

Membership Retention Tool Kit



**Grand Lodge of Virginia
A.F. & A.M.**

2009

Membership Retention Tool Kit

Purpose of the Retention Tool Kit

The purpose of the Retention Tool Kit is to reach out to the Brethren who do not attend Lodge regularly and effectively communicate with new members. The tool is divided into three parts:

The first part provides a sample survey which is intended to be used by the Worshipful Master to reach out to those members, who live within commuting distance of the Lodge and are in good health but do not regularly attend Lodge. This survey will collect their ideas and interests and will help the Worshipful Master determine if changes need to be made in the Lodge to attract its members who do not attend regularly.

The second part contains a list of valuable sources for information you can retrieve from the Grand Lodge of Virginia website. I encourage you to visit this site while you are preparing your Membership Retention Plan.

The last part of the Tool Kit provides the Worshipful Master with a set of sample letters he can use to communicate with new members as they advance through the degrees. They are intended to be used to assure the candidate we

are interested in him and his family. It also provides sample letters to be used to communicate with the candidate's wife as he proceeds through the degree process. The text of these letters is a suggestion only and Lodges should feel free to modify the text of a given letter as best suits a particular Lodge membership.

Questions or suggestions regarding this Tool Kit should be directed to the Chairman of the Grand Lodge Committee on Membership or any member of the Membership Committee. A list of the Grand Lodge Membership Committee members can be found on the Grand Lodge website under the link to Committees. Additional copies of this Tool Kit are available for download from the Grand Lodge website by clicking on the Membership Retention Tool Kit link on the Membership Committee webpage.

Retention

First, my Brother, let's address retention. Based on exhaustive research, it appears the typical Mason becomes inactive quickly, in about four years. This is particularly true if he does not see an advantage to attending Lodge or continuing to pay his dues. Our three biggest contributors to membership decline are deaths, demits, and suspension for non-payment of dues. Obviously, we cannot control the number of deaths, but we can address the issue of demits and non-payment of dues suspensions. Start now to retain every Brother in your Lodge.

Focus on the expectations of the Brothers in your Lodge:

1. Take an interest in your new Brother.
2. Respect each Brother's time commitments.
3. Offer quality and inspiring programs.
(include the family)
4. Offer opportunities to contribute to the community.

Understand if your Lodge is meeting the expectations of its members:

1. Survey the membership.
2. Compile the results.
3. Make a plan to address the results of the survey.

Reasons for not participating in Lodge meetings or activities

Fact: Master Masons say they become inactive for the following reasons:

1. I don't have the time.
2. It's not what I expected.
3. No one contacted me after the degree.
4. The Lodge was unfriendly.

Action Items: Develop a plan for each new member. Make certain a member calls the new member prior to each meeting.

1. Make certain that every member present talks with the new member at every meeting.

2. Ask the new member about his interests and expectations.
3. Invite the new member to participate in some Lodge activity.
4. Schedule family activities for the new member and his family.
5. Follow up with his coach and mentor. It is important to understand the needs and expectations of each new member. Make an effort to get to know the new Brother and understand what he is looking for in the Lodge.

Action Items: Determine if the Lodge is meeting member expectations.

1. The Worshipful Master cannot do it all, but he can appoint a Member Relations Committee to determine if member needs and expectations are being met.
2. Immediately after the first degree, interview the candidate in person and determine if he has questions.

3. Conduct the Member Satisfaction Survey with at least 12 recent Master Masons. (See page 4 and 5)
4. Create and maintain a database of the responses.
5. Analyze the results and develop a plan to address any issues.

Sample Membership Satisfaction Survey

This survey is intended to be used to determine what might be done to encourage members who do not regularly attend Lodge to become more active. Questions are general in nature and may be tailored or omitted to meet the needs of your Lodge.

Greetings My Brother,

The Officers of your Lodge are interested in your opinion regarding Freemasonry in general and our Lodge in particular. As your Worshipful Master, I am asking that you please take a few minutes to respond to this questionnaire, and let me know how the Lodge might serve you better. To facilitate your response, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. If necessary, please elaborate on your response(s) on additional pages, as necessary.

Thank you in advance, my Brother, for giving me your time and by responding to this questionnaire.

1. Name _____
2. Profession _____ (If retired, your occupation at time of your retirement.)
3. Are you proud to be a Mason? Yes ___ No ___
Comment _____

4. What prompted you to become a Mason? _____

5. How many miles do you live from the Lodge? _____ Driving time _____
6. Are you interested in serving on or Chairing a Lodge Committee? _____
7. Are you interested in a group that includes your age group or profession? _____
8. How often do you attend Lodge? _____
9. Do you feel welcome when attending Lodge? _____
If not, please provide a comment _____

10. What type of events would you suggest? _____

11. Are you interested in a leadership role? _____
If so, what type? _____
12. What would encourage you to attend more stated meetings? _____
13. How do you rate Freemasonry's Image?
Excellent __ Good __ Fair __ OK __ Poor __

14. What is your opinion of the *Masonic Herald*?

15. List your hobbies (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
16. Rank your favorite sports listed:
Baseball __ Football __ Basketball __ Golf __
17. Rank your favorite activities listed:
Fishing __ Hunting __ Reading __ Computer __
18. Have you ever played a musical instrument?
_____ What? _____
19. What is your greatest talent or skill?
_____ Would you
share it? _____
20. Have you ever visited the Masonic Home?
_____ Would you like to? _____
21. What could the Lodge do to improve your
participation? _____

22. What can the Lodge do to attract young
members? _____

23. List three strengths of your Lodge:
(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

24. List three areas that hurt the Lodge:
(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

25. Are you a member of Scottish Rite _____
York Rite _____ Shrine _____

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to the Lodge as soon as possible. Your time and the thought you put into your response is appreciated.

Fraternally,

Worshipful Master

Resource Materials Available from the Grand Lodge of Virginia Website to Assist your Lodge in Developing a Plan for Membership Retention

The materials listed below are available for download on the Grand Lodge of Virginia website and can be printed out for your use. The following web address will take you to the location for all of these publications:

<http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/education/publications> (NOTE: These materials are in Adobe PDF format. You will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view these files. If you would like to download the free software, go to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>) Printed versions are also available through the Grand Lodge office — some for a nominal charge, plus tax and shipping. If you would like to make an inquiry about cost or to order them, please send an e-mail request to: supplies@grandlodgeofvirginia.org .

Focus on Informing the Public and Potential Members about Freemasonry

- [Share The Light of Freemasonry](#)
- [Bring A Friend Night Program](#)
- [For Your Information Brochure](#)
- [Freemasonry - A Way of Life Brochure](#)
- [The Question of Solicitation](#)

Focus on the Petitioner

- [For The Investigating Committee](#)

Focus on the Candidate

- Questions and Answers for the Postulant
- Mentoring A New Brother Brochure

Focus on Leadership

- A Guide For Planning Your Year As Worshipful Master
- Jobs to Keep Our Brethren Active And Our Lodges Healthy
- Masonic Etiquette, Protocol and Decorum
- Meeting Management
- Lodge Officers Training Tool

Focus on Programs for the Lodge

- Handbook on Lodge Community Service Projects
- Public Ceremonies of Freemasonry
- Widows Program

Resource Materials Available from Other Sources

The Masonic Renewal Committee of North America

<http://www.masonicrenewal.org/>

Masonic Service Association of North America

<http://www.msana.com/>

Lodge Builder

<http://www.lodgebuilder.org/>

Candidate Letters

Before initiation and while the candidate is advancing through the degree process, it is important that the Lodge maintain contact with him and his wife, if he is married. The following pages provide sample letters that may be used to facilitate this process.

While this seems like a lot of effort in addition to all of your other duties as Worshipful Master, it is not really. If you have a computer, simply store the letters as boiler plate, and all you will have to do is change the name and address for each candidate. Be careful and make sure you change the salutation in addition to the address.

Page 8 contains a sample letter to send to a candidate after his election and while he is waiting to be initiated. This is important because it could be up to two months from the time he submits his petition until he is initiated. This is a long time to wait without hearing from the Lodge.

Page 9 contains a sample letter to a candidate's wife, if he is married, and the Worshipful Master feels it is appropriate.

Page 10 contains a sample letter to send to an Entered Apprentice and should be given to him the evening he is initiated.

Page 11 contains a sample letter to an Entered Apprentice's wife, if he is married, and the Worshipful Master feels it is appropriate.

Page 12 contains a sample letter to a Fellowcraft Mason and should be given to him the evening he is passed to that degree

Page 13 contains a sample letter to a Fellowcraft's wife, if he is married, and the Worshipful Master feels it is appropriate.

Page 14 contains a sample letter to a Master Mason and should be given to him the evening he is raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mr. Doe,

On behalf of the Brethren of our Masonic Lodge, I extend our congratulations to you on your election to receive the Degrees of Freemasonry in _____ Lodge No. ____ in (town or city).

This is the beginning of an enriching journey, and we hope you will experience the full measure of the joys and benefits of membership. The degrees you will receive are of a sincere and solemn nature, each incorporating symbols and allegory to teach some very important Masonic lessons.

Freemasonry has many definitions. Perhaps the simplest explanation of our Order is that it “makes good men better.” Character building is, in essence, a goal of Freemasonry. Many Brothers have said that they get out of Freemasonry what

they put into it. Therefore, I encourage you to read and learn as much as you can about our Order, to live its precepts in your daily life, and involve yourself in the various aspects of the Lodge activities as your time permits.

The Lodge you are joining is one of several in a district. Your district is one of fifty-seven in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and comes under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, located in Richmond. Though we are all bound together by our fraternal ties, there is no national Masonic body in the United States. We are all Brothers and our principal commitment is to mankind.

We look forward to building a Fraternal bond as you progress through each of the degrees in your Masonic journey. The Brethren of your Lodge, and those in your district, are at your disposal to help you in this journey. Please feel free to call on us for assistance at any time.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

Jane Anne Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Your husband has been elected to receive the degrees of Freemasonry in _____ Lodge No. ____ in (town or city). We are indeed honored that he chose to petition our Lodge, and we look forward to his involvement in the Fraternity.

Freemasonry is the most respected and well-established fraternal organization in the world. The three Masonic Degrees to be conferred on your husband are dramas which teach the building of character through examples related to the skills acquired by stone masons as they worked on the Ancient Temples and Cathedrals.

While many people perceive Freemasonry as a secret organization, it is actually very open. A wide variety of information is available at

bookstores and on the Internet. There is also a significant amount of false or misleading information available, and we encourage you to bring any questions that you have to our attention, so we may provide you with answers and information that will provide a balanced understanding of our Fraternity.

We hope you will share your husband's interest in Freemasonry and that you will support him on his journey. We look forward to getting to know you, and including you in the social activities of the Lodge, as many of our Lodge events are designed to include the family and community.

There is much more that I would like to tell you about Freemasonry, and with that in mind, I will send you similar letters as your husband progresses on his Masonic journey. In the meantime, visit our Grand Lodge website at: www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org, or contact me with any questions you may have.

We welcome you into our Masonic family, and hope you will attend our family and public events.

Sincerely,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Brother John,

You have completed the first step in your journey along the path of Masonic knowledge and understanding. Congratulations!

The Degree of Entered Apprentice is the first of three degrees that open the door of Masonic knowledge unto you, and ultimately lead you to earn the title of Master Mason. Lessons learned in the Entered Apprentice Degree include obedience, humility, and industriousness.

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, you learned that to be a Freemason, a man must first be prepared in his heart. You would do well to remember that. Freemasonry is concerned with the building of character in the life of the individual. That building must begin in the heart, for if it is not

properly receptive, we can expect to make little impression on the mind.

As an Entered Apprentice, you may attend a Lodge on the First Degree of Masonry, as well as any Lodge social events. You will be instructed in, and have the responsibility to demonstrate proficiency in speaking of what you experienced in your First Degree ritual before advancing to the next degree.

You are now preparing for the Second Degree in Masonry, known as the Fellowcraft Degree. The Entered Apprentice's catechism you must learn is not difficult, but will take time with the *[insert the word "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]* who I will assign to you. You are encouraged to work with your *["coach"/"mentor"]* as soon and as often as possible, so you may progress to the Fellowcraft Degree in a timely manner.

Please call your *["coach"/"mentor"]* or me with questions at any time.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

Jane Anne Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Your husband recently began his journey into the world of Freemasonry when he received the Entered Apprentice Degree in our Lodge. This is the first of three instructive degrees that teach the principles and philosophy. These degrees are very solemn and sincere and teach moral lessons to improve a man's character.

Your husband has been given the responsibility to learn the meaning of the symbolism of this degree which helps to emphasize and reinforce the lessons he has learned so far. Demonstrated proficiency in what has been learned is a necessary requirement before he can progress to the next degree. To accomplish this, he will need to spend time with a *[insert "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]*, who has been assigned to assist and teach him the

required information. We hope you will encourage his meetings with his [*“coach”/“mentor”*], so he can move on to the next degree in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about Freemasonry or your husband's new activities, please do not hesitate to ask your husband or call me or another member of our Lodge. We will always do our best to answer your questions and explain what is going on in our Lodge. For example, if you have not already seen the Lodge room where your husband's Masonic journey began, please join us for dinner before one of our meetings and ask for a tour.

Sincerely,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Brother John,

A short while ago you received the Degree of Fellowcraft. Congratulations on your continued progress in Freemasonry and toward becoming a Master Mason!

As you learned, the Fellowcraft Degree emphasizes the dignity and worth of the individual. This degree symbolizes man in the prime years of his life, an adult who is ready to accept the responsibilities of life, not only for himself, but for his family and the enlarged circle which is his world.

Your Masonic rights as a Fellowcraft are much the same as an Entered Apprentice. You may attend a Lodge on the First Degree of Masonry, as well as on the Second Degree. If your Lodge, or any

other, is conferring an Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft Degree, or hearing a catechism proficiency from an Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft Brother, you are entitled and encouraged to attend when accompanied by a Master Mason.

You are now preparing yourself for the third of the degrees in Masonry, known as the Master Mason's Degree. This preparation is not difficult, but it will take time with the *[insert the word "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]*, who has been assigned to you. You are encouraged to work with your *["coach"/"mentor"]* as soon and as often as possible, so you may progress to the Master Mason's Degree in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about any aspect of your Masonic journey, I encourage you to discuss them with your *["coach"/"mentor"]*, another Brother of our Lodge, or with me at any time.

All the Brothers of our Lodge look forward to your continued progress.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

Jane Anne Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Your husband recently continued his journey in Freemasonry when he received the Degree of Fellowcraft in our Lodge. He is well on his way to becoming a Master Mason!

In the Fellowcraft Degree, your husband was taught, among other things, to regard the internal, not the external qualifications of other people. The degree also encourages a man to live a virtuous life; and to maintain a proper perspective when deciding whether and how often to participate in Masonic events when they may conflict with other obligations, such as family events or job related responsibilities.

Your husband will again be responsible for learning the meaning of this degree in order to

progress. As before, he will need to spend time with a *[insert “coach” or “mentor” as appropriate]*, who has been assigned to him by me. We hope you will encourage his meetings with his *[“coach”/“mentor”]*, so he can move on to the next degree in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about Freemasonry, or your husband’s progress therein, please do not hesitate to ask your husband or to contact me or another member of our Lodge.

Sincerely,

(Master’s Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master’s Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236

June 11, 2009

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Brother John,

You have been “raised” to the sublime Degree of Master Mason. Congratulations! The attainment of this title isn’t easy and, as with all titles of honor, takes persistence and hard work.

What lies ahead? As you obligated yourself at the altar, you are to practice the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth in your daily life. As a Master Mason, the most important thing you can do is live your life in accordance with the morals and virtues taught in the three Degrees of Masonry.

If it is at all possible, you will be expected to support your Lodge with your attendance at the monthly stated Lodge meetings. In addition, there are other events you will be encouraged to

participate in, such as Lodge Degree work, visits to other Lodges, and social or charity events they may hold. Your active participation will not only help sustain the Lodge, but will help you realize the full potential of what it means to be a member of this Fraternity and will strengthen the bonds of fraternal fellowship with the other members of your Lodge.

Ritual is an extremely important part of Freemasonry. To afford you a better understanding of the ritual, we hold regular schools to teach parts in the degrees and the display of solemnity in our ritual work. We encourage you to learn all that you can, and we try to make learning fun!

Don't hesitate to proclaim your membership in our Order, and feel free to discuss Freemasonry with the non-Mason, just taking care not to reveal any of the "secrets" you have sworn to protect. When in doubt about what you can discuss, don't hesitate to ask a more experienced Brother. We encourage your inquisitiveness into Freemasonry, but please be aware of the falsehoods of anti-Masonic propaganda. We will gladly recommend books that document the truth about our history and organization.

We hope you will attend the meetings and other events of your Lodge on a regular basis. We

encourage you to include your wife (and family) at all public Lodge events.

And finally, you are encouraged to learn your Master Mason's catechism, and when proficient, stand examination. This is a singular honor, and the ultimate achievement in attaining the title of Master Mason.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)