FLORIDA MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GUIDE:

A Supplement to the Grand Lodge Membership Program & Planning Manual

First Edition
May 2012
MEMORIAL
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated in loving memory of Joseph F. “Joe” Tuhill, PER, Secretary of Punta Gorda Lodge #2606, the largest Lodge in FL. Joe knew and understood the value of membership and was a devoted Lodge Liaison since the inception of the program. He continually worked to make his Lodge a great place to be and he genuinely cared about and lived the Elks mission. He could always be counted on by the Florida State Elks Association staff for any request they might have. His smile, positive attitude, generosity, and kindness will be sorely missed by all who knew him. May we keep him in our thoughts as an example of a dedicated Elk and may he continue to inspire us in our efforts for Elks membership growth.

Joseph F. “Joe” Tuhill, PER
January 8, 1951 - April 20, 2012
Elks member 1989 - 2012
PREPARE: 
Modernize the Lodge and the Thinking of our Members

In order to successfully recruit members to your Lodge, you must first modernize not only your physical Lodge but also the way your members think. Some of you will think that this is unnecessary or will draw “the wrong crowd.” However, consider this:

If what your Lodge is doing is the only way to appeal to potential members, you’d have all the members you’d ever want or need already and it’d be enough to keep them satisfied throughout their years of membership.

We know that this isn’t true, though. You need to make your Lodge marketable to diverse populations.

Start by physically modernizing the outside of your Lodge. This is all nonmembers can see unless they are invited to be a guest at the Lodge, so this makes up a lot of their perception of your Lodge and its members. First impressions are lasting.

Think about the following elements of your curb appeal and consider what needs fixed or updated:

- Does your building need painted?
- Do your windows need washed or even replaced?
- Is your lawn mowed on a regular basis?
- Do you have flowers/shrubs/bushes/trees/etc. that need regular upkeep?
- Is your parking lot smoothly paved or does it have potholes and cracks?
- Is there ample parking?
- Is your building handicap accessible?
- Is there a sidewalk leading to your doors or do members and guests have to walk on grass or dirt to get to the door?
- Does the sidewalk have bumps or cracks that make it a threat to safety?
• Does your doorbell work?
• Is your outdoor furniture old, dirty, and falling apart?
• Is your external signage modern and up-to-date? Do nonmembers passing by know what your sign means? Does it say B.P.O.E. or ________ Elks Lodge? Why not be clear who you are?!

If the outside of your Lodge is not modern and appealing to passersby, it won’t matter how wonderful the inside is and what you can offer. The nonmembers will have made up their mind about you and decided that your Lodge isn’t for them. Don’t let this happen! Every nonmember is a potential member!

Now let’s move on to the inside of your Lodge. In order to modernize the inside of your Lodge, you must also modernize your members’ thinking. Now some of you will want to stop reading right here because you don’t have a problem with your way of doing things so you don’t think anyone else should either. You think that what appeals to you should appeal to everyone. You think that because something has been done a certain way for years that it should always stay that certain way. This just isn’t possible though!

In order to modernize the inside of your Lodge, you must also modernize your members’ thinking.

Modernizing members’ thinking means expanding your way of thinking and letting in others’ viewpoints on what they like and thinking about what potential members would like. Ask your members what they would like to do in the Lodge.

HIGHLY SUGGESTED CHANGES:

• Update your Lodge by accepting credit cards. So many people use credit and debit cards now and will even avoid going where plastic is not accepted. Members will also spend more with plastic than with cash. Don’t let this be a reason for someone to stay away from the Lodge.

• Add several television monitors to the bar area so members can watch different sports.

• Offer Wi-Fi.

• If you have a game room, fix it up. Add some new games to the mixture, perhaps a Wii game system. You could even start a Wii League. Offer darts and corn hole.

• Consider a late happy hour.

• Have a website created for your Lodge. Many people find information via websites so this
not only allows more nonmembers to access you, but your Lodge members will certainly find it helpful as well. Post information, events, etc.

- Consider using Facebook and other social media.
- Make the Lodge more user-friendly for the nondrinking member. If some members aren’t coming to the Lodge to drink, they need options to keep them entertained.
- Have your members ask young people what they would like to do at the Lodge. Get involved in a high school (band, debate). Start having teens in for different activities. Have your members be chaperones so that they will interact with the young people. Perhaps the teens could help show your members how to use some new technology.
- Ask longtime members what they would like to do at the Lodge that isn’t currently available. A good way of doing this is to survey members.
- Ask new members what they think of the Lodge and what else they’d like to see.
- Spruce up the inside like you did to the outside. Perhaps add new tables and chairs.
- Add parking for RVs.
- Consider if your Lodge is progressive acting and thinking. Do others see you as hip and with it? If not, work toward that. Otherwise, you won’t be successful in recruiting members who are.
- Strive to be a friendly Lodge and let your Lodge be known as a friendly Lodge. This speaks volumes to other Lodges’ members and to nonmembers. This shouldn’t be difficult! Treat others as you want to be treated. Welcome others who enter the Lodge. Strike up a conversation with them first. Perhaps the state will establish a statewide friendliest Lodge competition.

**Final Thought**

REMEMBER, there is no rule that states that things can never change. We need change in order to grow and progress. Change is your friend, not your enemy. Don’t avoid it! Physically modernizing your Lodge and the thinking of its members may seem like two obvious concerns that should be addressed before member recruitment can be successful, but in fact, these very things often get overlooked. Why should they be overlooked though? They are concepts we put into practice in our daily lives.

Following this chapter’s advice will prepare your Lodge for the start of the member recruiting process. Do not take this step lightly. Before you can welcome others into your Lodge, you must first analyze and modernize what needs mended with your Lodge and its members. Then you are positioned to move to the next step in member recruitment: Prospecting.
PROSPECT:
Prospecting for New Members

Now that your Lodge has modernized its appearance and your members have modernized their ways of thinking, you are ready for the next step in the member recruitment effort: prospecting. It’s time to start searching for potential members.

Take some time as a Lodge and think about whether you should refer to them as “new members” or “new Elks.” Does it make a difference? Everything you do that affects new members is critical to gaining and retaining them. If they feel valued from the beginning, there is a better chance that they will become a longtime member.

Have your Lodge set a goal for the amount of new members needed for success. A suggested standard to use is this:

New members = to 10% of the current membership

In meeting this goal, keep in mind the image we said we want to portray from Chapter 1. A friendly Lodge with modern appearance and forward thinking members should certainly have an easier time recruiting prospects than a shabby looking Lodge with rude members who refuse to change.

Member prospecting is somewhat like digging for gold on a treasure hunt. Those who seek gold generally search where gold was found before. Treasure hunters follow maps, clues, history, etc. The point is this: prospectors and treasure hunters do not search blindly. Rather, they explore the places that would give them the best odds. Your Lodge should do this too. There are places and types of people to seek that will give you the greatest chance of success. What follows will lay out these options.
Each Lodge should form a Prospecting Committee to implement the following action plan.

The following action plan is more likely to produce member prospects than simply randomly asking nonmembers to join:

⇒ **Produce a Lodge flyer.**
  - Have available in Lodge
  - Hand to nonmembers during community events
  - Display in local offices, restaurants, etc.

⇒ **Contact your Chamber of Commerce.**
  - Can help you advertise your events
  - They are a point of contact for local citizens, people who just moved to your community, professionals, etc.

⇒ **Rent out your Lodge to civic, benevolent, and fraternal groups.**
  - Examples: Rotary, Lions, Knights of Columbus
  - Shows off your Lodge to people already involved in other similar organizations who are more likely to join another one

⇒ **Open your Lodge to community organizations that need a place to meet.**
  - Examples: Local autism support group, local political clubs, etc.

⇒ **Encourage your members to “Just Ask.”**
  - Examples: Ask friends, family, neighbors, business associates, etc. to join the order

⇒ **Sponsor a community work day.**

⇒ **Ask to be invited into a local school. Parents and teachers are prospects!**
  - Sponsor a presentation
  - Hand out drug awareness information during lunch or an assembly
  - Inform the school about the Elks’ children’s programs and student scholarships

⇒ **Arrange to speak at a homeowners association meeting.**
  - Give a presentation about Elks and their charitable works

⇒ **Work with local police and city service departments.**
  - Partner with them for drug awareness programs, etc.

⇒ **Develop teams to go into the community and make targeted presentations about Elkdom and invite prospects to open house events.**
⇒ Develop a training program for those in the Lodge who are usually a first point of contact for prospects.
  • Examples: Staff, greeters, other volunteers
  • Educate them about our mission

⇒ Get applications out from behind the bar.
  • Make applicants go through an open house event so they can learn more about our expectations and what a membership is and isn’t

⇒ Provide calling cards for members to hand out.

⇒ Plan prospecting activities at the Lodge which would attract target groups.
  • Examples: Retirement planning; housing/loan seminar; guest speakers such as local city official, medical practitioner, and school superintendent; etc.

⇒ Target stray Elks and reinstatements.

⇒ Target groups of people who would benefit from membership and who could benefit us.
  • Examples: Teachers, firemen, the newly widowed, etc.
  • The benefits of targeting teachers: they can help with drug awareness and other youth activities, they are great at creative projects and designing bulletin boards, they can become after-school tutors at the Lodge for high school students, they can help the Lodge become “the” place where they do their state-required volunteer work, and they can assist in establishing a junior Elks program or an Antlers program.

⇒ Set up booths at craft fairs and local shows.
  • Draw large crowds - a good way to share information to many people at once
  • Makes your Lodge visible to community

⇒ Participate in local parades.

⇒ Open your Lodge to scouting and other youth organizations.

⇒ Distribute bumper stickers.

⇒ Use Twitter and Facebook.
  • Announce Lodge events and programs
  • Post what your Lodge believes in and can offer its members and its community
⇒ Set up think tanks with other Lodges to share ideas.

⇒ Develop a culture in the Lodge in which Gen X and Y are desired and welcome.
  • Let them join purely for social reasons. Many of us joined for social reasons; let’s let them!
  • Don’t make them feel pressured. Let them build an age group base that will develop into something more.

Note on External Needs:

This list contains external needs because many actions require the cooperation of outside organizations. Oftentimes, these organizations are happy to make a connection with your Lodge. However, circumstances may exist where relations or communications with these groups are strained and not successful, perhaps due to prior differences they may have had with your Lodge. If this is the case, maybe this would be a good time to clear the air by highlighting to them all of the good things your Lodge does and can offer to others.
RECRUIT:
Opening the House to New Member Prospects

Moving right along, you have now modernized your Lodge and the thinking of your members and you have prospected and found potential members. GREAT! Now it is time to open your house to them! This step serves as a way to show them what your Lodge is all about and what it has to offer them. A successful open house should lead to new members, especially if your prospecting step did well.

Develop open houses as application-free. The application should be handed to the member/prospect at the invitation step (see Chapter 4). Here they would be invited back to the Lodge for the commitment.

As stated in the previous chapter, the Lodge should develop a Lodge brochure to have available for open house guests. Be sure to include Lodge contact information, the state major projects, community support services, Lodge events and activities, hours and dining menu, the Elks mission, and national programs including scholarship information and grants.

Keep in mind your audience. Have you targeted specific groups in your prospecting? Holding a separate event for a group would allow a tailor-made presentation.

Example: If you are holding an open house for parents of boy scouts and girl scouts, for law enforcement and emergency services personnel, or for teachers, you would want to stress our drug awareness program, the Florida Elks Youth Camp, Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services, and scholarship opportunities.

Note: you could tell the law enforcement groups that you could team together to hold drug awareness events.
**Put a positive spin on everything you convey in your presentation.** Steer away from communicating negatively and about what cannot be done. Instead, make all statements about what can be done and highlight the benefits for them. Don’t forget to present your social activities as well.

⇒ Be sure to have a sign-in sheet for all guests’ names and contact information.
⇒ Remember our members’ needs for fun, being entertained, doing for others, and being respected. Your presentation should have remarks about each of these so that your guests leave the event with a firm understanding that all of these needs can be met by the Lodge.
⇒ Keep in mind the image you are trying to portray to your open house guests: friendly, modern, fun, etc.
⇒ Incorporate stories from those recipients who have benefited from the Lodge’s charity.
⇒ Develop the open house as a sales event complete with a sales pitch.
⇒ Sell the Elks Opportunity. Tell them what’s in it for them.
⇒ Develop a list of what Elks offer that other organizations do not, e.g. charitable endeavors.
⇒ Ask your Chamber of Commerce to announce your open house on their website.
⇒ Your open house could be a breakfast, a wine tasting, etc. Lose any previous limits on what your Lodge did for open houses and let your imagination run free!
⇒ Have presentations or stations (tables, display boards, videos, overheads, etc.) showing guests what the Lodge and the Elks are about.

Not every guest at your open house will decide that your Lodge is right for them. Similarly, you can retain your ability to selectively recruit. You do not have to offer membership to every guest.
INVITE:
Inviting Prospects to Become New Members

This invitation step takes place after prospects have been to an open house and after they have acquainted themselves with your Lodge.

Outline expectations of a new member:
- What we expect from them
- What they can expect from us
- What we should expect from current members

Place more emphasis on what members can do in the Lodge rather than on what they cannot do.

Spell out the dues and financial responsibilities of a member. Define the fixed costs of the Lodge that are covered by dues and the costs that are not which must come from operations and profits.

Encourage new members to invite their friends to become prospective members.

Develop the parameters for an interview step.

Outline Lodge volunteer needs and expectations.

Define the roles of the prospect, the inviter, the proposer, the sponsor, the officers, and the members for your Lodge.

Don’t forget to ask them to join.
EDUCATE:  
A Fresh New Approach to Indoctrination/Orientation

The Importance of Indoctrination/Orientation:

It is crucial that you teach your candidates the fundamentals of your Lodge: the rules, expectations, customs, and how to carry out everyday Lodge tasks that you now take for granted in knowing how to do properly. Think back though to when you first joined. Something so simple to you now was probably not so obvious during your early days as an Elk. Since this is an Orientation, ORIENT your members to your Lodge! This would include:

⇒ A tour of the Lodge
  • Tell them what takes place in each area of your Lodge

⇒ A how-to session
  • Examples: Sign-up sheets, calling in reservations, bringing in guests, etc.

⇒ Give candidates a written copy of the Lodge & House rules and customs
  • When you provide rules in writing, there is no question or confusion as to what is and isn’t accepted. Candidates have a right to know all of this.
  • If wearing hats is not permitted in your Lodge, or only at certain times, provide this information. Candidates can’t read your mind!
  • Do not put them in the position of being embarrassed. The more you tell them before they encounter it blindly on their own, the more comfortable they will feel at the Lodge!

⇒ Remember that your District Vice President or District Indoctrination Chair may be there to observe and grade orientation to maintain standards

During Indoctrination/Orientation, you also want to make the candidate feel welcome and valued and that their concerns are being addressed, help them to feel a connection to the Lodge and to the order, and explain the importance of being a member. Following these steps should help make this successful:
Develop a welcome packet for new members
Develop best ways to assimilate new members into the Lodge
Explain how to become a good and productive member
Explain how to use your membership in the Lodge and Order
Convey the importance of and how to stay in touch - us with them and them with us
Obtain from them the kinds of information they want, what is available to them, and how they wish to receive it
Develop a privacy statement on how a new member’s information will be used
Explain how and why the new member needs to get involved
Assess hobbies and interests of new members - not just what committee they want to be on

The Purpose of Indoctrination/Orientation:

The purpose of Indoctrination/Orientation is to positively reinforce the candidate’s decision to become an Elk by:

⇒ Familiarizing candidates with the Lodge and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
  • Lodge rules and expectations
  • Lodge customs
  • How to accomplish basic tasks in the Lodge (e.g. obtaining a new ID card, how to volunteer, who to ask questions of, how to get help, etc.)
⇒ Answering candidate questions about the order and the Lodge
⇒ Explaining what an Elk is and should be
⇒ Answering candidate questions about the initiation ceremony

Indoctrination/Orientation is accomplished at a Lodge meeting which all candidates are required to attend prior to initiation into the order. Transfers and reinstatements should also attend since they may not be familiar with the activities and traditions of the Lodge. In unusual circumstances where a candidate cannot attend a regular Indoctrination, the Lodge should have a procedure to accomplish the purpose of Indoctrination/Orientation one-on-one.

The Indoctrination/Orientation meeting is best conducted by using various presentation media which includes but is not limited to:

⇒ Presenters:
  • Telling - giving information
  • Asking questions -
    • To find out what candidates know about Elks
    • To find out what candidates want to know
  • Interacting - creating a dialogue with the candidates
⇒ Computer generated materials / computer aided presentations
⇒ Grand Lodge and Florida State Elks Association video media
⇒ Provide written materials not provided in the Lodge Secretary’s Packet (Lodge house rules, current Lodge bulletin, copy of obligation, etc. - Check with Lodge Secretary)

The physical setting of the Indoctrination/Orientation meeting is as important as its content. The room should:

⇒ Be attractive with comfortable seating
⇒ Be insulated from outside noise
⇒ Be well lit
⇒ Be maintained at a comfortable temperature
⇒ Have workable video and sound equipment
⇒ Have the United States flag present
⇒ Offer hors d’oeuvres or a light buffet before or after the meeting. This is a nice touch which allows time for candidate interaction with the officers and Elks present.
⇒ Offer other ice breakers also serve to welcome the candidates into our Elk “family.”

It is recommended that the following attend Indoctrination/Orientation meetings to support the effort to reinforce the candidate’s decision to become an Elk and Indoctrination/Orientation’s importance to the order and the Lodge:

⇒ All officers, not just the chair officers
⇒ Committee Chairmen: House, Lodge Activities, Elks National Foundation, Harry-Anna Trust Fund, Ladies Organization, and others particular to your Lodge
⇒ The candidates’ sponsors as the new members’ mentors to the organization
⇒ Candidates’ spouses and family members should be encouraged to attend

Each Lodge needs to establish its own Indoctrination/Orientation meeting format and procedures. What follows is an example your Lodge might want to use as a guide, but since all Lodges are different, you will all want to put your own spin on it.
Example Agenda for a Lodge Indoctrination/Orientation Meeting

Opening:

Meeting Moderator *(Moderator should be a Lodge officer or PER)*

⇒ Gives the welcome
⇒ Introduces self
⇒ Introduces Chaplain and asks those present to rise for Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chaplain

⇒ Gives Invocation
⇒ Leads group in Pledge of Allegiance

Moderator

⇒ Asks group to sit
⇒ States purpose for Indoctrination
⇒ Asks the candidates for any initial questions *(this gives presenters a sense of what the candidates hope to learn during the session so that it can be addressed in the meeting)*
⇒ Asks Exalted Ruler to come forward for opening remarks

Exalted Ruler

⇒ Welcomes candidates and spouses
⇒ Introduces Lodge officers present
⇒ Asks each sponsor to introduce candidate(s)
⇒ Reviews Indoctrination/Orientation meeting agenda *(agendas should be available to each person present - at each seat before meeting, handed out at the door, or given out during this portion)*

Moderator

⇒ Takes charge of meeting content and introduces topics, videos, and speakers.
Indoctrination/Orientation Meeting:

Moderator

⇒ Provides brief overview of Elkdom’s structure (Grand Lodge, State Association, Lodge, Member)

- Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America
  - Grand Lodge (show current Grand Lodge video)
  - Elks National Foundation (have ENF Committee Chairman speak, show ENF video, or both) - place emphasis on getting more back than we give at state and Lodge level

- Florida State Elks Association (FSEA)
  - FSEA description (show current FSEA video)
  - Grand Lodge relationship to FSEA
  - Lodge relationship to FSEA
  - Harry-Anna Trust Fund (HATF) (have HATF Committee Chairman speak about the fund’s importance and local fundraising efforts on its behalf)
  - FSEA Major Projects
    - Florida Elks Youth Camp
    - Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services
  - The Army of Hope
  - HOPE Scholarship

- Local Lodge Organization
  - Lodge (have Esteemed Leading Knight or other designated officer present)
    - Present Lodge structure (Who does what?)
    - Local charities
    - Community activities/Service
    - Why volunteer at the Lodge? (many new members belong to other organizations and need encouragement to spend some of their volunteer time on Lodge programs)
  - Social Quarters/Club (kitchen & bar) (have House Committee or individual in charge of social quarters/club present)
    - Social activities
    - Volunteering opportunities (It is recommended that you be as specific as possible when requesting volunteers because vague appeals for volunteerism usually result in little or no response; have a list of needs.)
  - Ladies/Spouses Organization (if Lodge has a Ladies/Spouses Organization, its leadership should be given the opportunity to present their programs and offer the opportunity to spouses to join)
Closing:

Moderator

⇒ Asks Exalted Ruler to give closing remarks

Exalted Ruler

⇒ Gives closing remarks
⇒ Asks candidates and spouses if they have any more questions
⇒ Welcomes them and encourages participation in all Lodge Activities *(the benefits of Elkdom are achieved through involvement)*
⇒ Reintroduces Lodge Esquire and asks candidates to meet Esquire at designated location for Initiation walk-through after the benediction
⇒ Asks group to stand for benediction

Chaplain

⇒ Gives benediction

After Meeting:

Lodge Esquire

⇒ Takes candidates to Lodge Room for Initiation walk-through *(it is recommended that the Esquire provide each candidate with a copy of the obligation which they can review prior to the Initiation ceremony)*

Spouses, sponsors, Lodge officers, and others present

⇒ Socialize in meeting room or lounge

Lodge Esquire & Candidates

⇒ After Initiation walk-through, they join the others for more socializing *(Those in attendance at the Indoctrination/Orientation meeting should socialize together. Drinks and food provide an opportunity to sit and visit in a less formal atmosphere. This provides an opportunity for the candidates to feel welcomed and meet Elks other than their sponsors.)*
Chapter 6

INITIATE:
Managing the Initiation of New Members

Guidelines to Follow for Initiation Celebration:

⇒ Consider holding Initiation Celebration at a time other than in conjunction with a regular business meeting
  • Consider hosting it on a Saturday night or on the same night every month so that it can be announced in the monthly Lodge bulletin and not require any special notification
  • This could be a membership activation tool as well

⇒ Make the event something to remember
  • Have special lighting
  • Invite family (Follow up in a few days with an invitation to a meet and greet. Ask the new member to bring guests. Our newest Elks are our greatest prospective member resource.)
  • Uniform ritual booklets could be used in response to memorization of respective initiation rolls
  • Socialize prior to and after the Initiation Celebration to create and build upon friendships
  • Inform the existing membership that they are not to request anything (time, donations, etc.) from the new initiates
  • NO PRESSURE on the initiates - only friendship building and idea exchanges
    • Share stories of past Elk experiences
    • Have a guest speaker
  • Have an open meal for socialization after the Initiation Celebration
    • Meal should be free to all to encourage members to attend and meet new inductees
    • Provide a guideline list for the evening

⇒ The new member should leave Initiation Night with an invitation to an upcoming Lodge activity or event
MENTOR:
Mentoring our New Members - Assimilating them into the Family

Mentors play such an important role in our lives, whether they guide us through our schooling, our jobs, our hobbies, or our everyday lives. With the help of mentors, we learn much and we better ourselves in the process. They are our models of what to do and not to do and they help us gain confidence and success. Mentors truly are a blessing to have and they become trusted counselors, tutors, guides, and coaches.

Why then should the Elks bring in new members and hope that they become successful and active members at the Lodge without giving them a mentor to teach them and set an example?

The following provides examples for the mentoring process. However, every Lodge has different styles and demographics and should work with their members to achieve what is best for individual needs and successes. What works in a larger Lodge may not work for a smaller Lodge. If some examples do not work in your Lodge, that’s alright.

Who should act as the new member’s mentor?
⇒ Ideally, this should be the new member’s sponsor.
⇒ If the sponsor is unable, then another member who has been trained as a mentor and who is active in the Lodge should be appointed.

How will mentors know what to do?
⇒ The Lodge should define and develop the process for mentoring a new member.
⇒ The Lodge must train members to be successful mentors.
⇒ The program should also include spouses or significant others to add a different perspective.
⇒ A goal of a mentoring program should be to empower the new member and create an environment where their thoughts and ideas can be contributed.
What should mentors do?
⇒ Introduce the new member to other members
⇒ Invite the new member to join them at a Lodge meeting or event
⇒ Be friendly and informative
⇒ Call the new member to ask for help with a project they are working on
⇒ Engage in informal conversations outside the meeting room
⇒ Make sure new members know about special events like game nights, golf, tennis, etc. as well as other outings that will be held in the future or annual activities. Invite them to join if they have an interest.
⇒ Work with new member if they have an interest in serving as an officer to make them both knowledgeable and comfortable with the meetings
⇒ Encourage; don’t discourage!
⇒ Try to have the new member meet with the mentor on a consistent basis to better educate and make them feel comfortable

What should the Lodge do?
⇒ Offer incentives such as “come to your third meeting and get something free”
⇒ Post pictures in the Lodge of all new members
⇒ Have new members wear name tags while in Lodge that give their name, what city/state they are from, favorite team, etc.
RETAIN:
Retaining the Members We Already Have and Addressing Dues Lapsation

Collection of Dues (Now Referred to as Membership Renewal):

Membership renewals generally are sent at the end of January with second notices mailed the first week in March with a reminder that their membership is about to run out. This gives members two notices before April 1.

Also consider starting an early bird renewal payment program. For example, if a member pays by February 15, they receive an early bird sticker or stamp that the Lodge can place on the membership card. This early bird sticker or stamp may enable the person to receive one free drink or dinner.

The Lodge Secretary is responsible for maintaining accurate contact information for all members to ensure that renewal notices are getting to the members. Ways to help obtain these updates:

- Do your part and give your Lodge Secretary your most current contact information
- Encourage the bulletin editor to include an update form in the monthly bulletin for members to use to update their contact information
- Set a goal to get every member into the Lodge for an activity at least one time per year. One method would be to divide the membership list into 12 parts and invite 1/12 of the
membership to a monthly dinner such as a free spaghetti dinner. Use these dinners to 
reorient and update your members and to make sure all contact information, their interests, 
and preferred contact information are up-to-date. Also survey their ever-changing needs.

**Payments/Budgets:**

Credit cards are so common today. Encourage payment of membership renewals with credit 
cards. Keep in mind that it is illegal to charge a service charge to process membership to make 
up for the loss when paying the credit card company.

Keep the Relief Committee in mind for members who are having difficulty paying their 
renewals.

Show members why their renewals are needed and how they are used. The Lodge can show a 
breakdown of where the money goes. Keep them informed of these numbers. Awareness is 
sometimes all it takes.

Show the members that dues support and perpetuate our charitable activities and that they are 
needed even if the member can not participate. Devise ways in which to recommit members to 
their support of the Elks even when they can no longer participate. *Elks for life!*

**Say, “Thank You:”**

Have a thank you note for the Lodge Secretary to include when sending the membership cards. 
The personal touch of a handwritten note to show appreciation goes a long way with many 
people. If your Lodge goes the extra mile in doing this, the renewing members will appreciate 
the gesture and hopefully be more likely to participate more often in Lodge activities. Consider 
also sending a ticket for a free drink.

Consider a punch ticket for dining members. Dine in the Lodge 5 times and the 6th time is free.
Atmosphere:

Establish a Welcoming Committee of members who will greet people at the door during an event.

Encourage people with like interests to interact with one another.

Consider establishing clique-free zones in your Lodge and/or holding clique-free events.

Communicate Good News:

Create a “Good News” phone or e-mail tree that will keep your Lodge’s members informed on what is happening in your Lodge. Also establish a Facebook account and advertise your events. Not only will your members see this but so too will other Lodges in your area. Have the officers create their own phone calling tree for emergency situations.

This way all officers will be notified in a very short period of time. This can be used for emergencies or general information.

Senior Members:

Keep in contact with the older members of your Lodge. Find ways to keep them informed. Offer a carpooling group that would pick up and bring home those members who have difficulty driving at night or who don’t drive at all. Bring them to the meetings and special

Follow the Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

In other words, BE NICE!

Don’t keep good news a secret! Tell your members! It will make them proud of the Lodge’s successes. Plus, if you announce upcoming events, more attendees are likely to show up.

Don’t forget about your Lodge’s more senior members. Just because they can’t be at the Lodge as much now doesn’t mean you should stop engaging with them and treat them with any less importance.
events. DON’T LET THEM DROP their membership because they can’t get to the Lodge anymore. Form a committee that would visit them at home, in the hospital, or in a nursing home. Send out birthday cards or cards just to let them know you’re thinking of them. Call them to see if they are all right or if they need something done. Remember to tap into their knowledge by phone. If they were a volunteer in the kitchen for years, call and ask their opinion if the need arises. Just think how that would make them feel!

**Lapsation:**

Don’t play the lapsation game just to not lose.

PLAY TO WIN!

Grand Lodge has established a 2% lapsation goal. Make a thermometer and keep track of the renewed members so everyone can see the progress. Get the sponsors involved in encouraging them to rejoin. Have the Relief Committee look into true hardship cases and authorize payment or partial payment of renewals.

**Members Helping Members:**

Just because your Lodge members perform charitable acts for members of the community doesn’t mean they can’t do the same for other members.

Remember that members can help members. Assist members with home improvements, etc. Embrace the concept of paying it forward. Our charity should not only be reserved for others. This is what makes us fraternal.

Try to get local merchants to give discounts to those with current Elk cards.

**Additional Committees:**

Create committees with the purpose of helping fellow members in a variety of ways.

Sunshine Committee: Send birthday cards, anniversary cards, get well cards, etc. to members
Visitation Committee: Visit shut-ins, hospitalized members, or nursing homes
Telephone Committee: Call members to invite them to events or to check on them and say hello
Home Help Committee: Do minor repairs around the house when needed by senior members
ENGAGE:
The Difference Between Lodge Activities & Club Activities

We must understand that there are two types of activities in a Lodge: Lodge activities and club activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LODGE ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>CLUB ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Activities held to benefit Elks charities and other charities, increase membership numbers, build member camaraderie, etc.</td>
<td>⇒ Activities that help the club generate cash flow and income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ AKA Benevolent activities</td>
<td>⇒ AKA Club Operating activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Should be planned and overseen by the ER, officers, Lodge Activities Committee, and members</td>
<td>⇒ Should be planned and overseen by the house committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ The Lodge Master Calendar should be managed by the ER and Officers who will take into account state and district functions.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Goals for the Lodge Activities Committee

⇒ To provide equal access for all members to all functions and to make sure everyone is included in an effort to unite members and give them a place to come so they are not alone
⇒ For every event to derive ½ of the committee from new members and then the event chairman can get the other ½
More Thoughts on the Lodge Activities Committee

⇒ A function of the Lodge Activities Committee could be to establish the Lodge as the place other organizations come to obtain volunteers. Think of it as volunteers with benefits, a ready-source of dependable, trained, and dedicated volunteers.
⇒ Lodge Activities should be planned that appeal to a broad range of members and their interests.
⇒ New members should be encouraged to be on the Lodge Activities Committee so they can begin to have a say-so in types of functions. This gets them involved and gives them functions to which they might feel more inclined to invite their friends.
⇒ Appoint each Knight (Loyal, Lecturing, Leading) to be responsible for 1/3 of the Lodge’s committees. This will also provide training for the Exalted Ruler position and oversight to all committees. There would still be a chairman. Knights would serve as advisors and default chairmen. If a committee chairman cannot attend a meeting, then the officer can report committee activities.

Final Thought

Communication between the Lodge and club is critical to make sure everyone is on the same page. Concentrate on the vitality of the Lodge. Make sure the Lodge and club meet together to resolve differences, to coordinate activities, and to ensure that all pertinent information is on the Lodge meeting agendas.
Membership Liaison Contributors:

THANK YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION!

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