

◆ Section II ◆

The Membership Recruitment Process

Lodge Membership Process

At the beginning of their term, every Exalted Ruler should set a realistic membership goal. Recent experience in this Order is that the average Lodge loses approximately 9 percent of its Members through deaths, dimits and nonpayment of dues. To absorb this loss and still increase membership, the number of new members obtained must exceed this 9 percent loss. If the Lapsation Committee meets its goal, this percentage is reduced to 6 percent.

Select a Membership Committee

Selecting the Membership Committee requires care. The Chairperson should be outstanding, enthusiastic and highly motivated to devote the time to attain the membership goal. Committee Members should be enthusiastic, active and well-known within their communities. Their stature should encourage prospects to join our Order.

The number of Committee Members may vary according to the requirements and membership of your Lodge. Select Members geographically so that every section of your jurisdiction is covered.

Set a Goal

This Committee should meet as soon as it's appointed. If the facilities of the Lodge permit, hold a luncheon or dinner meeting. The Exalted Ruler and Chairperson should discuss with the Committee the importance of securing new members and the membership objectives. Except for extraordinary conditions created by institution, new buildings, etc., the goal for initiates should be 10 percent of the membership at the beginning of the Lodge year. The goal for Transfer Dimits and Reinstatements should be enough to offset the number usually lost each year by Absolute Dimits and deaths. Make the goal realistic but challenging.

Organize and Brief the Committee

A well-informed Member should talk to the Committee about the benefits of membership in our Order, stressing our national projects and community service. Appoint a secretary to keep minutes and record names of prospects. A vice chairperson should also be designated.

Compile a List of Prospects

Once the Committee is organized and briefed, begin formulating a systematic and selective membership program to meet your goal.

Make a list of prospective Members. By careful selection of these prospects in advance, practically all undesirable applications can be eliminated. The names should be selected by the Membership Committee from suggestions obtained from their own sources or received from the entire membership of the Lodge.

For instance, ask your Members who are physicians to look over the list of the jurisdiction's medical society and

check off names of prospects. Rolls of members of the Chamber of Commerce, leading service clubs, social and country clubs, and other organizations are another source of good prospects. Personal friends and acquaintances of Lodge Members should be listed. The list should be much larger than your membership goal. Figure on actually obtaining only 10 percent of these prospects.

Set up a Card Index of Prospects

As soon as the name of a prospect is recommended, list it on a card in duplicate. Below is a suggested form for such a card.

As the prospect cards are prepared, the Committee should review them carefully. If the slightest doubt of the qualifications of any of the prospects exists, place the card in an inactive file. This is the time to weed out any undesirable prospects. Assign the cards to Committee or Lodge Members best able to approach each prospect. The Committee Secretary should retain the duplicate cards as a record and check against the originals.

At each Committee meeting, a report should be made on every prospect assigned for interview. With a large prospect list, be sure to assign to Committee Members and Members only as many prospects as can be interviewed in a reasonable time. If a prospect refuses or shows little interest, put the card in a future-prospects file. Frequently, where one Member was unable to sign up a prospect, another may be able to do so. These future-prospect cards can be reassigned later to Members who through

Prospect Card	
Name _____	Approx. Age _____
Address _____	
Employed By _____	
Occupation _____	
How long lived in Jurisdiction _____	
Prospect suggested by _____	
Assigned to _____	
This card is your authority to interview the person named above. To prevent duplication, no interview should be conducted without the card. If you think of the name of a prospect, a card will be issued you if not already assigned.	
When application has been obtained, or if unable to obtain application, return this card to the Chairman of the Membership Committee. Report of your interview should be turned in on this card not later than _____	

(Signature) _____	

some personal connection might succeed in signing up the prospective candidate.

“Frequently, where one Member was unable to sign up a prospect, another Member may be able to do so.”

Hold Regular Meetings

Meet at least once a month, and as often as weekly when a Special Class is being promoted. The Committee should take advantage of Grand Lodge Membership Seminars and those of State Associations. Classes promoted by the Lodge add a local touch and are usually effective. Such classes may be named in honor of a prominent Member, past or present Officers or Members, a certain profession or industry, or even in recognition of a significant event.

Publicize Membership Efforts

Use Lodge bulletins and mailings to further the work of the Committee. Publicize membership classes in the Lodge bulletin and encourage Members to suggest names of prospective candidates to the Membership Committee.

“Try to promote friendly rivalries among Committees and the membership, both for submitting names of prospects and for actually signing them up.”

Offer Incentives

Try to promote friendly rivalries among Committees and the membership, both for submitting names of prospects and actually signing them up. Delegates at the 1996 Grand Lodge Session in Las Vegas, Nevada, amended Section 14.010 of the Laws of the Order permitting a Lodge to offer prizes to members for securing applications for membership, as long as it is not done publicly.

One successful program is called “Ship, Captain and Crew.” The Committee is the Ship, the Chairperson the Captain, and the Committee Members the Crew. Several ships compete to bring in the most members. To increase the stakes, make the losing ships pay for the winners’ dinner, or make them prepare and serve dinner to the winning ship.

This kind of friendly rivalry can only help your recruitment program.

Grand Lodge offers incentives in the form of the GER Award Pin and special Elks Membership Award Watch. Members can earn the GER Award Pin by sponsoring three new or reinstated Members. The Elks Membership Award Watch can be earned for sponsoring any combination of eleven new or reinstated Members.

Stray Elks

A “Stray Elk” is a paid-up Member of a Lodge who now resides within the jurisdiction of another Lodge. An individual who has taken an Absolute Dimit or been dropped from membership for nonpayment of dues is not a Stray Elk.

The Stray Elk Program is aimed at extending friendships by inviting Stray Elks to continue their participation in Elkdom through your Lodge programs. A successful Stray Elk Program can curtail the dwindling interest that leads

to a loss of Members.

In metropolitan areas where several Lodges may be close by, Elks who are Members of one Lodge may show up on a neighboring Lodge’s Stray Elk list because they reside in that Lodge’s jurisdiction. Common sense dictates that these individuals not be pursued as Stray Elks. Contact those Elks who have moved from another state or those who are not Members of neighboring Lodges.

Questions arise about Lodge jurisdiction in connection with this worthwhile program. All printouts include a list of the zip codes presently assigned to your Lodge. Our computer used this data to determine whether a Member should appear on your list or the list of a neighboring Lodge when residency changes. Please notify your Sponsor(s) of additions and/or deletions of zip codes within your Lodge jurisdiction. Make sure you copy the office of the Grand Secretary with any such correspondence.

Stray Elk printouts are sent to each Lodge semi-annually by the Grand Lodge Membership Committee.

If your Lodge is just starting a Stray Elk Program, or if your Program needs a fresh start, a complete listing of STRAY ELKS can be obtained from the Grand Secretary by requesting the COISES printout for copying names and addresses onto Avery #5351 Copier Labels.

The Stray Elk Program is one of fraternalism. Its primary purpose is to welcome Stray Elks to the Lodge near their new home — to show them that the bonds of Elkdom transcend specific localities. In this way, we might encourage these Elks to maintain membership.

By welcoming these Stray Elks, you can help prevent the needless loss of good Members. A Stray Elk may not want to transfer into your Lodge. If so, make sure that they feel comfortable and welcome. There are good reasons why some Stray Elks do not want to transfer. Charter Members, Life Members, Past Exalted Rulers and “old-timers,” for example, may not want to relinquish their standing in their current Lodge. Other Members may have personal reasons for sticking with their old Lodge.

Whatever their reason, we should not fault them. We should make *every* Stray Elk feel welcome. Offer them the opportunity to transfer to your Lodge, but let them know that they are just as welcome to use the facilities of the Lodge and to participate in its functions if they don’t.

Every Lodge should keep its Stray Elk file up to date. If the list becomes obsolete, a new list can be secured from the Grand Secretary by submitting the post office zip codes in the jurisdiction of the Lodge. The Grand Secretary will respond with the names of all Stray Elks receiving The Elks Magazine at these post offices. Please keep in mind that this procedure is expensive. Only request a new list as a last resort.

Associate Membership

An alternative to membership for Stray Elks who do not wish to transfer Lodges is an Associate Membership. Your Lodge, if desired, can provide Associate Membership for these Elks. To do so, your Lodge, following the Laws of the Order, must amend their By-Laws and have the amendment approved by the Grand

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Lodge Committee on Judiciary.

Associate Membership provides all the privileges of membership, including use of club facilities and attendance at Lodge meetings. The only drawback is that an Associate Member cannot vote on issues presented at a Lodge meeting.

“Dr. William Glasser wrote that “perception is reality.” Perception is reality and whether that perception is right or wrong is totally irrelevant.”

EVERY ONE OF US MUST PITCH IN

Why Do Some Members Quit?

The answer is simple. Many quit because they feel neglected! Whether perception or reality, many Elks fail to return to the Lodge because they feel their fellow Members were indifferent or without courtesy toward them. We failed to impress upon them how important their membership was to us.

Even if we replace these Members with new ones, we’re still far behind. More time and effort go into getting a new member than holding onto present members. And we’re losing the members that they might have sponsored.

We all yearn to be appreciated. We love individual attention, to be recognized. This won’t change when we join an Elks Lodge. A Member wants to feel important and valued. Let your Members know — especially new Members and Stray Elks — that the Lodge is thinking about and appreciates them.

Reinstatements

If we could just reinstate some of our former Members — people who at one time found the Elks attractive — we could significantly improve our overall membership.

The Lodge Membership Committee should take a good look at desirable former Members. Many times special circumstances cause an Elk to let membership lapse or take an Absolute Dimit. But when these problems have disappeared, the former Member may be embarrassed to ask for reinstatement. The Lodge Secretary can provide a list of Members eligible for reinstatement for consideration by the Lodge Membership Committee.

Delegates at the 1997 Grand Lodge Session in Chicago, Illinois, amended Section 14.180 of the Laws of the Order, which established a 60-day window during which the reinstatement fee could be reduced to \$1. This would apply only if a Lodge adopted a specific By-Law Amendment that it could **not** apply during February through May.

Round-Ups

The Lodge Membership Committee should hold a “round-up” night once or twice a year featuring good fellowship

and entertainment. The program should also serve as a reorientation to the Order’s objectives and achievements. Invite all Stray Elks and select reinstatement prospects and explain, either orally or in writing, how easy it is to transfer or reaffiliate. Many Elks think this process is complicated and therefore hesitate to ask about it.

Also, invite Stray Elks to your Preinitiation Orientation meetings. The Orientation Program presents the perfect opportunity to get to know these Members while exposing them to the projects of your Lodge and, if necessary, the nationwide works of the Order.

“It is vitally important that we, as Elks, are aware of the messages we send to people both by our actions and our inactions because they create perceptions that affect our membership.”

Making It Happen —

Getting Energy Out Of Everyone

Effective Lodge leaders pay attention to creating positive energy the same way they pay attention to Ritual, the Elks National Foundation, Youth Activities and the needs of their communities. They know positive energy helps Members overcome membership obstacles and rise to new challenges.

One way to create positive energy is by being positive yourself. You must be determined that you really care and support the Lodge membership goal.

Use your enthusiasm to attract people while making them see that their contributions make a difference.

Potential Members are just waiting to be asked to join by the right person. A well-planned membership effort with clearly defined responsibilities will result in new ideas, more reinstatements, membership retention and a growing, viable Lodge. Don’t forget that newly initiated Members are themselves important for obtaining other new Members. They all have friends who may never have been asked to join. Appendix A contains suggested model letters for recruiting Members.