

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge Of Masons in Massachusetts

Membership Recruitment Program

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Phase One: Planning and Evaluation

The secret to success is Planning, Planning, Planning, and more Planning. In order to be successful in obtaining and holding new members or to be successful in converting inactive members to active ones, there must be a reason for these men to become involved. This means having a consistent lodge program that gives its members a reason and a desire to participate. Overall lodge program becomes the key to success.

The Lodge program must be one that attracts people. Boring meetings, ritual alone especially done poorly, and unfulfilling activities do not accomplish a desire to participate. The first key is a Lodge's monthly meeting. Masters should plan those meetings to attract members. Innovation, recognition, quality, and fun all enter into this equation. The ideas are infinite (note the MAC Blue Pages – Membership pages 3-9). Sideline participation in ritual, recognition of brethren for a host of reasons, and interesting and fun family nights are always good. Sociability is always desirable.

Beyond regular meetings a Lodge Calendar of events should include social events, community service events, visitations, and other events which promote Fraternity and build sociability among the brethren. Have fun; include wives and family; be appropriately innovative in considering new ideas and new twists on old ideas. Build on past successes. **Active Lodges are healthy Lodges. Even if a Lodge is small, when the brethren are enjoying themselves, the strength of the lodge will increase.**

The Lodge Calendar is a key tool in planning lodge program. A lodge calendar as used by the officers and individuals involved in planning should contain planning goals and deadline dates in addition to events. **The lodge officers should be able to glance at the lodge calendar in any given month and know exactly what is expected of them.** The lodge calendar also requires advance planning – at least two years- and therefore must be done in conjunction with upcoming officers and with programs anticipated by future Masters as well as the current one. This process must also include planning dates and deadlines as well as coordination of application and balloting procedures for future degree work. (Note: Membership Award

Instructions – Lodge Calendar)

The Lodge's standing within the community, which we refer to as Awareness, is also important in attracting good citizens to our Fraternity. **The best way to build community awareness is through community activity and presence.** From CHIP to a host of other projects, Masons can demonstrate who we are and for what we stand. Don't be afraid to put the Lodge out in the community and don't be afraid to seek publicity. As long as community programs are well planned and properly implemented, they will do nothing but enhance the image of Massachusetts Freemasonry.

When the Lodge program and community awareness programs have been evaluated and implementation is in place, the next step becomes the development of a Membership Recruitment List (MRL). There should be at least three MRL's: 1) Active recruitment of new members, 2) Active reinvolvement of inactive members, 3) Passive list of potential members for which the timing of recruitment is not yet right. These lists and their proper maintenance are key to success. Without these lists a coordinated effort is impossible. (See p. 14: Membership Award Instructions – [Membership Recruitment Lists](#))

Finally, a Lodge must have a plan by which to involve new and reactivated members after they have entered the lodge. Experience has shown a window of about six-weeks to three-months for a new member to become involved. If this does not happen, chances are they will be lost the active membership of the lodge. All lodges should have activities planned for the purpose of engaging these members. Specific committees, participation in ritual, participation in community events, and involvement in lodge service are all strong possibilities. **Match the needs of the lodge with the needs and desires of the individual members.**

When this preliminary planning and evaluation has been completed, a Lodge is ready to beginning planning a membership event.

Phase Two: Preparation and Execution Membership can be promoted at any open Masonic function. Lodges and brethren should always make appropriate invitation to both prospective and inactive members to attend open events that are appropriate to that individual. Our preparation as presented here is for an event specifically targeting recruitment as the primary activity.

Membership Event: There are many forms that a membership event can take. The MAC Blue Pages (especially Membership pages 16-28) is an excellent resource book for ideas and suggestions. **Above all the membership event must put forward the best possible scenario for recruitment.**

Our primary suggestion is for a social hour type party to be given at a nice restaurant or in someone's home. Institutional dinners in Lodge basements do not often afford the best social atmosphere. The event should be as elegant and formal as a Lodge deems appropriate; most importantly it should create an atmosphere most conducive to close personal contact. The atmosphere should cater to wives as strongly as it does to the prospective Mason. This is where our pitch for Freemasonry is best delivered.

Potential members should be invited with their wives. Individual members of the Lodge should be assigned to help the prospective candidates mix within the group. They should be introduced to the leadership of the lodge and to individuals deemed important for an individual prospect to meet. **There is room for spontaneity, but careful planning will yield the best results. Promote an atmosphere of fun and congeniality.**

It is expected that Masons will make personal contact with prospective members long before any invitations go out. If a candidate accepts a cold turkey invitation, it is probably because of family history or some type of personal contact with Masonry. It is much better to carefully plant seeds and then nurture them for the successful harvest.

The invitations should be sent out or hand delivered by specific members assigned to each candidate. The candidates should know that this will be a fun party but be clear as to its intent. If a candidate does not know the purpose of the evening, they may feel ambushed and be turned off or intimidated. **Thirty**

invitations properly delivered should yield about ten positive returns.

In the course of the evening a brief formal talk on Freemasonry should be delivered. A member who is capable of selling(?) the spirit of our Fraternity in a very positive and inspiring way should do this. There are several MAC Blue Pages examples of introductory speeches - the most effect ones will be adaptations that are positive, sincere, and speak from personal history as well as from fraternal history and values. Time should be allowed to answer questions.

After the formal talk, materials should be available to sign up members. Again, personal contact and sensitivity are key elements. If a potential member is not ready, it is seldom wise to apply high pressure. If preparation has been done properly, the results should be successful and obvious.

After the party those potential candidates who sign up should be kept in constant contact prior to and during their degrees. They along with their wives should be included in all open functions of the lodge. Those members who do not sign up should be evaluated and either retained on the Active MRL or placed on the Passive list with proper follow-up notes. Just because a potential candidate does not sign immediately does not mean he is not a good prospect for future recruitment. By the same token each candidate must be carefully evaluated so that an uninterested party is not badgered by zealous members seeking to enroll them in the Fraternity.

The Degrees: Personal contact, personal contact, and more personal contact. **The importance of personal contact throughout the degree process cannot be overstressed.** These candidates are building a relationship to the members of the Lodge. If that relationship is successfully nurtured, a candidate is most likely to become a strong active member of the Lodge.

One of the most important Masons for personal contact is the candidate's sponsor. This is an individual who already has a close relationship to the candidate. The sponsor should make sure that the candidate is informed as to what is expected, that he be present for all the degrees if possible, and that he act in between degrees to support his candidate.

It is also important that a candidate make an investment in the Lodge to cement his relationship. That is sometimes secured through learning the cipher, sometimes from active involvement in Lodge programs, and sometimes in the planning of lodge activity. Personal contact is key to determining the niche that new members can best play in the lodge. It is extremely important that through personal contact a new member is made to feel welcome and an important member of the lodge. **Leave nothing to chance – plan for success and success will happen.** Remember that the window to create an active Masons is usually about six-weeks to three-months.

Reactivation of Inactive members: The reactivation of inactive members is more challenging than that of recruiting new members because the structure of degrees and the lure of the unknown are not present. Personal contact is again the key. Establish contact with the inactive member, discover his needs and interests, and plan a program for his rehabilitation. Remember lack of time is usually an excuse – we always find time for activity that is a priority. Personalize the approach to the inactive member and log it on the MRLI. **Remember – planning is the most dependable key to success.**

Phase Three: Follow - up

It has been shown that there is about a six-week to three-month window in which to make a new member an active member. The window is much smaller (i.e. instantaneous) for a reactivated brother. After that time, if a member is not actively participating in some aspect of Freemasonry that they enjoy, they will probably become inactive. It is therefore imperative that these new members or reactivated members be followed closely to make them feel a strong active part of the Fraternity. Everyone's needs and interests vary. **A successful lodge will continue the evaluation process for each new member long after initiation is completed.**

The candidate's sponsor is again important in the follow-up process. All new Masons need to be

shepherded into an active role in the lodge. The sponsor should maintain a close relationship to that candidate throughout his Masonic career.

Again, in follow-up as with initial planning overall Lodge program cannot be emphasized enough. Integration of candidates can require active shepherding into appropriate directions. This does not just happen and requires constant planning and evaluation.

Miscellaneous:

One Day Classes: One-day classes where all three Masonic degrees are conferred on the same day present a special set of challenges and pitfalls. They also present tremendous opportunity. On one hand they are essential to bringing in many members who would not otherwise take the time to enter through a regular three-month schedule. By the same token it is a greater challenge to integrate and activate the one-day candidate into routine lodge activity. Again, personal contact and planning are key. **The thought that once a man is made a Master Mason the work of membership is finished is erroneous.** Integration into the lodge is a process that takes time and effort – if it is not done properly, the best recruiting programs will fall flat.

MAC Blue Pages as a Resource: There is a wealth of information contained in the MAC Blue Pages. Becoming familiar with its content in all its areas – especially membership and community service – will be a huge plus for any program.

Role of Community Service: Community service projects offer a tremendous opportunity to put Masonry into the community in a positive light. Such events also provide an excellent opportunity for recruitment. It was noted that Lodges with active CHIP participation were also the Lodges with active a relatively successful membership programs. This is not a coincidence for two reasons: **1) Activity is key to the vitality of a Lodge which is necessary to attract new members, and 2) Community activities such as CHIP put us out in our communities in a positive light.** Potential members who might develop or already have a favorable inclination towards the Fraternity notice such activity.

Resources: Grand Lodge is committed to doing everything possible to help lodges with membership programs. Contact should either be made directly with the MAC Membership Subcommittee or through the District Awareness Officer or his assistant for membership. MAC is developing a group of Masons who have had experience in areas of membership to serve the lodges as advisors if requested. Grand Lodge would also encourage lodges to work together or in districts or areas to pool resources and make programs more effective. Again, **each lodge will customize their approach to membership to such serve its own needs.** There will be similarities among programs, but each will be unique unto itself. It is win-win when community service translates into productive membership growth.

Membership Seminars: from time to time MAC will hold membership-training seminars to share ideas and pool resources. Keep in touch with these programs through your District Awareness Officer.

Membership Award: The Grand Lodge Membership Award is designed to recognize those lodges that are making sincere and effective efforts in the area of membership. More importantly it serves as a planning tool to establish, maintain, or improve membership programs. The instructions for the award describe much useful information for building membership. Lodges should give serious consideration to participation in this program.

Summary:

Membership is a critical issue for the survival of Freemasonry. It is easy for those of us who love the craft to generate enthusiasm for it. To stimulate membership we must focus that enthusiasm on membership. Planning and personal contact are the keys to success.

Together we can make this happen; we shall rebuild this Fraternity.