

B 2 B FaciliFacts

*Presented by the Brother 2 Brother Team
of the Lodge Resources Committee*

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ABC Masonic Desk Top Reference

*In the September 2008; Vol. 3, Issue 8; we introduced to you the ABC Masonic Desk Top Reference. It was developed as a guide to help lodges provide opportunities for its members to have meaningful participation, to make meetings more interesting and to promote fellowship. This easy-to-use resource booklet contains a collection of practical, reasonable and do-able suggestions that lodges could use to help regain their place in the lives of present brethren and for those others that will choose to join us in the years ahead. **The following are some additional excerpts from this very worthwhile guide.***

Please Note: Should you wish to receive a copy of the guide in its entirety, please contact the Editor at the e-mail address below.

Preparation-Attendance

- Speak directly into the microphone (if your lodge has such a luxury) or stand directly beneath a voice-activated sound system.
- Hold weekly rehearsals to ensure all taking part have an opportunity to practice their part. Don't assume someone knows his part.
- Consider regular instruction nights for candidates in each degree. Have 'coaches' who know the ritual and who are up-to-date with floor-work requirements and changes.
- Encourage brethren to attend to brush-up on their knowledge of The Work and promote a social time after the practice.
- Involve all lodge members and especially newly made Masons with the lectures, committee work, event organization, etc. Don't rely on lodge officers to do all the work.
- Practice how to conduct a ballot properly and without hesitation. Request members to stand as the ballot is distributed and collected.
- Appoint only one prompter. Please no notes or open books during the conferring of degrees.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Preparation-Attendance	Pg. 2
Business Meeting Practices	Pg. 2
Community Involvement	Pg. 3
Finances	Pg. 3
Membership	Pg. 4

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Preparation-Attendance – cont'd.

- List members doing degree work on a bulletin board plus a list of candidates, their sponsors and the dates set for their next degree. Keep listings current.
- Encourage mentors and sponsors to actively help their candidates with The Work. Be in lodge with their candidates, stand beside them when the brother proves himself.
- Actively use the Mentor and Brother 2 Brother Programs - they really work!
- Appoint 'sparkplug' members to promote these programs. They should be encouraged to attend district meetings to learn the program and to share ideas. Reference: The FaciliFacts publication and the B2B Membership Retention Manual.
- Install a chairlift, if necessary, to encourage older members to attend.
- Recognize a member who sponsors a candidate with a token of appreciation.
- Give a newly-made Mason a Masonic Bible, Masonic or lodge pin, a specially made certificate marking the occasion. Examples: EAM - The White Lambskin Apron; FCM - The Illustrated Lords Prayer, MM - Tonight I Knelt Where Hiram Knelt.
- Toast the newly-made Mason after the meeting during refreshment time.
- Assign yourself something that needs doing in the lodge room or anterooms.
- Encourage the brethren, especially new members, to visit other lodges and districts.

Business Meeting Practices

- When reading correspondence, summarize notice/flyer information; then post them.
- Allow the Committee of General Purposes to do the business groundwork, discuss contentious issues and bring their recommendations to the membership. Do not take lodge time to debate the issues and disturb the harmony of the lodge. Just refer the problem issues back to the committee; but do invite constructive suggestions.
- Encourage members to attend the Committee of General Purposes meetings to offer input and to learn what is involved in the operation of the lodge.
- Create a handy Membership Directory with names, titles, addresses, telephone/fax/e-mail information, current or former occupations, spouse's name, interests, committees served on at the lodge, district and Grand Lodge levels.
- Consider a shoe-size box of reference materials and books under each senior officer's chair as a handy reference: Book of Constitution (current edition), lodge by-laws, The Masonic Manual, Meeting The Challenge, Masonic Memorial Service (revised), A Functional Pronouncing Glossary of The Work, Guidelines for Lodge Officers in The Mechanics of The Work.

Community Involvement

- Show the Friend-To-Friend videos in the community and your lodge.
- Install Masonic signs at the entrances to your town. Secretary or G.L. have guidelines.
- Hold a lodge Open House for family, friends, neighbours and the community.
- Hold a MasoniChip event
- Join police detachment/division to distribute bicycle helmets.
- Supply police cruisers with teddy bears/blankets for small children in an accident.

Finances

- Prepare an annual budget, distribute it to all members at a meeting and insert it in the summons for those unable to attend.
- Prepare an annual Lodge Operating Financial Statement stating receipts, disbursements and assets (this is not a cheque register).
- Ensure the annual audit contains all pertinent information (1-3 pages should be sufficient) and is signed by both auditors. It must be legible, easy to read and to understand as well as be available to any member upon request.
- Encourage your Finance Committee to work closely with the Temple Corporation, Committee of General Purposes and all senior officers.
- Review your dues level annually for possible adjustments. Dues really should cover the cost of operating the lodge. It is important to not use-up capital investments for month-to-month operating expenses.
- Use lodge income only for the purposes for which it is received and intended.
- Consider a Mission Statement and Objectives for your lodge Long Range Financial Plan. May include (but not limited to the following): investment structure, building fund, property inspections and costs, furniture and regalia appraisal and insurance coverage, renovation and repair schedule, fire safety inspections and necessary upgrades, dues review, donation guidelines, annual review and 5 year projections. Use a team approach drawing upon the members varied business expertise.
- Create a contingency fund for lodge repairs and refurbishments
- Set-up the four basic accounts recommended by the Grand Lodge Finance Committee:
a) Operating, b) Investment, c) Benevolence, and d) Life Memberships.

Membership

- Develop a focus group to identify what is necessary to attract new members. Consider using the Grand Lodge Strategic Plan as a guide, according to the particular circumstances of your lodge. Keep in mind though, that quality is better than quantity.
- Appoint knowledgeable investigation team members; not necessarily those brethren who attend lodge that night. Reference: Guidelines for the Committee of Inquiry, Book of Constitution and Meeting the Challenge. This is one of the most important public duties we can perform. It is an honour to be selected; an expression of confidence by the WM in one's ability, judgement and tactfulness for the welfare of the lodge.
- Carry a pocket-size pamphlet(s) about Freemasonry to give to a man who expresses an interest in Masonry. Examples: A Guideline on Discussing Membership in Masonry and The Petitioner, both available from Grand Lodge. Also, there is a business card available entitled: "On Becoming A Mason".
- Use the Friend-To-Friend Program - it works! Develop a membership strategy.
- Wear a Masonic ring or lapel pin. Display the Masonic emblem on your vehicle; use a Freemasonry license surround or a bumper sticker with the message: 2B 1 Ask 1.
- Show a non-Mason your lodge room and banquet area. Explain some things and answer questions. Give him a pamphlet about Freemasonry. Invite him and his spouse to your coffee club, if your lodge has one. This is a nice way to get to know them and for them to feel comfortable meeting new friends with no strings attached.
- Hold a work bee to clean-up, freshen-up, paint and refurbish both the inside and the outside of your lodge building. Outside work, even landscaping, is public exposure and may generate the interest of a man about the Craft.
- Visit members who are considering a demit or who are close to suspension. Mention interesting upcoming events and the benefits of remaining in the fraternity. We are the poorer without them. Encourage them to travel with you; help them with the passwords; assist on a committee for a social event; join the Speechcraft course.
- Avoid demits and suspensions by using your telephone committee. Advise these members of a Masonic Memorial Service; contact a member who usually attends meetings, but hasn't lately, to enquire about his health and to update him on the recent meeting and special occasions planned.
- Visit older and ill members at their home, nursing home or hospital. A personal visit is very special.

My Brethren, the list of things to do is endless and with a little bit of imagination, we know that you and your lodge members will come up with more ideas. Take a calculated risk, enjoy the occasion and take the opportunity to get to know your fellow brethren better. You will reap the benefits of your initiatives, plus have fun planning and participating in them.