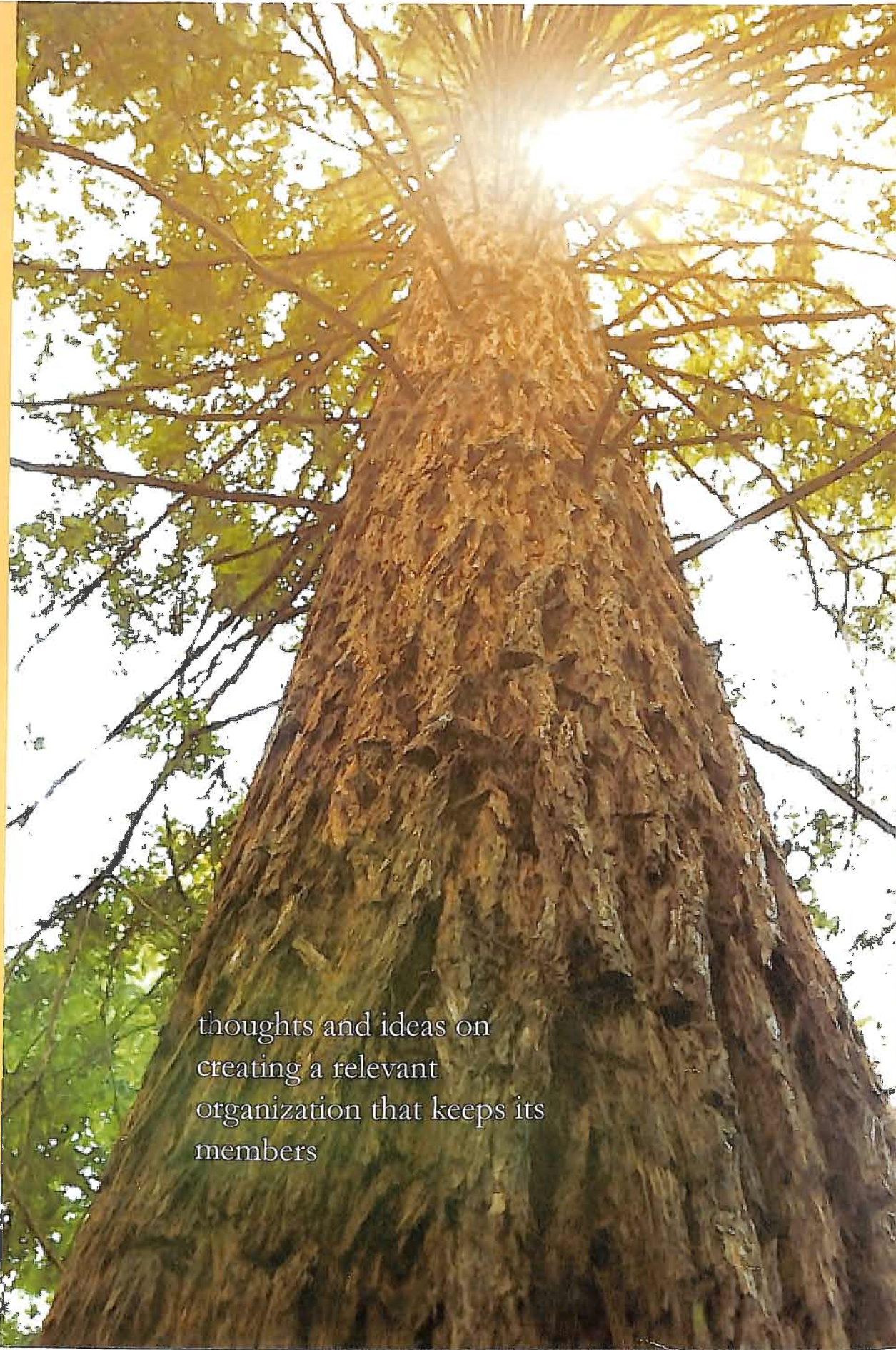


# Member Retention



thoughts and ideas on  
creating a relevant  
organization that keeps its  
members







“YOU MUST CAPTURE AND KEEP THE HEART OF THE ORIGINAL AND SUPREME ABLE MAN BEFORE HIS BRAIN CAN DO ITS BEST.”

*Andrew Carnegie*

Welcome to the third in our series of developing a relevant Lodge. This article is devoted to developing a Lodge that your members will not want to leave. You will also find some ideas on what you can do if they have already left. Our second magazine “Mentoring for Growth” presented insight into creating a Mentoring program. These “Mentoring” programs will go a long way toward keeping a new member coming back. However, there is still a great deal of work that we must do on an organizational basis, and this publication is dedicated to that effort.

The quotation at the beginning of this article is attributed to Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Carnegie made his fortune in steel. But his

life story is one of never giving up.

When Great Britain was on the brink of disaster Winston Churchill delivered his now famous victory speech, he said:

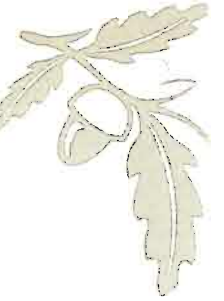
“What is our aim? I answer in one word: Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.”

Churchill knew the power of making sure everyone knew exactly where he stood, what his vision was, and that everyone believed in that vision.

It is our responsibility as leaders to make sure that the men who join our Lodges stay.

This booklet will examine the reasons men leave, the reasons men stay and what we can do to make the odds much more favorable for your Lodge.

# Reality...



A membership retention program must first lay down what we have going for us and against us. Your Lodges weaknesses are the threats to your actions. Your Lodges strengths are what you have to counter those threats. Lay down on paper those items that fit into the categories listed below. Use additional paper if you need to. Another great resource is available from the Masonic Renewal Committee of North America entitled “Getting Set for Success”.

What are our weaknesses?

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What are our strengths?

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What benefits do you provide your membership at this time? Lets list them here:

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In listing the programs your Lodge offers now, you begin to understand the concept of “member benefit.” Lets continue discovering our reality:

How many members do we have right now?

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How many new members have joined in the last 3 years?

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How many do we suspend for non payment?

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Do we know who our members are? How old they are, where they live, what their phone numbers are?

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The answers to these questions will move you toward a better understanding of your membership. When you have this information you can begin to build products and programs to address the needs of your members.

Remember, the reason most men leave the Masonic fraternity is because:

1. They were ignored
2. Their needs were not met

Both of these reasons for leaving are tragic. Men join our organization looking for something. For most it's fellowship and friendship. If they are ignored, they will leave. We cannot meet their needs if we don't know what those needs are, and that cannot occur if we ignore them.

To sum up: Do you know who belongs to your Lodge? Do you know what they hoped to receive when they joined your Lodge? Do you have a plan in place to deliver those “member benefits” that have value?

The answers will either give you more of the same, or take your Lodge in a whole new direction.







"I'M ALL IN FAVOR OF CHANGE AS LONG AS I DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT."

*Anonymous*

Many times change in the organization is fought with almost tenacious zeal. The question is, why? Why do we have to fight for even the most minor change to occur? Good questions, lets take a look.

Change is fought for several reasons, but I believe that the reason most often found is this: *"In order to change, you must step out of your place of comfort, you must move, and movement causes friction."* I don't necessarily think that people resist change just to be obstinate. I do think people resist change because it can be uncomfortable. Perhaps when they observe change, they observe themselves being rendered obsolete. After all if we change the organization then it can follow quite easily that we are changing because something is wrong. The viewpoint that something is wrong can

reflect on the people in charge, and that can be uncomfortable.. Those in power view these kinds of changes as threats to themselves and their perceptions of themselves. That is powerful stuff to overcome.

First things first. What do we change, what don't we change? How do we know the difference?

I'm sure that some of you have heard of the "Pareto Principle" but for those who haven't here it is in a nutshell. The Pareto Principle states that 80% of your results will come from the top 20% of your people. When you ask yourself where you should concentrate your efforts, concentrate on the top 20% not on the other 80%. If you were in sales, you could concentrate on the 80% (as a matter of fact most do concentrate on them) but is that the best use of your time and resources? Probably not. You could spend all of your time and resources on those 80% and never obtain the same kind of results you would

## Change...



receive from working with the 20%. Hard as this sounds it is simply the reality of organizations, for profit and not for profit.

Think about it this way: What are your most popular events? What events bring out the most people? What events fall flat? Do more people come to a steak dinner or the regular monthly meeting? Do you have a larger turnout at a golf outing, or at an initiation? I am not implying that you stop having monthly meetings or initiations, I am simply illustrating that members attend those events that are fun and that they find value in. Yet, how often does your lodge hold these enjoyable, family or fellowship centered events as compared to holding the types of meetings that your lodge has been conducting for the last 100 years?

Do you think change is easier when performed by yourself, or with others? Do you think that change has a greater impact when championed by a team or is the ability to effect change better when done by a single person? I think that the ability to effect lasting change is greatly enhanced when conducted by a team. For one thing it carries greater weight because you have done what is essential in the change process, created "buy in". Once you have that you have everything that goes with it, influence, trust and respect. You have convinced a group of people that they need to follow you, that you will do what is right by them and their lives will be enhanced by their participation in the change process.

"IT MARKS A BIG STEP IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT WHEN YOU COME TO REALIZE THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN HELP YOU DO A BETTER JOB THAN YOU COULD DO ALONE."

*Andrew Carnegie*

We need to realize that we can't do it alone, we need other people. Those others may have influence over people that we do not. They may have ideas that we cannot grasp. They may have knowledge that our team needs. Who you have on your team is as important as what change that team wants to undertake. If you are more comfortable starting small and taking bigger steps gradually then start with a program that changes something, but doesn't have a negative effect on those persons who will be uncomfortable in the change process. This type of change does several things, first it shows the group that your ideas on change won't cause the world to end. Second, it builds success. Success is very important in the process of change. Success is a key element in building influence and the ability to influence others in the change process is vital.

Changing an organization is never easy. As noted Leadership Developer and Author John Maxwell noted: "If your going to change an organization you better have a lot of change in your pockets." The change that Mr. Maxwell talks about is the trust that all of us obtain when we do the right things the right way. This trust, will get us over and through the rough spots in the early stages of the change process. If the people trust their leader to do the right thing, if they have seen that he has the best interest of the people in mind, if he has success's that he can point to, then his level of influence is going to be high. If he has just come on board, if he has not developed a trusting relationship with his fellow members, does not have any success's that he can point to, he will have a low level of influence with the Lodge. Change is achieved by those that have a high level of influence, and that takes time, success and hard work.







There are lots of ideas for member retention, but let's look at some that provide value not only in retaining members but also will attract others to the craft. Remember, the Lodge that keeps its members is also the Lodge that will attract new ones.

Listed here are some of the programs that are available through the Masonic Renewal Committee of North America. Their web address is located on the back cover of this booklet.

**Widows Recognition Program:** Here we take an evening to remember those that have suffered loss and to give them hope and the assurance they are not alone, or forgotten.

**Story Night Program:** Set aside a night just to tell stories.

**Presidents Night Program:** An evening's program to honor our Presidents. And to remember the impact they have had on us and

on the future.

**Mentoring Night Program:** Here we take some time and discuss the ideas associated with Mentoring, and possibly develop a mentoring program.

**Hero Night:** Do you have a Hero in your life? If so this is the night to tell your associates about your Hero.

**Comedy Night Program:** Set your room up like a comedy club and let the fun begin!

**Honor our Veterans Program:** Here we honor the bravest among us, our Veterans.

**Masonic Charities Recognition Program:** In this program we look at and recognize the tremendous impact that our charities have on the lives of others.

## Ideas...



**Bring a Brother to Lodge:** This program is straight forward enough, bring a brother to lodge.

**Charter Night Program:** Here we remember the night our lodge was chartered, ideas for a successful event are included.

**Career Night Program:** A great program for all of us, but especially for the younger man who needs to network.

**Wine and Cheese Night:** Simple enough and oh so good.

**Youth Group Night:** Say thanks and well done to a youth group in your area, details for a fun evening will be found with this program.

**Greeters Program:** Put a greeter at the door and see the change in attendance.

**Who I am:** This program allows all of us to tell our membership "who we are".

**Hobby Night:** Let the membership display their hobbies, you'll be surprised at what shows up!

**Treasure Hunt:** Look around your building, and you'll be shocked at what you find.

**Cigar Night:** Share a cigar and enjoy good friends.

**Community Thank You Night:** Select a organization in your community and thank them for making your world a little better.

**Poster Program:** Let the kids draw and involve the town, ideas abound with this program.

**Progressive Meeting:** Start in one building, end in another; along the way meet new friends and old acquaintances.

**Membership Bingo:** You have no idea the information you don't know about your members.

These are just a few of the ideas that can help make your Lodge a place that keeps its members. These programs and much more are available on the web at [www.masonic-renewal.org](http://www.masonic-renewal.org)

It is important to remember that to retain a member, we must involve that member in a way that meets his needs. It simply isn't enough to "put him into a chair" when we have no idea if he has the skills to perform the duties necessary. Or if we have the willingness to train him and stay with him over the long term. The simple fact is this: most men leave an organization because they were ignored. The programs listed in this section are designed to involve the newer member in activities that are non-threatening, simple and fun. Fun for the new member and enrolling at the same time. Enrolling by the way is the process of making a man a member. It's what the Marine Corps does, Wal Mart and Midwest Airlines. It's what the Girl Scouts do. The one thing these groups have in common is this: "They never take their customers or their members for granted." They do whatever they can and need to do to make sure that once someone has joined they will never leave of their own accord.







The ability to envision the future is a key need in the ability to create a relevant organization. If you cannot imagine a brighter, better day for your Lodge, then there is no need to change from what you are doing now!

Lets try a little visioning exercise to get you started, take a moment to answer the following questions and write them in the spaces provided:

Imagine your Lodge 10 years in the future. You are giving a report of what your Lodge has accomplished

Last year (2016) my Lodge accomplished -

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Last year (2016) "I" accomplished -

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What does the Lodge look like in 2016 ?

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What qualities do the people in our Lodge possess this year that they did not last year (2016) ?

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What recognition did we receive last year ?

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Now go over your responses with the other members of your Lodge. Where did you answer similarly and in what areas did you differ? Did you find the process difficult? John Maxwell's excellent book "Developing the Leader Within You" will help you develop your understanding of the power of vision and its place in your Lodge.

Use this exercise to develop your ability to

# Envision...



envision your future.

You have 1 minute with an individual in an elevator. You have to convince him "why he should become a member of your Lodge". We'll give you 3 minutes to put your thoughts in order. Ready? Go!

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Now, pair off with someone else and deliver your pitch. See how you do. You have 1 minute.

What were your thoughts during this exercise? Did you find it easy, or difficult? Do you think you did a good job of encouraging the "customer" in the elevator of the need for him to become a member of your Lodge? This is why it is so important to develop a strong understanding of your organization and a compelling vision of its future.

Viktor Frankle was a prisoner in the Nazi Concentration Camps during World War II. He determined to find some value in that experience, can you imagine that, to find some value in that hell on earth? He discovered that those who had a compelling vision of their future were the ones who had the greatest chance of survival. He wrote, "I became disgusted with the state of affairs which compelled me, daily and hourly, to think of only such trivial things. I forced my thoughts to turn to another subject. Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp!...By this method I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the suf-

ferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past."

This is the power of vision. And it is the single best illustration of its need in your life. If your Lodge has a clear compelling vision of its future, it has a destination in mind. And from there they can discover the route to that destination. A map is no good if you don't know where you are at and where you want to go, it will then help you find the route to take.

Vision is a key component of creating a relevant, renewing Lodge. The ability to dream and then turn those dreams into reality is the very substance of our humanity and it is essential to the healthy growth of your organization.

What is your vision of the future for your Lodge? I think one of the greatest differences between our fore fathers and those of us in the craft today is that we tend to look very short term and they looked very long term. They found great pride in building for tomorrow, for those that would come after them. They built for no personal glory or self indulgent reasons. They built for those that came after them, so that their journey would be a little easier, a little gentler.

One last thought. Vision never comes from the people, it always comes from the Leadership, and the people always buy into the leader before they buy into the vision.

"The very essence of leadership is that you have a vision. It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet."

Theodore Hesburgh



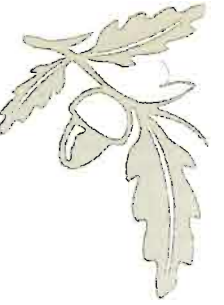
A place for your vision



Write your vision in the space provided below

Lined writing area for vision notes.

a place for notes



Lined writing area for notes.





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Mr. Conley is a nationally recognized speaker and trainer on the concepts of renewing and growing organizations. Specializing in Leadership Development and Goal Oriented planning. Mr. Conley can be reached at 888-734-4232 or electronically at [dirofren@comcast.net](mailto:dirofren@comcast.net)



There are excellent resources available to assist your organization in developing a renewal program for your Lodge or group

Masonic Leaders Planning and Budget Guide

75+ Ways to Attract and Retain your Members

251+ Ways to Increase Involvement with the Family and in the Community

Also available from the Masonic Renewal Committee

Getting Set for Success: A wonderful "how to" book to get your Lodge started on the right foot for growth.

Who Are We: A short essay on the Generational differences that affect all of us, but most especially the fraternity.

Find these and much more on the web: [www.masonic-renewal.org](http://www.masonic-renewal.org)



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