

## **SECTION 6: RENEW - RENEWAL OF INACTIVE MEMBERS**

### **6.1 PURPOSE**

As of January 1, 1996, our membership in the Province of Ontario was 73,629. As of December 31, 1996 our membership reduced to 71,799 brethren, a net change of 1,830 members. During the same period of time we initiated 1,356 new Masons who joined our fraternity. 2,037 brethren past away in 1996. What happen to the other 1,882 brethren?

This section will assist the interviewer to thoroughly investigate the reasons(s) why a member is not attending lodge. We want to RETAIN this membership. We want to RENEW:

- A suspended member
- A potential suspended member
- A demitted member in good standing
- A demitted member with dues owing

This section will assist you to conduct a personal or telephone interview, and to utilize current Masonic Programs that are available to your Lodge.

The interviewer must be prepared. Research will be required to determine why the member stopped attending lodge. This information is usually available. We know what the problem is. Try to establish a cause.

## 6.2 HOW DO WE REACH THEM?

The Ontario Mason, Lodge newsletters, Visitation Committee, and personal contact by original sponsors. Give a role to shut in members who can't attend (i.e. phone committee), advise of positive change in the lodge, identify the "need" for their return, encourage loyalty and respect, conduct a "rusty" mason night.

Make contact first by phone and then by visit. (See Section 8, Form C)

### Questions to Ask

- Why are they not attending?
- Where are they?
- Who are they?
- What are they doing?
- How to we get to them?
- Why do they remain members?
- Why did they join?

### Conduct Exit Interviews:

Design a one page form to obtain feedback, perception (transferred out of town, dissatisfaction), personal follow-up contact.

## **6.3 RETENTION AND RESTORATION: MORE UNDERSTANDING AND TAKING ACTION**

### 6.3.1 Retention

Webster defines retention as “A remembering; Memory”.

A candidate will always remember his first impression of Masonry. Therefore, the first impression is a lasting impression. What we do, what we say, how we act are all important.

A candidate's Initiation should be a very memorable event for him and his family. If harassed, distracted, embarrassed in front of his peers, don't expect him to get involved.

Encourage the candidate to become active. Make him feel NEEDED, WANTED and WELCOMED. Most of us need to be wanted and receive recognition. (Be patted on the back!) Listen to his needs, desires, concerns and suggestions.

We must continue to keep abreast of our changing times. Successful businesses do. So should we? A good retention program reduces the need for a restoration program and will produce positive results.

The needs and desires of our members must be met to:

- Include fellowship.
- Include enjoyable activities.
- Provide community service.
- Offer leadership opportunities.
- Offer family participation.
- Communicate with members....FOLLOW UP!
- Develop a plan that includes benefits.
- Networking with peers in a prestigious organization.
- We must retain the members we have. It is becoming a greater challenge to face.

### 6.3.2 Restoration

#### THE CAUSE OF SUSPENSIONS - CONCERNS

Keep in mind, in a single year, a financial disaster can turn into a positive situation:

- Bad health conditions, can cause a financial burden.
- Age prevents some members from being active.

- Wrong mailing address. Didn't get around to changing it.
- Lost interest. Membership no longer appeals to me.
- Lack of fellowship and networking activity.
- Lack vision, programs outdated, old traditions.
- Misunderstanding, disagreement and egos. Not happy!
- Failed to provide value. Lack of benefits.
- Few opportunities to get involved in leadership.
- Lack of family programs and family participation.
- The only time I get a call from the brethren is when I am behind in my dues or you are raising funds.
- No one ever listens to my suggestions or needs.

### 6.3.3 Telephone Calling Procedures

What you need to know before making a call, strategies, techniques, tips, ideas, how-to and skills:

1. Recruit brethren to make calls who are professionals. (i.e.: Insurance and Sales.) Also conduct training meetings and train other members in the calling process.
2. Make sure that the former member is still alive.
3. The needs and desires of our membership must be met. Search for those priorities in your conversation.
4. Make the former member feel important. Listen to his response. Keep an open mind. Be a good listener.
5. Search for a common ground in the conversation that will allow you to be his friend and build on. Be friendly.
6. There is a right and wrong way to make calls. Think before you make the call. Plan your strategy. Avoid 'mind' confrontations.
7. What you say and how you say it is critical. Speak clearly into the phone and talk as slow as possible.
8. Prevent from hurting former members feelings. He will be somewhat embarrassed to discuss sensitive information, however, give him the opportunity to air it out.

9. Research activity that the former member was involved in:

- The year he was initiated, passed and raised?
- The date he was suspended?
- Who was the Master when he was initiated?
- Who were his sponsors?
- Did he participate in the Floor Work?
- Was he an Officer or Worshipful Master?

10. A good time to make the call is from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

With information listed on the RETENTION and RESTORATION COMMITTEE REPORT, you are now ready to make that important call.

Have knowledge of the amount of money (\$\_\_\_\_\_) he will need to pay to be current and the method of payment.

Mail a letter to him indicating the amount he owes, with all current information, including your Lodge Summons, enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope and ask him to mail it to you within the week. If you don't receive a reply, call him and stay with him until you receive a reply.

If you follow these procedures and follow up after the call, you can expect to restore 40% of the members called. The end result of this effort will be rewarding to you and the individual you called. Bringing a Mason back home makes you feel good.

There is a feeling of warmth and caring that comes from being a part of the restoration process. It is the right thing to do.

#### 6.3.4 The Call

*(See Section 8, Form D)*

The interviewer must be prepared. Research will be required to determine why the member stopped attending Lodge. This information is usually available. Remember, we know the what the problem is, try to establish the cause.

In order to prepare oneself adequately, the following steps may help you:

- a) Review other discussions which may have taken place.
- b) Go over any documentation which may have been accumulated.
- c) Review positive accomplishments of this person.
- d) Have the correct facts to avoid an entirely corrective discussion.

Your plan will have three parts:

1. Opening: You will give the opening statement. Do not begin with a question, such as: "Do you know why I'm calling?" Practice writing an opening statement. Say it out loud. Run it by someone to get feedback.

2. Discussion: This section is the cornerstone. Try to get the co-operation of the person to find solutions. Ask open ended questions. It will allow a wide range of responses, and give the person more room to state their position, feelings and ideas. Let the person know you are listening. In your own words, tell him what you have just heard. It is not a question, and should not be followed by a question. It is a statement.

"You're saying then that....."

"If I understand you, you mean...."

3. Closing: Summary of what has gone on. Remember to follow-up and encourage feedback.

Be prepared for possible resistance and defences which may arise during your telephone call. Reactions vary from one person to another, and may affect you in various ways. How you handle these reactions will set the whole tone.

Some reactions are more difficult to handle than others, such as:

- Silence.
- Attacking you.
- Comparing to others.
- Blaming everything and everyone.
- Denial.
- Over-talking, rambling.
- Anger emotions.
- Rationalization and justification.
- Minimizing the issue.
- War stories.

When making that first call, have a plan. Know what your going to say. Be the facilitator and let him do the talking. Try to avoid those probing questions

## 6.4 A LETTER TO A SENIOR MEMBER UNABLE TO ATTEND LODGE \*

The following is an example of a letter that can be sent from the Senior Warden to a member who is unable to attend lodge.

This letter should *NOT* be a form letter. The underlined areas below indicate where the letter should be personalized. Never send a "fill in the blank" letter to a brother under these circumstances. You are strongly encouraged to personalize this letter as appropriate.

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Date:

Senior Warden

Bro. \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Bro. \_\_\_\_\_

I was most impressed by the thought and deep concern which our incoming Master portrayed in his Installation talk, "we are indeed most grateful!"

His idea that if we believe in Freemasonry and its future it is time to get back to basics. He asked "where is the Brotherhood, Friendship and Closeness?", characteristics which were in evidence and I am sure attracted each one of us when we were first initiated.

Perhaps we can set an example by keeping in touch and caring about one another. After all that is said and done many of us in this Lodge are senior in years and have a wealth of Masonic knowledge and experience.

I would be grateful if you would telephone me at \_\_\_\_\_ at anytime when you are under the weather through sickness, bereavement; or are in need of assistance, or even just want someone to talk to. I realize only too well that some of us prefer not to talk about it. But how can we help one another if we don't share our need. If you hear of some one sick or in need please let me know. I would be glad to make a report at each meeting.

We do need to care for each other. I honestly believe that simple caring is the foundation on which Masonry was built and which creates the Brotherhood of Freemasonry. Please help me to help you and our Brethren.

Fraternally and sincerely,

*Signature*

Senior Warden