

Grand Lodge of Nebraska



Getting Members Involved

Developed by the Membership Committee of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska
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INTRODUCTION

A major challenge any masonic leader faces is keeping members connected. It's hard to keep them involved with the general workings of the lodge. Regardless of your lodge's direction and goals, there are a lot of activities competing for your member's attention, so you must continually strengthen their bond with the lodge.

There comes a point for every lodge where some of its most active members start to lose motivation and consider leaving the lodge or not being involved. Retaining members is in fact just as difficult as attracting new members. There are many reasons members choose to leave and in most situations they can be encouraged to stay.

Just as businesses try to motivate their employees to work harder and progress, lodges need to motivate their members in order to be able to maintain retention rates. In fact, motivation is no longer an option, it has become a necessity.

The process outlined in this document is not a "one size fits all". It is intended to provide a proven process, but feel free to adapt it in ways that will make it work for your lodge. The result will be involved members that will thrive in their life-long Masonic journey.

UNDERSTAND YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Let's be honest, in today's society people are busier than ever and have competing interests pulling them in many directions - family, work, children, and other activities. To ensure your lodge is a priority for your members keep the following principles in mind:

- **Understand what motivates your members**

Ask your members what they want to get out of being in the lodge. Some members may be looking to socialize, while others may want to increase their leadership skills, and still others may seek education or to improve with ritual. Knowing what your members are interested in will allow you to suggest activities or leadership positions that match their motivations.

- **Be clear on the lodge's needs and expectations**

Often times members are concerned about the level of commitment required when they volunteer to get more involved. It is important to outline what the lodge needs, why it is important, and what the expectations are for someone who is serving in a position. This way members know what is needed and expected from them.

- **Make it convenient**

Remembering that most people have busy schedules, find ways to make it easy for your members to participate. Take into consideration the type of activity, people's availability, and what is actually needed to get the job done.

- **Show your appreciation**

Everyone likes to know they are making a difference and they are appreciated. Personally say thank you and publicly recognize members who have stepped up. Certificates of appreciation or other ways to recognize people for their service serve two purposes – the recipient appreciates being acknowledged, and others may see the award and be inspired to serve as well.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

The idea is simple - attitude is contagious. It is a fact that we tend to feed off the sentiments and reactions of those around us. If you and your officers foster an ambitious, positive, and supporting atmosphere, the rest of the lodge members will no doubt begin feeling encouraged to participate and bring forth their own ideas. Let them make a difference and, in turn, become committed members for a long time.

Conversely, if members see others in the lodge get away with tardiness, negativity and reluctance towards letting the lodge grow, chances are their perception of the lodge, and the entire fraternity, may become negative. By doing nothing about this sort of behavior or attitude, you might lose an opportunity to cement what was once dedication to the lodge and ultimately lose a valuable member.

FOCUS ON HAPPINESS

Happy members are also those motivated to do good for the lodge. There are many ways to keep members happy. In fact, you do not need an elaborate plan to achieve this. Sometimes just being asked means a lot, so in your next meeting, have every member anonymously write changes that they would like to see in the lodge which would make them happy. Then implement some of those suggestions and you will probably see a positive change in the attitude of your members.

MAKE SURE MEMBERS SHARE IN THE LODGE'S SUCCESS

If you were asked about how involved and invested all of your members are in your lodge's success, what would your answer be? How good is your lodge's attendance rate? Is there potential to grow and improve?

A successful lodge is one where all members can adopt and share a “we’re in this together” attitude, which is something that requires passion. The good thing about this is that all of your members have this passion, otherwise they would not have joined the lodge. Foster this passion by recognizing those that bring forth ideas, support and encourage those who go beyond their responsibilities, but do not stop there. Celebrate these achievements with the entire lodge and get everyone involved.

TAKE ON FUN ASSIGNMENTS

Part of keeping a level of interest alive includes doing more than routine meetings and regular activities. Have members brainstorm activities and events they would like to organize and projects they would like to fundraise for, participate in, and contribute to. Collaborate and work with other lodges in your area to host events that are meaningful and enjoyable. By adding variety to your lodge’s regular routine, you can ensure that you keep lodge members excited and involved.

KEEP FRESH IDEAS GOING

Schedule regular brainstorming sessions where lodge officers and members get a say in various aspects of the lodge. Make this an annual exercise so that at the very least members feel that they can bring forth fresh ideas and suggestions for change. Everything and anything should be up for evaluation; just because it's always been done that way, does not mean it should continue to be the modus operandi. When members see that the lodge is open to evolving they will be more likely to bring forth their suggestions.

FORMING MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

So, you have your changes and goals. Now it is time for your lodge members to think of projects or tasks that are specific, measurable, realistic, and timely in order to achieve the goal. Ideally, you want to define at least three objectives to help you develop your plan of action. An example of a measurable objective is one with a time table associated with it. The point here is to break down your goal into stages that you can achieve.

PLAN OF ACTION

Your plan of action is a series of strategies to help you accomplish the objectives you set. In other words, your plan of action includes what it is that you will need to do to ensure you meet your objective.

Some examples might include:

- Increasing awareness in the community about what your lodge does
- Generating a list of qualified potential members
- Improving and increasing number of guests at social and fund raisers events
- Researching and understanding other lodges' membership strategies

However, it is not enough to simply list your plan of action. Add a time table requirement to each idea and step in the process to help you stay on track.

STRATEGIES

The next steps are your actual 'how to' steps – your strategies. What actions will you need to take to make sure your plans come together?

For each idea you outlined in your plan, try to brainstorm at least three strategies that will help you achieve those plans. This is a good idea because if you find that one of your strategies is not yielding results, you have a range of other strategies to help you accomplish what you set out to do.

As an example, if one of your plans included “increasing awareness amongst the community”, strategies to accomplish that might include:

- Creating a social media presence
- Hosting an open house for community and prospective members
- Contacting local newspapers and community blogs
- Inviting the local Chamber of Commerce to an open house or other event and introduce them to what Masonry is, what it does, and what it can do for the community.

TACTICS

Finally, we reach tactics; the absolute specifics of your strategies. Tactics are the actual actionable steps you take to now finally carry out your strategies.

An example of tactics for promoting the lodge through social media channels would be:

- Forming a social media committee
- Opening social media accounts on channels such as Facebook and Twitter
- Posting meaningful content regularly (and determining what gets posted by whom)

- Getting lodge members involved in inviting their family and friends to follow and help promote social media channels
- Enabling the Facebook like button on your lodge site
- Linking social media channels back to the lodge website and other sites in order to reach target audience
- CAUTION: Whatever social media account is used it has to remain up to date.

SUMMARY

All the steps outlined here are simple, but necessary. Too often we come up with a goal and immediately jump past strategies and focus on executing tactics, as we tend to interpret them as our strategies. While that may work for some, many fail to accomplish their goals because of the lack of measurable elements. By setting measurable objectives, plans of action that have a time element associated with them, you create a timeline for you and your lodge members to follow to make sure you reach your goal. In this way you are able to assess and reassess at every point to see where the lodge is in terms of its long-term strategy, and make adjustments as necessary. Keep every member involved in this process, so everyone is accountable on the state of the lodge, and also is attributable to its success.