



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

October 17, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Below is an article that first appeared in the DMC Newsletter of January 19, 2013. It presented a three-year plan to "re-charge, re-invigorate, and re-new" your Lodge. DMC is not just about stating the truth: that is, speaking about the problems our Order has encountered due to the dramatic and continual drop in our membership. DMC is also about focusing on the future: that is, suggesting methods and ways that members of this Order and Lodges can actually stop the decline, reverse it, and start growing.

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Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

While a handful of Odd Fellows Lodges in California are growing, and another handful are maintaining a static membership, the vast majority of Lodges in this State are shrinking. The math is not complicated. Members move away, depart, stop coming to meetings, lose interest or pass away - and at the same time, the Lodge doesn't add new members or, perhaps, adds one or two new members who might be close friends or relatives of existing members. And too, often, the new members added are of the same age as existing members. The result is inevitable: Lose three members and add one member and you have a Lodge in trouble. Clearly, we must do something to change this equation.

I am often asked: What can we do to grow our Lodge?

Well, talk is cheap. Action is required. So, here, for those who are truly interested, is a three-year plan to re-charge, re-invigorate, and re-new your Lodge. (For those members of the Order who are satisfied with the status quo of your Lodge, and who are happy to maintain your Lodge just the way it is for the balance of your life, you can stop reading here.) For those members who wish to build for the future of your Lodge, and guarantee that the tenets and ideals of this great fraternity live on and flourish, please read on. The secret of success is not just to open our



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Lodges up, to increase our internal good fellowship activities and to increase our involvement and exposure in the community.

Year One

1. Open your Lodge to the public (and to potential members) by having open, social meetings - at least one such social meeting each month. Of course, no ritualistic work is conducted and no secrets are revealed at such meetings.
2. Bring in one or two major community leaders into membership in your Lodge. This can be a local elected official, a recognized business leader, a leader in his or her profession (like a lawyer), a Judge, the County Sheriff, etc. These people will raise the community profile of your Lodge and can become "rainmakers" in bringing in new members.
3. Plan and execute one major community event, to benefit a local charitable or community group, and make sure it is publicized.
4. Plan for and put on one social event each month for the Lodge members and their guests. This can include themed potlucks (for example, Italian potluck), "Bunko" Night at the Lodge, Trivia Night, a talk and demonstration on beer brewing, etc.
5. Target husbands and wives, both, to consider membership in your Lodge.

Year Two

1. Hold a "retreat" of your active members and lay out five goals for the year. These five goals should always include a goal identifying the number of Lodge applicants you intend to bring in during the year. Resolve at this retreat NOT to be negative. Positively listen to all ideas that are proposed and put on the table, and then decide which you will implement.
2. Continue each of the Year One activities into Year Two.
3. Develop a "signature event" that your Lodge will organize and put on for the community - which will become an annual event. For example: An "OddtoberFest", a wine tasting event at the Lodge, Pasta Feed, etc.
4. Organize a committee structure for the Lodge. These committees can include: A Good Fellowship Committee, a Community Support Committee, a Music Committee, a Photography



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Committee, etc. Give each committee an assignment and let them do their work.

5. Target young potential members for your Lodge - from 30 to 40 years of age.

Year Three

1. Continue each of the Year One and Year Two activities into Year Three.

2. Find out what member's are interested in doing, and do it. If members wish to take a wine country trip, figure out a way to do it. If members want to put on a Bingo night for the community, find ways to do it. If members wish to go on a hike, let them organize to do it. Etc.

3. Contact, personally, each of your "inactive" members and let them know about Lodge activities - see if you can bring them back into active membership in your Lodge.

4. Connect with your members. Ideally, have all members connected through e-mail so that everyone can be kept posted and informed. For those who don't have e-mail, set up a phone tree.

5. Target even younger potential members for your Lodge - from 16- 29 years of age.

This Plan of Action can work for your Lodge! It does not diminish, in any way, the principles of our Order. It seeks only to increase your membership, and in this way will benefit your Lodge as well as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

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Dave Rosenberg