



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

July 15, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Our very active Brother Louie Sarmiento has forwarded some of the results of a 2013 study of our Order he conducted. Some 300 survey questionnaires were retrieved from members of the Order, but Louie was also able to gather some 1,800 comments and suggestions from various sources. Below you will find the results of "Part C" of the study. I find the results instructive and revealing. While there is general satisfaction in such things as training of new members, encouragement of new members to hold leadership positions, and the like - the poll reveals a strong undercurrent of dissatisfaction and disenchantment. We ignore the dissatisfaction and disenchantment of our newer and younger members at our peril as an Order.

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Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

**PART C: OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH
I.O.O.F ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND NEEDS
ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS**

Opportunities for growth help members expand their knowledge, skills and abilities, and apply the competencies they have gained to various situations. The opportunity to gain new skills and experiences can increase members' motivation and satisfaction. As a result, this can translate into positive gains for the organization by enhancing organizational effectiveness and efficiency as well as help the organization attract and retain quality members.

Question 1: Senior members train newer members and encourage them to hold leadership positions in the organization.

Less than half of the respondents (45.24%) show satisfaction or think that senior members train newer members and encourage them to hold leadership positions, while more than half of the respondents (54.76%) show dissatisfaction or think otherwise.

Question 2: I am encouraged by senior members to learn new things about the organization.

While most of the respondents (62.4%) show satisfaction and think that they are encouraged by senior members to learn new things about the organization, a significant number (37.60%) show dissatisfaction or think that senior members do not encourage them to learn new things about the organization.



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Question 3: Senior members are actively involved and interested in my development and advancement as a member of this organization.

Three out of every five of the respondents (59.58%) show satisfaction and think that senior members are actively involved and interested in my development and advancement as a member of this organization, while two out of five of the respondents (40.42%) show dissatisfaction or think that senior members are not actively involved.

Question 4: The organization gives me opportunities to learn new things.

A substantial majority of the respondents (69.50%) show satisfaction or think that the organization gives them opportunities to learn new things, but almost one-third of the respondents (30.51%) show dissatisfaction or think that the organization does not give them opportunities to learn new things.

Question 5: Being a member of this organization is challenging, stimulating and rewarding.

More than three quarters (77.31%) show satisfaction or think that being a member of this organization is challenging, stimulating and rewarding, yet almost a quarter of the respondents (22.69%) show dissatisfaction and think that being a member is not challenging, stimulating and rewarding.

Recommendations:

Membership in I.O.O.F seems to be perceived by 77.32% of the respondents as challenging, stimulating and rewarding. This can mean both positive and negative challenges within the I.O.O.F. The four other aspects under this category such as membership training by senior members (45.24%), encouragement to learn new things (62.4%), senior member involvement in the development of new members (59.58%), and opportunities to learn new things (69.50%) DID NOT reach at least 75% satisfaction rating. It is recommended that I.O.O.F:

- **Formulate a succession plan and adopt term limits** - this is to provide newer members the opportunity to lead and be involved with I.O.O.F. and, at the same time, avoid senior members from being burn-out. This will not only increase the chances of retaining newer and more members but will allow fresher ideas to come into decision-making.
- **Develop a "new member" mentoring process** - it is important that new members learn all the history, system and processes within the organization of the I.O.O.F. Members who do not understand and know much about I.O.O.F tend to leave or will not be that involved. The new Membership Handbook is a helpful tool in educating members.
- **Consider changing date and time of meetings** - Many of our lodges meet at the same date and time as they meet over 80 to 100 years ago. People of today work longer hours and



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usually have the weekends as free time. Adjusting or moving meeting dates to weekends may encourage working members from attending and joining the I.O.O.F.

- **Adopt a new management paradigm** - The case of membership decline in ghd I.O.O.F, besides other reasons, involves a case of an inter-generational gap or conflict. Senior members need to be aware that when there are younger generations there must come a new approach in doing things. The old management paradigm focuses on ensuring "order", "control", "authority" and "seniority" in an organization or company. This is the paradigm that most of our Lodges, Grand Lodges and Sovereign Grand Lodge still follow. Thus, a number of those in office (but not all) may be focused on codes, laws and titles to ensure "order" and "control". Today, one can easily be turned-off if they encounter officers following this old management paradigm. Nowadays, the new management paradigm is focused on creating change, initiating strategies, empowering people, and launching processes. According to management and leadership experts, the task of leaders today is to influence and encourage, NOT FORCE, others to attain organizational goals. In other words, the new management places a premium on leadership - people admire and follow leaders who deviate from traditional bureaucracy - those leaders who give more importance to people over procedures, codes, protocols and titles. Those leaders who do not think that they are the boss but rather act as servants of the people. People today want people who do not use their title or position as a source of power or authority over others.

Opportunities for growth Comments/Suggestions:

#294: Better use of our younger members

#292: Push for younger new members. Think outside the box. Just because someone looks different from other members does not make them unworthy. Stress for current members to wear swag or flare. Every time I wear my new IOOF 80 ball cap somebody ask about it.

#289: My lodge is small and this is one of our problems, but the state and natl organizations should at least have printed materials.

#187: Same people running the show and do not want to pass it on to new members.

#185: Younger members respect older members but where missing the boat in our meetings. Members are assigned to committees but very seldom hear a report from any of them. Most are oblivious that there even in a committee.

#179: Senior members also need to be aware that with new blood comes a new approach in doing things ie. how minutes are taken and presented. With new blood also comes the question of "why do we....." and a lot of times "because it's always done like that" or "that's by GL or SGL tells us" isn't a good enough answer. We are lucky in our Lodge to have senior members that want to see the new members grow and take on responsibility so they can sit back and enjoy.



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#178: Find out what young people want in a group and provide it to them at the same time getting more of the elder members something to stay involved for.

#175: Make personal growth the center of attention for all members and make it simple... The Order is bound by a complex web of rules and traditional understandings that actually confine personal growth (and thereby organizational growth). There is a major difference between limiting the options for action by defining the detailed protocols for each possible action (something that Odd Fellows do well, it seems)... and defining the general guidelines by which to identify need and to take action to address such need. Moses made it easy: Do anything you wish to make a better life but just do not violate these ten commandments. Compare that to the rules we create in the Order and "civil society" these days. We do need to obey our laws and follow our faith but we do not need the rules or the limits on personal actions performed in true and genuine FL&T. We only need to understand each mission we encounter in life, as an Order member or in any role we play, and to know that Odd Fellowship will guide each member of the Order to cooperate as a team to accomplish that mission... And find the next mission needing our attention...

#171: It should be the goal of the Lodges to promote personal growth by encouraging members to rotate through different positions and officer slots. This has been the case in the Lodge I attend. The problem with other lodges is that they have the same people rotating as officers while the newer members stand by the side. This results to newer members no longer attending meetings or losing interest.

#168: I think these things are all mostly true, but we still do too much during working hours at the Grand and Sovereign level - which leaves younger (<65) members unable to participate fully because of their need to be at their jobs. If we want to bring in younger members, encourage them to take an active role and serve as leaders, then we need to adjust how we operate to make their participation practical.

#97: Sovereign Grand Lodge, Grand Lodge and lodges should start making a succession plan. Lodges should push finding members aging 50 or below for officers. Sovereign Grand Lodge and Grand Lodges should find people aging 60 or below for officers. Also, those serving more than 5 years or more as Grand Lodge officer or SGL rep should be replaced by a new and younger member.

#87: Senior Member needs to support new members.

#75: There is a need for mentoring program for new members from senior members.

#64: Have grand lodge stop the witch hunt. If they have questions. Ask it.

#61: Stay true to the traditions and Ritual work and do both with young Brothers. I am lucky to be in a Lodge that has a young membership that is active and growing because we (older members) listen to them.



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#60: I must say I am lucky my father has been a member for over 50 years as well as my grandfather was, so I have grown up around the order. When I did finally join 5 years, I have been taught how to lead and pushed to greater heights in the order than I ever thought I could achieve I am NG of my lodge and CP of my encampment. We need to keep this level of encouragement for all members, I have been doing that with all of our newer members and I am glad to hear them say they would like to advance through the chairs and take bigger roles in the order.

#56: By being a possible "senior" member I remember when I first joined - the senior members then were unwilling to try new things and I don't see that changing now.

#53: I am a senior member, 70 years old, and my experience has been mixed in seeing members my age and older helping new members. Some lodges have men and women who either don't know how to help or are afraid to help because they feel younger members will "take over" their lodge. Like many our age they are afraid of change. Lodge is comfortable for them and they don't want the comfort to leave.

#49: Train our SGL Reps to be more receptive to new ideas. Even our own reps in California are closed minded. This way of thinking is destroying our Order. I can recite our Ritual better than any member I know. I can stand up to the "good 'ol boys" on any ritual matter; however, unless they are willing to change, we shall die.

#41: 5 years ago I would have disagreed with most of these statements because the Grand Lodge was so closed minded and did not allow younger blood to take active part.

#31: If there were more people working for our common goal we would be great. Rebekah's in Michigan are great but can only do so much. We need more people involved.

#23: Individually, yes I feel my senior members that surround me are willing to help and advance things, but overall I do not see that. Majority seem to not want younger members to take active parts.

#20: There is too much focus on the needs of the senior members and very little on new members. Celebrate a new members 1st year as much or more than a membersâ€™ 25th year.

#18: There are far too many members who are so old they can't be taught new tricks. How about term limits? Something to pry their fingers off the neck and allow new blood flow again.

#15: The senior members talk a good talk of wanting younger members to advance but we see it over and over that when they do try and advance the senior member goes into overtime to destroy the person so the senior members can still stay in their positions and control decision-making.



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#12: My individual training is the result of collection historic literature from eBay, and learning it on my own!!!! Happily the 19th century Odd-Fellows were prolific and loquacious writers and publishers; there dis a lot to research. But I did it all myself! This is where I discovered my enthusiasm! from the appeals of the past efforts of our worth ancestors. When you read of how the lodges of the Northern and Southern states simply welcomed each other after the Civil War, you realize the power and the miracles of the Order and Fraternal LOVE! Can we still see this today?

#9: Our state level leadership is lacking, clique-ish and not welcoming to new members. Many of those offices have been held for too long by the same people. We've gotten past all those issues with the older members of our local lodge, but we (my similar age sisters) hesitate to get involved at the state level because we don't need the drama in our lives. They argue too much.
