



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

August 10, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

It's my pleasure to forward to you another article from Brother Louie Sarmiento, the driving force in Philippine's Odd Fellowship. Also, attached is a "cool" international logo that Louie developed.

Louie's article focuses on technology, and the need for Odd Fellowship to get into 21st Century technology - primarily because that's what connects with young men and women today. Even our administrative forms are "old school" requiring a person to fill them out by hand or with a "typewriter", as opposed to being available on line. We are an ancient fraternity, but that doesn't mean we have to use ancient methods of communicating.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

Brother Dave,

Changing resolutions and legislation's alone will not increase membership; change in attitude, activities and services are also needed. Members feel satisfaction when they can see tangible improvements and not just written laws. Like what people always say - actions always speak louder than words.

Activities that can make a member stay depends on the lodge and the Sovereign Grand Lodge or Grand Lodge has no control on that. The materials and services, on the other hand, which include how the Odd Fellows "market" themselves and how attractive and appealing their way of recruiting is can be solved through the support of the Grand Lodge of Sovereign Grand Lodge. The Knights of Columbus, the Freemasons and the Rotary have more members than us not only because they have better projects but because they have invested a lot in updating their services. Employing digital marketing, for example, - books, online recruitment videos, attractive



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websites, huge signboards, etc. And, if you have heard about it - the Freemasons also released a new movie "The Freemason". They were also able to coordinate with History Channel to make a film about the Freemasons. This alone led to thousands of young men joining Masonic lodges across the globe including the Philippines. The Masonic lodge, where my father is affiliated, just accepted a lot of petitions for membership from men below 50 years old that year and this year. Their Lodge has some 300 members with about 50-100 members per meeting. This alone did not just help them recruit members but increased their members' "satisfaction" and "sense of pride" for Freemasonry which are vital points why a member stays or will be more involved. That year, many masonic online stores were established and many of their members are buying a lot of these rings, shirts and so on - proudly wearing them on public. My dad alone bought a lot of masonic items and books when he saw the film. These are just one of the reasons why many people prefer to join these other leading organizations - they are more up-to-date.

While some just won't take the effort to recruit, we all know that not all members are capable of recruiting because they are either too old to be convincing or just do not have the talent to do so. And, of course, no matter how hard the person recruits, his or her words will never be enough if the person see that other groups - such as Freemasons - have far way better materials and services (books, brochures, media exposures, they even have music videos, and they are featured in television shows). These things give people a "sense of pride" for their organization. We do not have these services in the Odd Fellows. We are too old-school. We think talking to a person to join is enough when it is not especially to younger people. We think doing charity is enough when thousands of groups including for-profit companies also do charity and volunteer opportunities. We now live in a materialistic world controlled by digital technology. Digital media and tools play a very influential part in convincing people of this generation to join or not to join. For older people, a magazine is just a magazine. A video on the internet is just a video. A website is just a website. A photo is just a photo. For them, what are most important are the paper works that a lodge needs to accomplish, the dinners and the legislation's to pass. But for younger people - these digital media tools are very important and very influential in their decision to join or not to join, to stay or not to stay. Why? Because these are the first things younger people look at before they even ask a member or approach a lodge to join. These are some things that members' can boast and be happy about the organization they belong. Also, applying proper branding with tag-lines can help people get people's attention in just one look. Just one example: One brother in the Philippines and I designed an Odd Fellows logo on a globe with all the flags of countries with Odd Fellows lodges. We posted this online about 5 months ago via facebook.com. And guess what? Our lodge received many membership inquiries in a day. As in many!!! Like more than 30 people in one day and more the following day. And these people come from all over the world. I posted this logo design via the facebook.com page of the



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IOOF. Guess what? I have received many inquiries about IOOF and how to join. Just by that one logo, we have forwarded contact numbers of Grand Lodges to more than 200 people in a month. I do not know if these people were really able to contact the Grand Lodges and join but what I am certain is at least now the name "Odd Fellows" got their attention. In the Philippines, our IOOF lodges are very young and poor but we are so updated in terms of technology because most of us are young - we now have 3 more lodges we are planning to institute composed mostly of people within 50 years old and below. In addition, yesterday I was working on an updated design for the Rebekahs and showed it to a 32 year old employee at the Sovereign Grand Lodge. Her reaction was, "Wow! Looks cool. Just made me want to join the Rebekahs!". This is the power of digital media today.

We often think updating our "services and tools" are not as important in retaining members. But the reason why I included marketing and branding in the recommendations is because majority of the respondents suggested about it and, oftentimes, they compare our "services" with these other groups mentioned in the study. They have branded their organizations and they have marketed their groups very well. Respondents asked, why do the Freemasons have this and that? Why not in the Odd Fellows? Why are they more "cool" and are we not? So, a statewide, national and international marketing strategy may assist the IOOF to get more members but, of course, this should be followed by fun and meaningful activities. But then, how can a lodge have fun and have meaningful activities when it is not even appealing to join in the eyes of younger generations? Lodges are lucky if they have good leaders who are talented recruiters. But not all lodges have people who have the ability to recruit people. Recruiting is also a talent. And, of course, there are so many cases reported when an Odd Fellow recruits a person to join his or her lodge and the person answers that "he prefers to join the Freemasons". Why? Many young people now see freemasonry as "cool" and "hip" because they are on television, they are all over the internet, they have "cool stuffs" they say. Their recruiting materials are "interesting". And I have had conversations with Odd Fellows who are facing the same challenge in California. One young member in one of your lodges in California shared that he recruited a group of his friends to the Odd Fellows Lodge, he got a NO and this group joined the masonic lodge. This young member in California also joined the Freemasons though he continues to hold membership in the Odd Fellows.

It's a world full of technology you know. A battle of "who is cool" based on technology. In the Odd Fellows, many non-members look at our services and activities as "old school" and "unappealing". Our recruitment materials and tools alone is not something a person below 50 year old would be interested in. If we can't even put ourselves in the shoes of these younger



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people and we do not study the "behavior of a joiner" in today's era, let's not expect them to even join or stay because they will not. But, of course, this also matters whether IOOF want to prepare itself for the coming younger generations. And if Odd Fellows want to start targeting people below 50 years old to resolve the aging membership issues or just focus on 60 years and above? How we market ourselves may also depend on the target market. The younger members (50 below) I have interviewed, chatted with and those who responded to the survey just don't see the services and materials that other groups do in the Odd Fellows which is their basis for "coolness" to join. I am just putting myself in their shoes because, of course, I also wish there are more younger people in the IOOF and wish the services are on the level with other international organizations. We all know that once people join other groups, it would be harder to convince these people to join or be as active in the Odd Fellows lodge.

In FLT,

brother Louie