

B 2 B FaciliFacts

Presented by the Brother 2 Brother Committee of Grand Lodge

MAY 2007



The B2B Tool Kit – Resource Manual “Let’s Look A Little Closer At ...”

4.7 DEVELOPING SOCIAL PROGRAMS

The twenty-four inch gauge divides the day into workable segments, giving a guide for a rich and balanced life. A similar division is essential in planning a successful lodge program.

The three segments of a lodge meeting are

1. Business or administration
2. The Ritual or "The Work"
3. The social period that closes the meeting

All are equally important.

The formality or structure of the first two segments discourages casual conversation or easy fellowship within the lodge room. The social program that follows the meeting is like the dessert after the meal. It should be imaginative, a delight, and something that the family members and guests anticipate with pleasure. People who linger to chat or socialize are a compliment to such planning. This topic gives suggestions for planning a program that should truly make the brethren "sorry to part" and really eager to "meet again".

4.7.1 Definition

"Social", according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, means "living in companies---gregarious---not fitted for or not practicing solitary life".

No mention is made of amusement nor guest speakers. Our lodges' challenge is the creation of a friendly, gregarious atmosphere, the establishing of an interesting environment conducive to fellowship. In order to meet this challenge, the planner has to have direction. If the brethren want meat, potatoes will not satisfy them.

Making the most of MEMBERSHIP through LEARNING



Explore Its Mysteries - Enjoy Its Privileges

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Thoughts to Ponder

**Success
has many Parents
&
Failure is an Orphan**

*I hear and I forget,
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand.*
----Confucius

**Masonry is the
Science of Service**



“Let’s Look A Little Closer At ...” cont’d.**4.7.2 Research**

Before undertaking to revive a social program, know your membership. Take an inventory of your members. Examine the demographics. Is the lodge top-heavy with octogenarians or bloated with Baby-Boomers? Are they identified with watch-fobs or multiple ear-rings? Having established this, determine the perils of a program that would exclude or alienate either extreme. The social program must be one of inclusion.

4.7.3 Consultation

What do your members want? Ask them. As a base, first meet with your officers. Whatever the membership demands, those officers are the means of achieving it. The fact that they are elected does not mean they have all the answers, but they are charged with finding solutions to problems and giving the membership a direction.

The officers have to deal with the past, the present, and the future. What has the lodge been doing?

If the program has been one of "open-business-initiate/pass/raise-coffee-and-home," perhaps an improved social program could be considered. On the positive side, successful visitations, ladies' nights, Burns Dinners, and appreciation nights might be measured against attendance and enthusiasm.

What programs have been dropped, such as Members' Nights, special dates such as St. Patrick's Day, picnics or potluck dinners? Would their revival be greeted with enthusiasm or a yawn?

What should we do now? This remains an unknown until the membership has input. Have the Worshipful Master dedicate a regular meeting to discussion and planning. In a think-tank, and that is what you will be leading, no question is improper. No suggestion is silly. The lodge must know where it stands, so come prepared with knowledge from the past. The members must set the direction they wish to follow. The present is the bridge between beginnings and completions.

A good leader never goes into a meeting with empty hands. Go with ideas that can be modified or chewed up. Outrageous suggestions sometimes force discussion from which great plans emerge ;

1. Get opinions. If no one has them, your lodge is dead anyway. Imposed programs do little to involve members. Involvement indicates life.
2. Expand on those opinions. Get the thoughts of others. Good men will enjoy the challenge of working together. (Leaders and program directors will be those evident at the meeting.)
3. Lead them to a consensus. If the ideas are those of the brethren, and if they have developed those seeds into a draft program, then they have already established ownership and have bought into the running or supporting of the social program.
4. Follow up the meeting with a written report to the brethren to be included with the summons. Highlight the issues raised and name the brethren who participated.
5. Announce the immediate beginning of some program or project that originated with the members' meeting. This acknowledges momentum.



*Extending A Helping Hand
Brother 2 Brother*

“Let’s Look A Little Closer At ...” cont’d.**4.7.4 Inside or Outside?**

Every lodge is competing with the World Series, Stanley Cup, and increasing family responsibilities. A brother may be reluctant to leave his partner at home for a night out with the boys. In planning a social program, be aware that one night a month for regular meetings is a reasonable allotment for the average brother. Another night for emergent meetings is usually negotiable. Lots of visitations start adding a strain.

Our Craft aims at excellence and excellence is expected. A boring night or one that did not meet its promise is a waste of time for the sometimes-come brother. He might not be back soon. It can even turn off regulars. Inside Programs: As a building starts with a foundation, so does a social program:

1. Utilize the time within the lodge, using the lodge room.
2. Take advantage of the banquet hour. In fact, use it as an attraction to bring more people out for the entire evening.

Outside Programs: If your members have time and if they can afford the expense, try outside programs. One lodge in particular held a "Master's Night at the Opera." Not everyone likes opera but 30 brethren and their spouses attended the Magic Flute presented by the Hamilton Opera Company. It was preceded a month earlier by a lecture and musical demonstration on Mozart, Masonry and the Magic Flute at the Regular Meeting. Spouses and friends had been invited to that part of the evening and the banquet hour that followed. Baseball games, minor hockey, and nights out at the race track offer camaraderie away from the lodge and should involve spouses, extended families and friends.

4.7.5 Trickle or Flood?

Assume that the think tank was a success, that all sorts of ideas bloomed, and eight different programs have been endorsed. The temptation is to go ahead with the converted membership and lead them to the promised land. **Don't do it.**

Pick the programs most likely to succeed. Assign them to brethren best suited to guide them to success. Go for one a month and limit it to an inside program. Once a year try for an outside program. As leadership in the lodge evolves, modest social programs will become entrenched and can become expanded. They will become part of the tradition of that particular lodge.

4.7.6 Linking Programs

The phrase words "social program" needs a flexible interpretation. At first glance, degree work has nothing to do with the social side of Masonry. But consider the opportunities. One particular lodge was initiating a candidate from the Greek community. The lodge scoured lodges across the city and came up with a team from that community. The banquet hour had flat bread, dips, and other Hellenic delicacies.

Another candidate, skilled in Japanese martial arts, was received by an old friend at the door of the lodge. The candidate's highly prized Samurai sword was smuggled from his house. Sushi was served at banquet hour. What has raw fish and Japanese armour to do with an initiation? They create interest and memories. Consider ethnic background, occupations, and religion when planning any degree.

Match the social program to them.

Police officers are honoured to see a fellow officer initiated. Their professional brotherhood crosses municipal, provincial, and federal lines. If the candidate is an avid fisherman, involve his fishing buddies if possible, and serve fish at the banquet hour. The candidate, the important person for the evening, is delighted to see brethren from his workplace, community, or church when he finally regains his sight. This joy, this social glow, is shared when the brethren socialize afterwards.

“Let’s Look A Little Closer At ...” cont’d.**4.7.6 Linking Programs – cont’d.**

One lodge invites the spouses of officers to the installation. They go from labour to refreshment to permit their guests to take part in the presentations. Members of other lodges assist by hosting a wine and cheese reception while lodge is open.

4.7.7 Resources

You have riches in resources you can't even imagine. When planning a guest speaker, find out what your members want to know. Go to your membership list. Go to your community at large. Ask, "Could you help us, please?" The question usually brings a positive response.

- Festivals: One lodge invited a founder of the Kitchener Waterloo Oktoberfest to talk to the lodge. "It took the imagination of three men to get that event rolling 25 years ago". He told us about community dynamics.
- Defence: A major who was public affairs officer for the Canadian Forces in the former Yugoslavia.
- Wine: Invite a guest with a purple thumb and a great wine cellar.
- Remembrance Day: Urge members to wear their service medals and decorations (miniatures for those in formal wear). Promotes conversation at banquet hour.

Individuals are willing to help. Agencies, unions, and companies are eager to tell their stories. Both await only an invitation and a platform. Your obligation to receive them with courtesy and impartiality and to give them a reasonably-sized crowd to address.

4.7.8 Voice of Experience

Your lodge has to decide what works for it. One particular lodge reports:

"Guest speakers present serious topics in the lodge room. (More casual talks are given in the banquet hall.) The VSL is closed on the altar and the working tools are away. The lodge has been closed but members wear their regalia and the lodge is otherwise clothed. Outside guests, including family members, are received and sit with the members. They see for themselves the link between Masonry and education, they can soak in the atmosphere of the lodge, and they can see the regalia. (This has resulted in requests for applications)".

4.7.9 Tips for a Successful Social Hour

- Guest speakers could engage in a question and answer period.
- Long banquet tables have been replaced by round tables seating six to eight people. It promotes group conversation.
- Grand Lodge Officers, past and present, are encouraged to sit at separate tables. Our members enjoy talking with them.
- Food does not have to be fancy nor expensive. A wheel of brie, a chunk of cheddar and quartered tart apples makes for good sociable food. Do it yourself sandwiches with cold meats, cheese slices, mustard and bread are quite adequate. (Please, not pizza or doughnuts every meeting!)
- The traditional Ladies Night has been dropped. In its place we have a family potluck dinner to end the Masonic season.
- Plan the event so that the degree, the candidate, the speaker, the guests, and the food all have links.

B2B Jurisdiction News

B2B PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS

1. In response to The Committee of Injury article in the April edition, we received the following comments and reminders about a Mason's responsibility. Both should be given serious consideration:

"Carefully inspect the Cornerstone before you erect the superstructure!"

"It is no light matter to receive an unworthy person into a lodge as a member or to reject one who is worthy."

2. The committee received this idea from a participant at one of the B2B presentations, during a discussion about involving lodge members and trying something different. *This suggestion was found on the website of The Grand Lodge of Michigan Free And Accepted Masons.*

THE QUESTION BOX

The simplest method of painlessly imparting more Masonic knowledge is to follow the method launched a year or so ago by Royal Alexandra Lodge No. 104 in Montreal, Canada.

Fastened to the wall in a prominent position at the entry of the lodge room is an unpretentious wooden box with a slot on top in which can be slipped an envelope or even a simple sheet of paper. Above this box is a small but visible sign worded as follows:

"Have a Question about Masonry? All questions pertaining to Masonry deposited in this box will be answered in open lodge at the next meeting. Write yours before you forget — Ask the Tyler for a pencil. You do not need to sign your name."

After each meeting the Secretary turns the contents over to the chairman of the Lodge Educational Committee. This Committee meets and prepares concise answers. The committee is well versed in Masonry, but most questions are mostly elementary and can easily be answered. Should difficult questions arise they are referred to someone who will be able to present a concise answer, such as the Grand Lodge Office.

This method ensures that the anonymous questioner remains anonymous and he therefore does not signal himself to the attention of his Brothers. The answers rarely take more than 10 minutes to read, and are read under the agenda item: "For the good of this Lodge." Thus all members benefit and add to their Masonic knowledge and very often one question suggests another, so that there are always three or four queries to be answered at every meeting.

*The Brethren are encouraged to submit their B2B Lodge or District News via e-mail to: idwates@sympatico.ca
We would be pleased to include the news items in an upcoming edition.*

B2B Committee - Activity Summary

Lodge Presentations

- **Fidelity Lodge No. 650 – St. Lawrence District**

For More Informtion

Contact the Grand Lodge B2B Committee

*e-mail **Dennis Hawman** – B2B Chairman*

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For Your Personal Copy of the B2B FaciliFacts

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