



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

July 4, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

First, let me wish each of you a happy and safe Fourth of July. As a person who served in the Armed Forces, I love this holiday, for all that it represents to our democracy and way of life. Plus it's one of only two holidays (the other being Cinco de Mayo) where I can always remember the date. :-)

Turning our attention to the seminal subject of DMC - membership - I have often said that growing membership in this Order is a task for each of us. Sovereign Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge can talk about it, they can develop programs to foster it, they can provide money to fund it, but ultimately, the task of membership development is a job for you and for me. Wars and battles are not won by Generals and Colonels. Rather, they are won by soldiers. And as soldiers in the battle to recruit and retain members in our Lodges, we can't just depend on "the other guy or gal" to do it. Each of us has to do our part in recruiting and retaining members.

The job of recruitment, in particular, requires two key ingredients:

First, you have to be constantly aware of the opportunity to recruit a potential new member. Let me give you an example. The other day I was at the barbershop and I got to chatting with the very nice young woman (who, by the way, was a member of an ethnic minority group) who was giving me a haircut. We were talking as is often the case at a barbershop or hairdresser, and I started telling her about my Davis Odd Fellows Lodge. I often make take the opportunity to talk about the Order and my Lodge, to people that I meet. We discussed the history and goals of the Order, the social activities at my Lodge and the many community works in which we are engaged. She was very interested and said that she was looking to be involved in just such an organization. I obtained her e-mail address and we have been corresponding ever since about her submission of an application and the process to become a member. Bottom line, each of us has to be aware of the potential for membership when we interact with others, and in particular, we should actively recruit women and minorities into this Order. Recently, I visited a Lodge where the membership was composed entirely of white men. Why should we exclude - by design or otherwise - women and ethnic minorities in our communities? By doing so, we ignore most of our population. That makes no sense, at any level.

Second, however, my conversations with this young woman would have been pointless if my Lodge had little to offer her. Let me tell you what I mean. I have visited Lodges where their



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meetings take 20 minutes and all they do is open the meeting, read the minutes and correspondence, pay a few bills, talk about members sick or in distress, do good of the order, and close the meeting. They don't have committee reports or new business. They essentially just have a meeting each month, and a potluck. A Lodge such as this would have almost nothing which would interest a man or women in their 20's, 30's or 40's certainly nothing that would appeal to my barber. But I was able to talk to the young barber about several community and charitable events my Lodge was planning and implementing (like helping frail seniors in their homes, supporting foster children who need clothes for school, working with mentally ill adults, providing volunteers for the food bank, and many more) and I was able to chat with her about social events we were planning and implementing (like our weekly social "club night" at the Lodge where we serve dinner and have some social time with our members and pledges, our OddtoberFest, a Halloween party, Odd Hikes we are planning, our wine club, and many more). Lodges that begin to get active in their communities and provide a social network for members provide a much more fertile environment for potential new members.

The proof? My Lodge has so many applicants that we actually have to put them on waiting lists, and the process to become a member of my Lodge takes a minimum of 6 months.

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Dave Rosenberg