



# Ideas That Work



Please Forward to Other Leaders in Your Lodge

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## Spring is Finally Here...I Think?

It's been a long time coming but Spring seems to finally have arrived here in Nebraska. And with it Spring Fever! At least that's my excuse for being so late with this issue of Ideas That Work! This month we will look at the answers to some

questions that have come up during the Grand Master led Leadership Forum and a few ideas from the Craft. Remember, we can never have enough content so if you find something that is working in your Lodge, please send it in!

### Lodges and Web sites

At Annual Communication and again at several of the Lodge Leadership Forums, the question was posed to the Grand Master about where to find out about how to launch a web site for a Lodge. Since I own a web site hosting and design company (full disclosure: These ideas will work any place on the web), the Grand Master has asked me to put together some basic information that you can use to either start a web site or improve the one you have. The information for this article comes from an e-book I wrote for my own clients. So let's get started!

I'm a big believer in Dr. Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Successful People. The very first habit applies to web sites. Begin with the end in mind. In other words, before we go off the deep end figuring out URL's and bits and bytes, take a deep breath and step back. Sit down with a cup of your favorite beverage and take a minute to define what exactly your website is to accomplish. Think in broad strokes here; we'll fill in the details later. Make sure to think about your web site from the point of view of the target group that will be using it.

Does it answer the "So What" question for them? You should be able to describe the purpose or mission of your web site in a few short sentences or bullets. Then begin to flesh out some of the features you want.

Now that you have a pretty good idea of what you want your web site to do and the purpose it will fulfill, let's do another quick exercise.

Fire up your computer and go to your favorite search engine, i.e., Google, Yahoo, Dogpile, etc. Start searching for web sites similar to what you have just defined. Use different combinations of words from your mission statement. Chances are, somewhere, someone has something similar or close to what you are thinking about. Click on some of these sites and see if they have any feature or "feel" that you like. Save these web sites in your browser "favorites" file (Ctl-D) as we will be coming back to them later. You can also find other Lodge websites using the Lodge finder on the Grand Lodge web page ([www.glne.org](http://www.glne.org))

Every Web site has to have a way to be found on the Internet. The method that the Internet uses to find you is pretty complicated and we won't be covering that in this book. But the fact still remains that you need a way for the world to find your web site.

That function is taken care of by your Domain Name. Sounds scary but it isn't. For example TLHInteractive.com is the Domain Name of my hosting business. Yours might be BobsPlumbing.com. These domain names are how the Internet finds you and knows you.

Domain names all come from the same place and do the same thing. The important thing to you, the novice web site builder, is that the name you want is available! This is pretty easy to find out. Here's how:

Fire up your web browser and go to [www.internic.net](http://www.internic.net) (These are the people that assign and keep track of all web site names)

Click on Whois in the title bar

On the next page you will see a search box that we will use to see if the name you want is already used

Type the name you want for your web site in the box, e.g. BobsPlumbing

Hit go and wait for the returns. In this case (as of the writing of this e book) the return says "no match for domain bobsplumbing". Great! That means we can use that name for our web site! If someone is already using the name, then it will tell you who.

## Free Stuff!

Now that I have your attention, I'd like to bring you up to date on all of the free stuff that Grand Lodge has to help you with your Lodge activities and your year as Master of your Lodge. During the Leadership Forum discussions, it was discovered that not everyone had a good idea of what was available from the Grand Lodge.

(Want to check this out? Type in [tlhinteractive.com](http://tlhinteractive.com) and hit return.)

If the name you want is already used, then try some variations on that name or try a completely different name. This is sometimes the hardest part of making a web site! Caution: If your web site name is easily misspelled or very similar to another web stie name, make sure a typo won't land your family member or potential client someplace you don't want them to be.

A few tips for web site names:

1. Keep them short and easy to remember
2. The most common ending is .com but .net and .org are also quite common.
3. Avoid easily misspelled words.
4. Avoid using special characters in your domain name.

Remember, it's possible and sometimes a good idea to have several different domain names pointing to your website. For example, Bob of Bob's Plumbing may want to buy that name in .com, .net and .biz just to make it easier for his customers and to keep the competition at bay.

Now that you have a name you know is available, let's discuss finding a place to host your web site. We'll cover that in the May edition of Ideas That Work.

(If you can't wait, send me an e mail and I'll send you the e book)

The Grand Lodge web site ([www.glne.org](http://www.glne.org)) has a treasure trove of things just waiting to be downloaded and used. These can be found under the link titled "Downloads". There you will find nine different categories of things for you to download and use. Let's look as some specific items:

1. Lodge Leadership Manual: If you a Master or in line to the East, you should have one of these!
2. Activities That Work: Can't think of anything for the Lodge to do? This document has tons of great ideas of activities for your Lodge.

3. Ten Steps to Lodge Renewal
4. Lodge Planning Guide
5. Membership Handbook

This is just a small portion of the list of great documents waiting for you on the Grand Lodge Web site. So take a look and start reading!

## Membership and Recruiting

*The following article was written by W.B. Patrick Barger who earned the top membership recruiting award twice, and most recently at the 2008 Annual Communication. He also was trained as a recruiter for the military. In addition, he edited and added additional useful information to Section 7 – Membership in the Lodge Leadership Manual. By W.B. Patrick Barger*

A lodge's success in growing their membership doesn't totally rely on a strong recruiting program. Men must be motivated to join. Before they sign a petition, they must see reasons to join, be active and to remain members.

The most effective recruiting tool available to your lodge is to build an active and enticing program of activities that meets the interests of today's men.

Surveys show Masons want our fraternity to provide:  
Better fellowship and opportunities to make new friends.

Leadership opportunities, improved leadership training and to be well led.

Greater civic involvement, public charities, pride in the accomplishments of the Craft.

Improved Masonic education and understanding of Masonry.  
A higher profile for Freemasonry, more open to the public, greater visibility and more pride in the organization.

Active commitment to the needs of youth.

Higher quality degrees presented more dramatically and understandably.

Improved meetings with entertaining and interesting programs.

Opportunities for family involvement in lodge.

Self-improvement

This list of motivators could be the beginning point when planning your lodge's year of activities. Review each bulleted item above and think of ways your lodge can answer the needs expressed here. You can find more than 400 activity ideas in the Lodge Leadership Manual online at <http://www.gln.org>. Simply click on "Downloads" and scroll down to "Publications." Work through the twelve sections of the manual and when you finish, you will have a complete plan constructed for the year you'll be Master.

The sad fact is that on average, after the first year of membership, 80 percent of all new members do not return to lodge meetings and activities.

In 2007, Nebraska lodges raised 306 members. On the negative side of the ledger, the biggest reason for losses was 455 suspensions, which were 41 more than deaths.

Imagine if our lodges were meeting the needs expressed by Masons in this article. Suspensions would diminish, men would be

attracted to join and our fraternity and your lodge would be growing.

## **Masonic Relief**

The Grand Master designated March as Masonic Relief Month in Nebraska but the need for Masonic Relief is an ongoing issue. The Grand Lodge maintains a fund for the relief of poor, distressed Master Masons, their widows and orphans and receives several applications per year for assistance. This fund has been seriously drained in the last 2 years and it's time to step up to the plate and fulfill our obligations. So how can we do that?

W. John Maxell (Grand Senior Steward) has put together a two-part program that is going to really boost our funds and provide our membership with a great opportunity to show their pride in Masonry! And the best part is how easy it is to do! Just go to the Grand Lodge web page ([www.gln.org](http://www.gln.org)) and click on the Masonic Relief Banner. Then chose the item or items you want and use any major credit card or your PayPal account to order. It's safe, easy and supports our Masonic Relief effort.

Here is what is available so far:

**Part 1:** For only a \$20 donation you can receive a Masonic Relief pin. This high quality pin shows that you care and support Masonic Relief. For only \$35, you can get two pins. (Makes a great activity for Lodge. See how many members you can get to donate for a pin, then take a picture of everyone wearing the pin and send it to Grand Lodge Office!)

**Part 2:** John has made arraignments with a Brother Mason to provide us with a variety of casual coats with the Masonic emblem embroidered on them. These are high quality garments at a great price! The price includes shipping and tax and the they come in a variety of sizes and colors. Show your pride in Masonry to the world and get one of these great items.

## **Keep Sending In Those Activity Ideas**

We know there are many, many more activities lodges have performed that have been successful. Don't be shy. Share them with us. Your lodge activity ideas may end up helping another lodge.

What may seem commonplace to you, because your lodge has held an event for many years, may be new to someone else. If it's working for your lodge, please send it to

us. Write a short summary and send it to: [michelle@gln.org](mailto:michelle@gln.org) or mail it to the Grand Lodge Office at: 1240 No. 10<sup>th</sup> St., Lincoln, NE 68501-1852. If additional information is needed, we'll call.

This newsletter will be sent to you as often as we have ideas. It will take you only a few minutes, but it could help our fraternity across the state. Thanks for your help.