hebron	1004 South Ave. Hebron, NE
154	Lily	1st & Main St., Davenport, NE

Area 9, Subarea C

23	Pawnee	1010 7th Street, Pawnee City, NE
26	Beatrice	601 Grant Street. Beatrice, NE
104	Wymore	209 W. F Street, Wymore, NE
165	Barneston	1st & Leslie, Barneston, NE

Area 10

75	Frank Welch	1830 Illinois Street, Sidney, NE
159	Ogallala	319 N. Spruce, Ogallala, NE
205	Golden Fleece	289 Vincent Ave., Chappell, NE
279	Wallace	279 W. Rodney Street, Wallace, NE
286	Oshkosh	111 Main, Oshkosh, NE
294	James L. Eatmon	104 S. Walnut, Kimball, NE

Area 11

46	Rob Morris	2349 Central Ave. Kearney, NE
146	Jachin	413 West Ave., Holdrege, NE
289	Lotus	502 Grand Ave., Ravenna, NE

Area 12, Subarea A

103	Ord	204 S. 16th Street, Ord, NE
106	Porter	818 O Street, Loup City, NE
148	Custer	1106 S. E Street, Broken Bow, NE
170	Mason City	Main Street, Mason City, NE
200	Blazing Star	270 S. 8th Ave., Burwell, NE
207	Parian	106 S. Grand Ave., Callaway, NE
284	Seneca	602 Walnut Street, Thedford, NE

Area 12, Subarea B

33	Ashlar	217 N. Locust, Grand Island, NE
82	St. Paul	621 1/2 Howard Ave., St. Paul, NE
211	Cement	904 Main Street, Wood River, NE
239	Friendship	202 9th Street, Chapman, NE
324	Cairo	312 S. High Street, Cairo, NE

Area 12, Subarea C

36	Lone Tree	1325 17th Street, Centrtal City, NE
62	Keystone	Main Street, Phillips, NE
68	Aurora	1417 L. Street, Aurora, NE
311	Polk	145 N. Main Street, Polk, NE

Area 12, Subarea D

78	Albion	6th & Prairie, Albion, NE
89	Cedar River	304 3rd Street, Fullerton, NE
134	Solar	102 W. Amity, Clarks, NE
143	Crescent	Main Street, Primrose, NE
305	Newman Grove	416 Hale Ave. Newman Grove, NE

Area 13, Subarea A

51	Fidelity	460 1/2 E Street, David City, NE
65	Osceola	451 Hawkeye Street, Osceola, NE
81	Composite	655 Main, Rising City, NE
126	Stromsburg	12 Commercial, Stromsburg, NE
323	Lebanon	4722 28th Street, Columbus, NE

Area 13, Subarea B

38	Oliver	147 S. 6th Street, Seward, NE
49	Evening Star	107 W. Grove, Sutton, NE
56	York	112 1/2 E 5th, York, NE
73	Friend	127 1/2 Maple Street, Friend, NE
79	Geneva	1620 J Street, Geneva, NE
96	Utica	611 C Street, Utica, NE

10 STEPS TO LODGE RENEWAL

1. Plan, Program, Prepare

Set lodge goals and agenda for the year

- ✚ Hold a planning and goal-setting meeting with your officers. Give strong consideration to 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 your lodge is represented at the Grand Lodge Annual Communication!!

2. Attract New Members

Identify men in your 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
- ✚ Telephone Book
- ✚ 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. Don’t overlook men who have expressed an interest in the past, even those who may have taken their 1st or 2nd Degree(s). Maybe that simply wasn’t the right time or perhaps there were other 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.)*

Send a letter to your non-Masonic friends.

Hold a “Friendship Night” (or Brother Bring a Friend Night).

Take advantage of an Awards Program.

Utilize the resources of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

3. Spice up Lodge Meetings

Streamline the necessary business portion of the meeting.

Suggestion: Print, don’t read, minutes and financial reports. Summarize communications (don’t read them verbatim).

Refer to: Wardens Handbooks and Tips for Running a Successful Meeting.

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.

Don't 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, don't force a brother to speak if he doesn't want to.*)

- ✿ The program doesn't have to be Masonic. Have a member come and talk about his profession. You'd be surprised how many brothers would find that very interesting. Consider using non-members to provide a program.
- ✿ Don't forget to include wives/families in some of the programs/activities.
- ✿ Contact the Grand Lodge office to request a speaker.

Announce the Agenda of your meeting in advance through postcards, local newspapers, newsletter or telephone.

- ✿ Create curiosity and interest in the meeting announcement. For instance, instead of writing "Brother Joe will discuss Masonic Opinions of Revolutionary Leaders," write this: "Did you ever wonder why Thomas Jefferson was never made a Mason? Was he anti-Masonic?"

Take advantage of the Mentoring Program to educate current, even long-term members.

Have your officers and members visit another lodge for their regular or special meeting.

4. Family Involvement

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

5. Community Involvement/Visibility

Take part in parades, community festivals, celebrations, etc.

- ✿ A lodge Open House could be held in conjunction with a community celebration or event.

Organize a service function such as lining up snow removal for the elderly or disabled.

- ✿ Think what good could come from a photo in the local newspaper of a group of Masons with snow blowers and shovels removing snow for an elderly or disabled member/resident.

The possibilities are unlimited. Use your imagination.

Adopt or join with another Community Service Organization for a worthwhile project. Examples: Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, C of C.

Adopt a highway for clean-up.

6. Initiate a major fundraiser, either for your lodge or a worthy cause in the community

An example might be to help raise money for a new fire truck or ambulance for the department.

- ✚ Don't feel you have to reinvent the wheel here – keep your eyes open to something that might already be going on in the community and jump on the bandwagon. (*This would be good if your lodge is a bit short on active members right now.*)

Other fundraisers

- ✚ Hold a monthly soup/sandwich feed – open to the public.
- ✚ Have a pancake breakfast for the public.
- ✚ Have a repository for redeemable cans. Publicize this.

7. Membership retention/Utilization

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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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 Grand Custodian or the Deputy Custodian 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.

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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.

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.

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.

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

RECRUITING - LOCATING, ATTRACTING & RECEIVING MEN INTO THE CRAFT

A. What you as the leader need to know

As a leader, it is not your primary job to do the recruiting. However, it is your job to discover ways your lodge can locate, attract and receive men into the Fraternity.

REMEMBER, RECRUITING IS NO LONGER AGAINST THE RULES!

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 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 these 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, 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 will be half the size they were in 1980 by the year 2101.
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 given at various times throughout the state.

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 must be able to take advantage of the one-day degrees when needed. 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. ***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. This is always a good recruiting tool.

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.

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.

TO THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER, WARDENS, AND BRETHREN OF

_____ LODGE NO. _____ A.:F.: & A.:M.:, _____, NEBRASKA

The petitioner respectfully represents that he is prompted solely by a favorable opinion conceived of the Institution, a desire for knowledge, and a sincere wish to be serviceable to his fellow man, and freely and voluntarily presents himself as a candidate. He further declares that he believes in the existence of a Supreme Being. He promises, if accepted, to cheerfully conform to all the regulations and ancient usages of the Fraternity.

He furthermore promises that he will not apply to any lodge, society, or institution that shall provide as a precedent that one shall be a Master Mason in good standing, such as the Scottish Rite, York Rite, Eastern Star, Shrine, etc., until he shall have passed his proficiency examination as a Master Mason.

Have you ever made application to or been rejected by any lodge of Freemasons? _____ If yes, complete the following:

On or about _____, I made application for initiation in _____ Lodge No. _____, located at _____, _____ and was _____ (elected/rejected) to membership.

What is your main objective in seeking admission to the Fraternity? _____

What financial benefits, if any, do you expect to receive from the Fraternity? _____

Are you financially able to care for yourself and those dependent upon you? _____

What is the condition of your health? _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____

How long did you live there? _____ Years

Last place of residence _____ Years there _____

Occupation (previous occupation if retired) _____

Employed by _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Married? _____ If yes, do you live with your wife? _____ Wife's name _____

If resident here less than two years, give as references the names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least two men, preferably Masons, in your last place of residence:

Give names, addresses, and phone numbers of two men, preferably Masons, who reside in this city, other than the signers of your petition:

Give name, address, and phone number of nearest relative, if any, who is a member of the Masonic fraternity:

PRINT YOUR FULL NAME _____ Home Phone _____

Residence Address (w/zip code) _____

Email Address _____

SIGNATURE OF PETITIONER _____ DATE _____

The following Master Masons of _____ Lodge No. _____ recommend Mr. _____ and certify that he has lived within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska for more than six months.

Signature

Signature



NOTES

Total Serial No. _____

Annual No. _____, 20____

PETITION FOR INITIATION BY

Mr. _____

Presented _____, 20____

COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION

Appointed _____, 20____

Report Due _____, 20____

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

We, the undersigned Committee on within petition,
report _____ favorably.

Date Elected _____, 20____

Date Rejected _____, 20____

E.A. _____ Exam. _____

F.C. _____ Exam. _____

M.M. _____ Exam. _____

RECOMMENDATION OF A CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREES OF MASONRY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 2-913 OF THE BYLAWS OF THE GRAND LODGE A.:F.: & A.:M.: OF NEBRASKA

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING FORMS

NOTE: The procedures set out in Section 2-913 of the Grand Lodge Bylaws are intended only as a supplement to the normal process for petitioning for membership in a Masonic Lodge in the Jurisdiction of Nebraska. In implementing this process of proposal and election of a candidate for Freemasonry, it is emphasized that this alternative process is never to cause a member of the Masonic Fraternity to take more casually the process of carefully considering any potential candidate. A standard form of petition must accompany the Recommendation under Section 2-913. The petition is simply completed and is signed after the candidate has been elected. If the candidate does not sign the petition or fails to answer questions in an acceptable manner, his election under 2-913 is voided and he shall not become a Mason under Section 2-913.

The Process:

Form of "Recommendation of a Candidate" is signed by three Proposers, each a member in good standing in the subordinate lodge of which the proposed candidate is a potential member, each Proposer being **personally acquainted** with such potential candidate.

Attached to the form of Recommendation will be a standard form of petition unsigned, but completed as fully by the Proposers as knowledge by them of the potential candidate will allow. Note that the standard questions on the petition will have not yet been posed to the candidate or answered by the potential candidate.

Form of Recommendation with incomplete and unsigned standard form of petition is presented to the Lodge Secretary, who presents the Form of Recommendation and its accompanying petition to the Master at the next regular stated meeting.

The Master announces the proposal of the potential candidate and orders the Proposers to serve as a committee to review the form of Recommendation, to consider their recommendation and to make report as a committee at the next stated communication. The report may be returned with a favorable or unfavorable report and the Recommendation is signed a second time by the Proposers as provided on the Recommendation Form.

The signed report is returned by the committee to the Secretary at the stated meeting next following the stated meeting at which the proposal was made. The Master will order the ballot spread on the proposed candidate. As otherwise provided in the Grand Lodge Bylaws, the balloting process will follow that set out in Sections 2-1001 through 2-1006.

An objection may be filed and sustained in the same manner as set out in the Grand Lodge Bylaws in Section 2-1101.

The Master will declare the result of the ballot. In the case of a favorable ballot, the Master will direct the Proposers to meet with the potential candidate to advise him of his election, and to discuss with him the nature of the Masonic Fraternity in order that he is informed of his obligations and the process of the three degrees of Masonry, respond to such questions as he may raise and invite his completion and signing of the standard form of petition.

[In the event of a ballot that is declared not clear by the Master, the Master will declare the potential candidate not elected and will direct the Secretary to retain the Form of Recommendation and the accompanying petition in the Secretary's lodge files. No communication is to be had about the matter with the potential candidate. The Master will remind the brethren that no discussion shall be had inside or outside the lodge about the matter of the Recommendation, the failure to receive a vote in favor of membership or any other details of the process and the proposed candidate. The Recommendation process for the said proposed candidate may not be repeated for a period of six months within the same subordinate lodge. However, since such candidate did not initiate the petition process, and has no knowledge of the matter, such individual may of his own initiative petition the same or another subordinate lodge for membership at anytime and properly state that he has not previously petitioned a lodge.]

The completed and signed petition will be delivered to the Secretary of the Lodge within 60 days from the date of the election of the candidate with appropriate fees for initiation. The Secretary will sign and seal the Recommendation Form with the petition attached attesting said Secretary's receipt of the completed form and petition within the 60 day period allowed.

The Secretary will advise the Master of the completion and return of the Form of Recommendation accompanied by the completed petition. The Master will make report of the same at the next regular stated communication following the Secretary's receipt of the Form of Recommendation and petition. The Master will further direct the Secretary to communicate the completion of the required petition documents and advise the candidate of the date to present himself for initiation.

Note: It is recommended and encouraged that one or more of the Proposers of the candidate personally escort the candidate to his initiation and that the Proposers 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.

**RECOMMENDATION OF A CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREES OF
MASONRY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 2-913 OF THE
BYLAWS OF THE GRAND LODGE A.:F.: & A.:M.: OF NEBRASKA**

*(Attached Hereto is an Initially Incomplete, but Current Standard form of Petition, Which Petition
Shall be Completed Previous to or Concurrently With The Date of the Final Certification Hereof.)*

Date: _____

TO THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER, WARDENS AND BRETHREN

_____ **LODGE NO.** _____ **A.:F.: & A.: M.:**, _____, **NEBRASKA**

The undersigned each certifies that he is personally acquainted with the within-named candidate for the degrees of Masonry in the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of Nebraska, that each believes the said candidate to be of good moral character and to be a qualified candidate to receive the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry and further believes that the proposed candidate will conform to and conduct himself in a manner appropriate to the tenets and laws of Masonry. Each individually and collectively recommends the said candidate for Masonry and agrees that he and they will in their role as an investigating committee carefully and thoughtfully consider said candidate as to his qualifications and report their findings to the above Lodge at the next stated meeting date of: _____

Name of Candidate in full: _____

Address of Candidate: _____

Town _____, *NE.* *Date of Birth:* _____ *Marital Status:* _____

Occupation: _____ **Employer:** _____

PROPOSERS:

Name : _____ **Member of** _____ **Lodge No.** _____

Address: _____, **Town:** _____, **NE** _____

Residence Telephone: _____ **Business Telephone:** _____

Signature: _____

Name : _____, **Member of** _____ **Lodge No.** _____

Address: _____, **Town:** _____, **NE** _____

Residence Telephone: _____ **Business Telephone:** _____

Signature: _____

Name : _____, Member of _____ Lodge No. _____

Address: _____, Town: _____, NE _____

Residence Telephone: _____ Business Telephone: _____

Signature: _____

The undersigned Proposers hereby certify that we have reviewed and carefully considered the within named candidate for Masonry as to his character and qualifications for membership in the Masonic Fraternity and our report as to the proposed candidate is: Favorable _____ Unfavorable: _____. We further certify and agree that we will individually or collectively, if the question of proposing the aforesaid candidate is voted upon favorably by all of the members present at the meeting at which this proposal for membership is balloted upon, promptly contact said proposed candidate, invite his completion of the standard form of petition for the degrees of Masonry and return the completed petition together with this form of Recommendation of a Candidate; we further agree that we will return the completed standard form of Petition for Membership within 60 calendar days of the date on which this recommendation is balloted upon; and it is further agreed and understood that all questions proposed and set out on the Standard form of Petition including among the other standard responses, a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, must be answered in such a manner that assures that the proposed candidate is fully qualified for membership.

Signatures of Proposers: _____, _____

_____, Date: _____

I, the undersigned the duly elected, qualified and acting Secretary of _____ Lodge No. _____ Officially certify that the above and herein signatures of each proposer is his own signature and that each freely and of his own accord affixed his signature hereto, and I further certify that this completed form of Recommendation of a Candidate for Masonry was competed and returned to me together with the Standard form of Petition for the Degrees of Masonry on the date set out below under my signature, **which fully completed form of Petition is attached hereto.**

Secretary _____

[SEAL]

Date: _____

RETENTION CHECKLIST

- 1. What do young Masons want from Masonry?**
 - A. See the following article
 - B. 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

RETENTION OF NEW MEMBERS

A. 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.

B. 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 which 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.

C. 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.), so 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.

D. 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?

E. 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.

F. 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

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.

G. What can we learn from The Promise Keepers?

Suggestion:

Read and study the organization of “The Promise Keepers.” For the past several years, there has been a national movement to capture the interest and attention of men called the Promise Keeper. Founded by Bill McCartney, former head football coach from the University of Colorado, this organization has grown from a membership of only 4,200 in 1990 to 1997 membership of more than two million men.

First, it’s clear that if you establish an organization with the needs of men in mind, they will join.

Second, if you meet their needs in a manner that is powerful, they will make sure their friends join. The Promise Keepers offer a man an opportunity to rediscover his religion, himself, his role with his spouse and his family, his community and his work.

If you can structure an organization so that it meets the very personal needs of men for their own development, and promise them benefits they want, you will have solved your membership problems.

H. 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.

I. 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.

J. Why are 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 of time. Form a plan to correct conditions causing bad first impressions.

K. 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 and 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.

L. 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**
- 5. Millennium Fund – Delinquent, but not Suspended members**
 - A. Establish a Millennium Fund
 - B. Send out letters – assist Lodge Secretary
 - C. Telephone calls and personal contact

INTRODUCTION

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. Consider any of the activities in *101+ Ways to Improve Interest and Attendance in Your Masonic Lodge*.
2. Appoint an active member to a lodge program team and work to develop a year-long agenda.
3. 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 Guides in this Handbook 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 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.

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. Use the Lodge Membership Satisfaction Form.

Lodge Member Satisfaction Form

State Need	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.

I. 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. (See sample letter # 1 page 36a and 36b).

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 (left up to the Lodge). (See sample letter #2 page 36c).

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.

THE “MILLENNIUM FUND”

Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth

A “Millennium Fund,” if established in each Nebraska Lodge, would accomplish two important goals by practicing charity among our brothers and our local community, both important Masonic teachings.

The monies received by the Millennium Fund would first, pay for the annual Grand Lodge per capita for members who, for whatever reason, have not paid their annual dues. It may be that a brother is in a care facility, has health problems, is financially distressed, or simply that he has not been brought into the fellowship of the Fraternity. It would not be considered Masonic to drop these members from the membership rolls. To do so, they would lose several important benefits: their right to apply for admission into the Nebraska Masonic Home, eligibility for membership awards, membership in appendant bodies, availability of Masonic Funeral Services, and all rights and privileges normally afforded a Master Mason in good standing.

After taking care of your own members, the remaining funds could be used to augment annual fundraising projects for the lodge to be used in the community, such as scholarships and community charities, or carried forward for future remissions.

Providing relief by practicing charity is a foundation within our Masonic teachings and establishment of a “Millennium Fund” offers that opportunity.

Lodge Letterhead
(1st Dues Notice)

Dear Brother _____,

(Body of Letter)

Last paragraphs - _____ Lodge has established a Millennium Fund which is used for assisting in the payment of dues for brethren of the Lodge who are unable to meet their dues obligation. The Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth should not allow a member to be dropped from the rolls for nonpayment of dues. Should funds be remaining at the end of the year, they may be used to augment charitable giving or fundraising by the lodge.

Should you desire to contribute to the fund, simply include an additional amount on your dues check. Your contribution and the names of those who are in need of assistance will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Fraternally,

Secretary

Your 200____ Lodge Dues are _____

Our records show arrears dues of _____

Total Outstanding _____

Please contact the Secretary if your records do not agree

Lodge Letterhead
(Second Dues Notice)

Dear Brother _____,

In reviewing the lodge records, I notice that I have not received your _____ dues payment.

_____ Lodge is required to send the per capita payment to the Grand Lodge prior to the tenth day of April of each year, so your cooperation in remitting payment at this time would be greatly appreciated.

If you find that you are unable to comply with your dues obligation at this time, please let me know. _____ Lodge has established a fund to assist those brothers in such a situation. It's part of our obligation as Masons to do so and will be done in strict confidence.

Thank you for your support of _____ Lodge and Nebraska Masonry.

Fraternally,

Secretary

Your 200____ Lodge Dues are _____

Our records show arrears dues of _____

Total Outstanding _____

Please contact the Secretary if your records do not agree

Lodge Letterhead
(Third Letter Re: Dues)
From the Master

Dear Brother _____,

I have been advised by the Secretary that you have not, for whatever reasons, responded to his notices regarding your _____ Lodge dues.

We have determined that, if we truly live by those great Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, no member should ever be dropped from the rolls for nonpayment of dues. To do so would harm the brother by losing his right to apply for admission into the Nebraska Masonic Home, his ability to visit other lodges, his eligibility for membership awards, his membership in appendant Masonic bodies such as the Shrine, the honor of a Masonic Funeral Service, and all the rights and privileges afforded a Master Mason in good standing.

Because of this and the generosity of your brothers at _____ Lodge through the Millennium Fund, I am pleased to enclose your 200__ dues card. Be assured that this is done in the strictest of confidence.

If we can be of further assistance to you or should circumstances change that would enable you to meet your dues obligation, please contact me.

Fraternally Yours,

Master

Lodge Letterhead
(Letter to Brother When Dues Received)

Enclosed is your 200____ Masonic Dues Card!

We thank you...

Your remittance has been received and it is a pleasure to enclose your 200____ dues card. Sign the card and always carry it with you. It is your record of good standing in this lodge and, upon proper examination, will entitle you admission in lodges around the world.

Your support of Freemasonry, and _____ Lodge No. _____ in particular, is appreciated and we offer the best wishes and kindest regards from the officers and your fellow brethren.

If you know of a prospective member for our beloved Fraternity and don't have a petition or are uneasy in contacting him, please contact the Secretary!

Lodge meets on the _____ of each Month at _____ p.m.
Please join us for fellowship.

THE RESTORATION CALLING PROCESS

File No. _____

Name: _____ Member # _____ Suspension Date: ____/____/____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Occupation: _____

Age: _____ Annual Dues When Suspended: \$ _____

Top Line Signer: _____ Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Raised Date: ____/____/____

CALLING PROCEDURE

\$ _____ Needed to Restore

Date of 1st Call: ____/____/____ Time Called: _____ Contact Made: Yes _____ No _____

Why Did Member Drop?: _____

What Was Your Response?: _____

Next Steps: _____

Committee Making Call: _____

Home Phone: _____

* * * * *

Date of 2nd Call: ____/____/____ Time Called: _____ Contact Made: Yes _____ No _____

Prospect's Response: _____

* * * * *

Will Member Reinstate? Yes _____ No _____ Home Appointment Made? Yes _____ No _____

Date of Appointment: ____/____/____ Time: _____ Petition & Fees Received? Yes _____ No _____

Follow-up Activity Required: _____

Responsible Mason: _____