

BLUE LODGE OFFICER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING PROGRAM

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Reviewed by the Committee on Education and
Public Relations, Grand Lodge of Alabama

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BUILDING LODGE MEMBERSHIP

Source: Masonic Leadership Training Manual.
Grand Lodge of Florida 2010



Objective

- To provide current subordinate Lodge officers and potential Lodge officers with a foundation for the development of Lodge membership

Building Lodge Membership

- What made Freemasonry successful centuries ago was its success in meeting the needs of the men of that day
- Our culture has changed. Masonic culture may be in conflict with elements of 21st Cent. culture.
- We must change the culture of Freemasonry, while adhering to the “Ancient Landmarks” of Freemasonry

Building Lodge Membership

- Masonic tradition has discouraged Masons from actively recruiting men to join
- Indicative of the need for change, Freemasonry was forced to create the campaign “2B1ASK1”
- A man’s time is limited today. Men work more than one job, share in child care, and other household and family duties.
- Our fraternity must offer something enjoyable and of value, meeting the needs of men

Building Lodge Membership

- Today, people tend to stay home, socialize with smaller groups, and do not become active in their community
- Community organizations do not market themselves to younger adults
- We cannot afford to ignore the modern recruitment culture

Building Lodge Membership

- **Decline of Civic and Fraternal group populations**
- **Grand Lodge of Alabama Membership**
 - 1950: 62,455 Lodges # 426
 - 1960: 76,404 Lodges # 436
 - 1980: 67,137 Lodges # 426
 - 2000: 39,766 Lodges # 346
 - 2012: 27,822 Lodges # 299
 - [KC: Helion No. 1 Huntsville: 1980: 1,025, 2013: 419]

Building Lodge Membership

- The Fraternity must develop a new way to maintain membership
- We cannot afford to ignore the modern recruitment culture
- The strength and prosperity of Freemasons depends on dedicated Masons like you
- You are the most valuable recruiter of our Fraternity

Building Lodge Membership

- Target the best and brightest from your community who can make Freemasonry better
- Look for men of vision who desire to develop a life plan, and who see how Freemasonry will help them achieve their goals, and discover a new kind of fellowship, and personal vigor through Freemasonry

Building Lodge Membership

- “A Mason’s Bill or Rights” (DuPree, Max. “Leadership is an Art”)
- Qualities your Lodge must have to provide members in order to recruit and retain members
 - The Right to be needed
 - The Right to be involved

Building Lodge Membership

- Qualities you Lodge must have to provide members in order to recruit and retain members (Cont. DePree)
 - The Right to a covenantal relationship (to enjoy a contract with leadership based on trust, giving a sense of ownership in solutions)
 - The Right to understand (What is my role in the future of Freemasonry?)
 - The Right to affect one's own destiny (personal progress and future)

Building Lodge Membership

- **The Most Effective Recruitment Tool:**
- When a member feels good about Freemasonry, and what he is gaining from it, he will be active in the Lodge, and share his enthusiasm with relatives, friends, and acquaintances about it
- **To increase Lodge membership, you must begin by building relevant and meaningful programs**

Building Lodge Membership

- Ask the most successful recruiters in your Lodge [and other Lodges] how they recruit members
- Ask yourself, and your Brothers why they became and remain Masons
- Using these sources, write a dialogue for use with prospective members
- **Establish New Member Teams** among active members by age groups (empowering them to act as they see fit)

Building Lodge Membership

- Develop a presentation for your Lodge members informing them of the consequences of failing to develop and foster membership
- Review your membership numbers for the past 5, 10, or 20 years
- Forecast your Lodge membership
- Show impact of Lodge finances resulting from loss of dues
- Develop a Lodge Prospective Members form

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Surveys show **what Masons want the Fraternity to provide:**
 - Better fellowship and opportunities to make new friends
 - Leadership opportunities (improved, well led, leadership training programs)
 - Greater civic involvement
 - Improved Masonic Education
 - A higher profile for Freemasonry.
 - More open to the public.
 - More pride in the organization

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Active commitment to the needs of the youth
- Higher quality Degrees (understandable and dramatic presentation)
- Improved Meetings (interesting programs, entertainment)
- Improved leadership training, more opportunities to be a leader
- Opportunities for family involvement in the Lodge
- Self-improvement

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- If you overlook what your members need, you will not gain membership
- On average, after the first year of membership, 80% of all new members fail to return to meetings and are not active in their Lodge.
- Only about 25% of men today indicate favorable interest in joining groups

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Research shows **six behaviors about men joining groups:**
 - 75% had little interest in joining
 - 90% said had no time
 - 90% said would not join a secretive organization
 - 85% said would not join if women were not allowed
 - 95% said did not want to wear special uniform
 - None said they wanted more ritual and memorization in their lives
 - Conclusion: Most men are not joiners

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Masonry is competing with other fraternal and civic groups for the small pool of men willing to consider joining our Craft
- Survey results indicating men likely to join Masonry
 - Between ages 35 – 55
 - College educated
 - Unmarried
 - Professional men
 - Lodges in rural vs urban communities

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Poll of inactive members that had joined the Lodge in the last five years.

Asked why their attendance has waned

- What were they looking for in Freemasonry?
- What were the reasons they stopped attending Lodge on a regular basis?
- What we need to do to improve attendance, and increase membership?

“Would you recommend membership to your friends?”

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- **Survey Results: What men want from their lives:**
 - 85% wanted more friends
 - Nearly 100% want to make new connections
 - Nearly all married men want better time with family
 - 80% want to play some role of importance in their community
 - 60% wanted more opportunities to lead

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- **Survey: Issues Important to Potential Masons**
 - 75% :groups excluding wives from membership were unappealing
 - 70% : objected to a dress code
 - 72% : do not find memorizing materials appealing
 - 88% : objected to racially exclusive organizations
 - 92% : quality of leadership important in decision to join
 - 92% : charitable efforts important
 - 88% : image of philanthropy important (89% of these: outdoor & sports image also)
 - 88% : modest fees important

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Shrine Survey of young men
 - 76% : not involved in clubs, societies, civic organizations
 - 24% : involved in clubs, societies, civic organizations
 - College graduates twice as involved as HS grads
 - 6% : involved with fraternal organizations
 - 47% ; (Men 35 – 55) problem finding time to be involved
 - 8% ; (Men 35 – 55) no problem finding time
 - 29% : trouble finding enough time for their jobs

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- USA Today poll: How men spend their time
 - 46% Read
 - 24% Watch TV (12% watch sports on TV)
 - 9% Active in sports
 - 6% Participate in hobbies
 - 3% Other activities

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Characteristics of a Candidate
 - Honest, faithful, responsible
 - Gregarious, congenial and intelligent
 - Interested in welfare of others
 - Good Morals
 - Financially responsible (meets obligations)
 - Practices temperance
 - Charitable nature
 - Does not gossip or belittle his fellowman

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- Characteristics of a Candidate
 - Not argumentative or controversial
 - Does not gossip
 - True to personal convictions
 - Industrious
 - Involved in community activities
 - Law-abiding

Motivating Factors for Becoming Masons

- **Girl Scouts: Success in increased membership**
 - Focus exclusively on meeting member's needs
 - A commitment to develop good volunteer leaders
 - Allocating up to 60% of revenue for membership benefits
 - Focus on modern skills for success in their lives (computers, budgeting, stocks, grooming and health, personal safety)

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- Any Mason can be a top notch recruiter
 - The hardest obstacle for success in recruiting is deciding what you want to do
 - Recruiter incentives for deciding to recruit:
 - A more active and meaningful Lodge
 - Shared workload
 - Increased fundraising
 - Annual dues waivers for recruiters
 - The continued existence of his Lodge
- Incentives for Brothers successful in recruiting members:
Lodge pays one year's dues. Recognition of such Brothers during Lodge meetings.

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- Become familiar with famous Masons for good background information
- **Get the Word Out:**
 - Wear a Masonic Ring
 - Discuss famous Masons with friends and prospects
 - Place the Square & Compasses on you vehicle
 - Bring up Freemasonry in any way you can without directly asking them to join
 - Point out Masonic influence upon history
 - Invite prospects to non-Masonic social gatherings with a group of Masons

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- After identification of prospective members, the next step is recruiting them via a favorable impression
- Provide accurate and meaningful information
- Hand out “Famous Masons” fact sheet, Freemasonry pamphlets for Non-Masons, “What is Freemasonry” pamphlet

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- Discussion topics
 - Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world (more the 1.5 million members)
 - Masons are found in every continent and ethnic group
 - Masons donate more than \$2 million per day to help others
 - Masons conduct activities for the betterment of their community, nation, and world
 - Masons focus on self-improvement through education and development, charity, and camaraderie

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter, (K. Carpenter, Helion No. 1, Huntsville, Ala.)

- Provide worthwhile information for the prospective member
- Why do so many Brothers fail to advance from Entered Apprentices to Fellowcrafts?
- Probably, in many cases, it is because when petitioning for membership, they were not properly informed of time frame of the catechism (question and answer series) necessary for advancement to the next degree, or the reason for and process of the catechism.

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter, (K. Carpenter, Helion No. 1, Huntsville, Ala.)

- To enhance retention and motivation for advancement after initiation, inform the petitioner of the following:
 - Unlike various civic, professional, and social organizations, **Freemasonry requires its members to understand and to be proficient in his knowledge of each level of the Craft before advancement.**
 - **Like the medieval craft guilds and modern trade unions, an entered apprentice must demonstrate his knowledge skill, and proficiency in his craft before being advanced from an unskilled position to semiskilled position, and finally to the skilled position of a master of his craft.**

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter, (K. Carpenter, Helion No. 1, Huntsville, Ala.)

- In operative trades (actual trades) such as the stone masons, one's proficiency is tested by a physical demonstration of his skill, and a written or verbal examination (e.g. advancement procedure in the U.S. Navy).
- In speculative (virtual vs. actual trades) Freemasonry, a Brother's proficiency is tested through a catechism (series of questions and answers), thus demonstrating his knowledge and understanding of the degree which he holds before being allowed to advance to a next degree. Such is necessary, because, as in any learning process, each degree is based on the foundation of the previous degree.

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- “My Religion won’t allow me to join.”
 - Inform the prospective member
 - Masonry is not a religion
 - Freemasonry advocates their members participate in their own denominations, never placing the Craft ahead of their religious involvement
 - No Masonic beliefs conflict with religions
 - If their concern is secrecy, note that Masons meet in identified buildings, and publish activities and meetings
 - As with other groups, Masons have signs and words they do not share with the public

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- “I don’t have time to be involved in anything else”
 - We all find time to do things we really want to do
 - Is the prospective member more concerned about the time it takes to become a Mason, or about attending meetings
 - Remind him he does not have to attend meetings every month. Masonry is designed to permit members to put in as much time as they want

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- “I don’t think I can memorize”
 - With the help of your catechism (lesson) instructor, the work can be learned [with time and patience]

“My family might object”

Our Lodge is family friendly, holding activities that involve all members of the family

Wives can become involved in the OES, daughters involved in Job’s Daughters or Rainbow Girls; and sons involved in DeMolay.

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- “What do Masons do?”
 - Inform the prospective member they will be given a chance to share camaraderie with other men of like interests,
 - Serve the community
 - Learn more about what qualities make a better man
 - Describe the activities and service work of your Lodge

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- **Ten Reasons to Become a Mason**
 - You can confidently trust your Lodge Brothers, and entrust your family with them
 - A fraternity within moral and civil guidelines, free thought, free speech, and spiritual growth to develop a man's potential
 - Opportunity to meet, know, and befriend outstanding individuals from all walks of life
 - A fraternity that holds Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth as its principle tenants

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- **Ten Reasons to Become a Mason**
 - Freemasonry provides self-development opportunities, leadership training, and experience, and refinement of public speaking skills
 - Fosters an environment to seek support and/or provide it to others
 - Teaches and regularly reinforces moral values
 - Provides an opportunity to spend time with a group of Brothers who, acting as good men, make you want to become a better man

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- **Ten Reasons to Become a Mason**
 - Affords an opportunity to enhance their services to their church and their community
 - Freemasonry is a place to meet established members of the community and to become a more effective and engaged citizen

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- The recommending Brother should arrange a time the prospective member can meet with the Worshipful Master along with a membership comm. member.
- Tell prospective member why you are a Mason and what it means to you
- Give basic information, a petition, an invitation to join
- If he will not make a decision at that time, change the subject or part ways; be positive and upbeat
- Develop a “Who are the Masons? meeting for prospective members

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- At the “Who are the Masons” meeting
 - Inform prospective member that an Investigations Committee will make an appointment for a visit regarding his qualifications and to answer further questions
 - Ensure he understands the investigation is “standard procedure” for all candidates

Some Methods to be an Effective Masonic Recruiter

- The Masonic Training Manual of the Grand Lodge of Florida contains multiple pages and details of organizing and conducting “Who are the Masons?” meetings



END

Membership / Recruiting Section