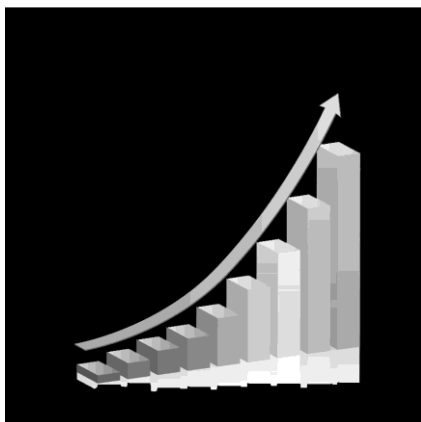


MASONIC MEMBERSHIP



Increasing Membership Through Retention

LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM

GRAND LODGE
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
STATE OF NEW YORK
EARLE J. HINO, JR.
GRAND MASTER
May 2, 1995 Reprinted December 2021

Brethren,

"Membership Loss" attributed to non-payment of dues has become a very serious problem for many Lodges within our jurisdiction. Concerted effort, perseverance and an Affirmative Action Plan should be established and implemented by "All Lodges" within the State to substantially reduce and/or possibly, even, eradicate this unfortunate circumstance.

For the last several years, Grand Masters have written to those who "stood-on-the-brink" of unaffiliation for NPD. Hundreds of our members responded, advising of their frustration. Many reported of their "emptiness" and felt neglected and unwanted by their Lodges. Many advised that no one has contacted them in years; and that the Lodge has never sympathized with them in their sorrows or has ever demonstrated a genuine concern for them; their families; their needs or for their genuine welfare.

Therefore it is apparent that an organized approach to reducing NPDs should be put in place- to reach out- communicate- and to salvage those in our midst who may be drifting away from our Illustrious Craft.

Attached hereto is a systematic program designed to assist in your efforts to substantially reduce NPDs. This Membership Loss Prevention Program has been "field tested" in several Masonic Districts and, I can assure you, it works!!

I urge you to implement this program in your Lodge- in doing so- I am confident that you will, with positive assurance, reduce your NPDs by at least 75% within the next three years.

Good Luck, and Let's Do It!

Fraternally,
M.: W. Earle J. Hino, Jr
Grand Master

MASONIC MEMBERSHIP LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Retention of our membership is one of the most important tasks that we face as a Fraternity. The following program gives the Masonic Lodge a vehicle to retain Brothers about to be unaffiliated due to NON-PAYMENT OF DUES (NPD)

The program is designed to give a Lodge appointed MEMBERSHIP LOSS PREVENTION TEAM, guidelines for coping with a variety of situations that it may encounter in this effort. It allows the Lodge to take a proactive stance in retaining its most important asset: ***ITS MEMBERSHIP!***

The program requires the Lodge to assign some of its veteran talent to work together as a TEAM. The report form has been designed to allow for numerous contacts to be made. The program is to be followed *step by step*, always recording what has transpired so that the Lodge can track successes as well as failures and learn from the team's experiences. The report form should be duplicated and turned over to the Secretary, with a copy to the Master and the District Deputy and Staff Officer in a timely fashion.

Step by Step

STEP 1: Picking the right Membership Loss Prevention Team

The Worshipful Master appoints a MEMBERSHIP LOSS PREVENTION TEAM CAPTAIN. It is recommended that Captain be a Masonically experienced Brother who is friendly, well known, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, in possession of a positive attitude. A Brother with these qualifications is better able to respond to some of the possible concerns of the delinquent Brother. It is also recommended that the Captain be allowed to choose the other members of the Team with the Master's approval. These Brothers should possess the same qualifications as the Team Captain.

STEP 2: The preparation phase.

The Team's first act should be to contact the Secretary of the Lodge by the last meeting before summer recess to obtain a list of Brothers who will be at NPD status by the end of the year. Along with this list, the team should ask for the name of the potential NPD's Brother sponsor and his appointed mentor, if available. If neither are available, try to locate someone in the Lodge who has some contact with the Brother. For example, belonging to the same place of worship, having the same employer, or having taken their degrees in the same class. The team should obtain their addresses, phone numbers and emails. (SEE FORM #5)

STEP 3: The contact campaign (use mail, email & social media if helpful)

Send the first of 3 letters (SEE FORM #1) to the DELIQUENT BROTHER by June 1st. Invite him to any summer events you may be having. The second letter would be sent by October 15th. This letter is still very encouraging and assumes the delinquent brother will be forwarding his dues. The second letter also offers different options for payment to the delinquent Brother, all of which should be approved by the Lodge in advance.

The final letter should be sent *certified mail*. Along with this 3rd and final letter, include a self-addressed stamped Post Card requesting his decision and signature for your records. See the sample enclosed. (Form #6). Before sending any letter, contact the Brother who sponsored the DELIQUENT BROTHER. If the Brother is no longer active, then try to find the delinquent Brother's Mentor or someone who is either close to him or has some knowledge of his life. Talk to that contact and find out all you can so that you have some basis upon which to relate to the DELIQUENT BROTHER.

STEP 4: The attempt to make personal contact.

Following the first letter, attempt to make personal contact by phone and ask the Brother if you and a fellow Brother can pay him a visit. Tell him you are concerned about his delinquent status and would like to talk to him about it. (You may find that a visit is not necessary, or possible) If the Brother resides out of town, conduct your interview over the phone or video chat. If you are visiting, set up a time, preferably at his home. Enlist the help of the contact who knows the Brother and ask him to join you at the visit. Out of Town Brothers may be visited by a local Lodge if the Grand Lodge requests it. See your District Deputy or Staff Officer for assistance. See the section entitled "Contact Objectives" for some ideas about what to discuss with the delinquent Brother. There really is no substitute for personal contact.

STEP 5: Your Grand Lodge Officers can help.

Have you thought of enlisting the help of your Grand Lodge Officers? The TEAM may want to ask the DDGM or STAFF OFFICER to write the first letter asking if there is a problem and offering his assistance to the Delinquent Brother. This would afford the Brother a channel to vent frustrations which he may not feel comfortable revealing to a member of the Lodge. You may consider the presence of a Grand Lodge Officer as well as the Secretary of the Lodge. A copy of the final report is to be sent to the DDGM.

Following these steps requires a committed team who knows how to relate well to people. The key to success requires good communication between the team and the administration of the Lodge, and the ability to follow through with a sincere desire to assist in saving a Brother Mason's membership.

Contact Objective

The Team should attempt to address the following issues, either in person, over the phone or video conference with every delinquent Brother if possible.

A) Does the Brother have financial problems?

Have a plan in effect, allowing you to be empowered to offer it to the Brother during the contact. Some Lodges offer amnesty program. ie; If the Brother will repay past Grand Lodge dues, the Lodge will forgive the remaining balance. Decide, beforehand, what if anything, your Lodge is willing to offer the Brother. *Any* plan must be authorized in advance by the Master.

B) Has the Brother been away for so long, he has forgotten the password or signs?

Shepherd him on them! Assign a shepherd to him if he would feel more comfortable. You know he is a Mason. For out of town Brothers, Grand Lodges can be contacted for assistance. Request a visit to the Brother from a Lodge in his area.

C) Has the Brother been away so long that he knows no one who is active and feels uncomfortable attending a meeting?

An excellent option is to ask him to come to the next "Brother Bring a Friend Night" Many of the men in attendance would be in a similar situation as he is because they have *never* been to a Masonic meeting. Invite him and his lady/guest to a social event, making sure that he can sit with you or someone he knows. Encourage out of towners to visit a Lodge close to them.

D) Does the Brother have a personal problem with someone or something in the Lodge?

Bring this information back to the Master. Together you may be able to come up with a solution. You may want to enlist other Lodge members for help or you can contact Grand Lodge Officers for help.

E) Does the Brother, because of health or eyesight, not want to Drive.

Offer to have him picked up and dropped off after the meeting.

F) Does the Brother just not care for Masonry?

Is Masonry not what he thought it would be? Ask him what he doesn't like and try to be objective. You may be able to learn something from this. DO NOT get angry. Masonry is not for everyone, Suggest that he pay his back dues and apply for a Demit. This would allow him to re-affiliate at a later time, should he change his mind. Make every effort to

FORM # 1

(NPD SAMPLE LETTER #1)

(send by June 1 on Lodge Letterhead use mail, email & social media if helpful)

Date

Dear Brother _____,

We hope this note finds you and yours well. We have not heard from you in awhile and with the summer beginning we thought that we would cordially and fraternally invite you to the summer events that **Can-Do Lodge #123** has planned. Attached is our schedule.

The Membership Loss Prevention team has been informed by the secretary of the Lodge that you have not yet paid the last _____ years' of dues. If this is just an oversight please remit your dues at your earliest convenience. You have been a brother Mason for _____ years, having been raised on _____ in _____ Lodge. Your petition lists (sponsors name) as your Masonic sponsor and the Master when you were raised _____ (master's name).

Our Brothers are the most important asset of **Can Do Lodge #123**. Without you there is no Lodge. We are looking forward to the coming year and invite you to participate as often as you can. (*include Trestle Board). Our Membership Loss Prevention Team will be contacting you shortly to touch base with you. Please be open with them about the status of your membership.

Drop me a line or call me to give the Lodge some news about your life. We will read it in the Lodge. We would really like to hear from you. Feel free to contact me at any time at **322-2222**. Do not hesitate to inform the Lodge of anything that we might be helpful with.

Fraternally,

Brother _____ (Team Captain)

*For out of town Brothers the letter should have this insert: "Do you know that as a Master Mason you have the right to visit Lodges in your area? Call me if you need assistance in this regard."

Form # 2

(SAMPLE LETTER #2 send on Lodge Letterhead use mail, email & social media if helpful)Date

Dear Brother _____,

Sorry we missed you at our summer events. The Lodge is now back in full swing, and your input is missed.

Our team is contacting you again to call your attention to the fact that on December 31, _____, you will be subject to unaffiliation from **Can Do Lodge #123** F&AM. We are actively looking for ways to make an arrangement with you to prevent this unfortunate end to your Masonic membership.

The amount that is delinquent is \$_____ which covers the past _____ years. There are several options that the Brethren of the Lodge have authorized our team to offer you:

1. You can pay the full amount of your delinquency as noted above, in which event you will continue to be in good standing in the Lodge.
2. You can pay at least one year's back dues before December 31, ___ and remain a member of the Lodge even though you are not current.
3. If you are in need of financial aid, please contact the Secretary, the Master of the Lodge or me and we will look at other options including the possibility of a payment plan or any other suitable arrangement,

The Grand Lodge of the State of New York requires that a Lodge pay the Grand Lodge Dues for ALL members on it rolls. This is the reason that **Can Do Lodge #123** F&AM cannot keep non-paying dues members in its roster indefinitely.

We sincerely hope that one of the above options will be an acceptable alternative to terminating your _____ (insert years of membership) years of membership in our Fraternity. We hope to hear from you soon.

Cordially & Fraternaly,
Brother _____ (Team Captain)

Form # 3

(SAMPLE LETTER #3 FINAL send by December 15 on Lodge Letterhead use mail, email & social media if helpful)

Date

Dear Brother _____,

I write this final notice to you with deep regret. At our next meeting, a vote must be taken that would drop you from the rolls of **Can Do Masonic Lodge #123** as of December 31st, _____.

We have tried our best to resolve any issue that might have prevented this letter from ever having to be written. We have tried to impress upon you that your membership in our Lodge is important to us. We have worked hard to retain you as a Brother.

Now we are forced to take your name from the membership rolls where it once was inscribed along with all of those who came before and after you. In addition, we **MUST** notify all concordant bodies and other Lodges to which you may belong that your membership in these organizations must be terminated as of January 1, _____

Should you at any time decide that you have made the wrong choice, we implore you to contact the Secretary of the Lodge, and he will advise you as to how to renew your membership.

As we have said to you over the past months, our most important asset is you, and we are truly sorry that you have chosen to end your membership in all the bodies of Freemasonry.

Cordially & Fraternaly,

Brother _____ (Team Captain)

FORM #5

REPORT OF TEAM INVESTIGATING BROTHER BEING
CONSIDERED FOR UNAFFILIATION FOR
NON-PAYMENT OF DUES

BROTHER _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ D.O.B. ____/____/____
YEARS OWED _____ TOTAL \$ _____
NOTIFIED BY SECRETARY SUMMONED DATE ____/____/____
MASONIC HISTORY _____

SPECIAL INTERESTS MASONIC _____

SPECIAL INTERESTS NON-MASONIC _____

PROPOSED BY _____

RAISED ____/____/____ OR AFFILIATED ____/____/____

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN _____

COMMITTEE MEMBERS _____

RESPONSE OF DELIQUENT BROTHER _____

COMMENTS OF COMMITTEE _____

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEE _____

DATE ____/____/____

SIGNED _____ CHAIRMAN _____

ACTION TAKEN BY LODGE

DATE ____/____/____ COPIES SENT ____/____/____

FORM #5

REPORT OF TEAM INVESTIGATING BROTHER BEING
CONSIDERED FOR UNAFFILIATION FOR
NON-PAYMENT OF DUES

BROTHER _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ D.O.B. ____/____/____
YEARS OWED _____ TOTAL \$ _____
NOTIFIED BY SECRETARY SUMMONED DATE ____/____/____
MASONIC HISTORY _____

SPECIAL INTERESTS MASONIC _____

SPECIAL INTERESTS NON-MASONIC _____

PROPOSED BY _____

RAISED ____/____/____ OR AFFILIATED ____/____/____

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN _____

COMMITTEE MEMBERS _____

RESPONSE OF DELIQUENT BROTHER _____

COMMENTS OF COMMITTEE _____

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEE _____

DATE ____/____/____

SIGNED _____ CHAIRMAN _____

ACTION TAKEN BY LODGE

DATE ____/____/____ COPIES SENT ____/____/____

FORM # 6

(send with final letter in December)

I WISH TO PAY MY DUES IN FULL

I WISH TO PAY ONE YEAR AT THIS TIME

I WISH TO PAY MY DUES AND DEMIT.
PLEASE FORWARD THE DEMIT TO ME

I DO NOT WISH TO PAY MY DUES.
PLEASE DROP ME FROM THE ROLLS OF
THE LODGE AS WELL AS
TERMINATING
LODGES MY MEMBERSHIP IN ALL OTHER
OR ANY CONCORDANT BODIES OF
FREEMASONRY

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Gary A. Henningsen, stated in his St. John's Day message of 1994 that the efforts of the Staff Officers for the years 1994-1996 would be directed towards Membership Retention, Masonic Education, and Leadership Development.

The Grand Master stated clearly; "Over the past decades, our State has been dropping more Brothers than we are raising. THIS TREND MUST END!!!" "You will visit every Lodge in your District to make sure that they have a program set up to contact potential drops."

The MEMBERSHIP LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM was created to fulfill this charge. It has been field tested in the quarries and has proven highly successful in assisting Lodges and Districts in reducing the numbers of Brethren dropped for non-payment of dues.

No program such as this is ever executed without help, aid and assistance. In this regard I would like to thank R..W. Lawrence J. Hammel, Jr. and R. W. Walter Gillis for their help in editing this program. I also thank all of the Lodges and their Membership Loss Prevention Teams who piloted this program and proved it successful.

Special recognition is given to R..W. Richard C. Friedman, who also edited this document, and who, over the years, has served as my friend and mentor. Without his continued guidance and support this program would not have been possible.

By
R..W...Bruce D. Chilton
Grand Director of Ceremonies
1994-1996

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