



Rite Notes
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 September 2011



Managing the Way Others Perceive Your Commandery

Companions and Sir Knights,

October is a big month for our Grand York Rite Bodies. Six districts will have festivals or will complete their festivals. We still have time to develop interest in the minds of non-york rite masons to complete a petition and participate in the up-coming festival. You know your commandery inside and out. You know who the members are, and what they want. You have served as an officer with dignity, and love the Christian fellowship. You may also know many Non-York Rite Masons in the local lodges, and what you think they want. But maybe you need to know something more.

Perhaps your commandery needs to perform a self evaluation of its reputation of “implementing change” to meet the needs of its membership. How do they perceive your Commandery? What are you doing right? What could you be doing better? Keeps potential members away from your local York Rite membership, and yet they may be active in Symbolic Lodges or other Masonic organizations? Is there any way to change their perception of the Commandery?

The answer is “yes”! Any company or fraternity can research, and manage the way it is perceived by its current and future members or any other group that’s important to its success. Perceptual issues, if not positive, can have many tangible effects on a local Commandery ranging from revenue impact to morale.

The key is for the leadership of the Commandery to identify and manage the perceptions of those it wishes to reach. This can be accomplished by borrowing from many of the traditional disciplines such as market research, marketing, public relations, customer service, and media advocacy programs.

But these are fancy terms for performing a “situation assessment” of your Commandery. How can we do this quickly, determine if changes are needed, and prepare for our membership development efforts? Don’t we want to assure ourselves that we have a good product with defined features and tangible benefits to sell to an emerging audience?

A Quick Situation Analysis - Simple market research can be accomplished by identifying three separate categories: Existing Knight Templars, former Knight Templars) who either demitted or are inactive in the Commandery), or Non-York Rite Masons active in Symbolic Lodges.

Call a meeting of the Commandery leadership. Agree that the task at hand is to determine what changes in our product offering are needed, if any, to improve the perception of the commandery by members, former members and potential members. Develop a list of names of people who you know and respect that fall into one of the three categories. Agree as to who should contact them.

Active Knight Templars - (Satisfied customers) Ask them what it is about the Commandery that creates the commitment, and desire to participate in our Order. Is it the meetings, ritualistic conferral of the Orders, the family activities, programs, drill teams, philanthropies, and fellowship? Ask them to identify areas that need

improvement. Ask them for recommendations of changes that, if made, might bring back inactive Sir Knights or assist in attracting new Sir Knights to join our ranks. Make a list of the recommendations.

Inactive Knight Templars - (Possibly dissatisfied customers) These are Sir Knights that are either inactive members or have demitted from our ranks. Performing a “Product Assessment” with this group requires patience and perseverance. But these are also the Sir Knights that may feel the Commandery did not meet their needs or expectations. Perceptions to these Sir Knights are based on first hand experience.

First, tell them how much they are missed. But begin to further explore the reason for their inactivity or separation. Focus the questioning on what changes could or should be made to meet their needs. Listen intently, and avoid being defensive. Acknowledge that their observations or recommendations, can make a difference.

Potential Knight Templars - (New Customers) These Masons are the primary target of our membership development effort. These are the future Knight Templars that will not join our ranks unless we have the “right product” for them. They may know little about our Christian Masonic heritage, but may have formed an impression of what it represents based upon perceptions.

Share with them an overview of the York Rite, and emphasize the features and benefits of membership. Ask them to consider joining the York Rite. Invite them to a planned activity. But, does your commandery really meet their needs.

Feedback Results - Once you know what motivates your target audience, you can take the appropriate action. Do they need to be re-educated, inspired, trained, won over or even entertained? Must we “redefine” or change our product to meet their needs? How can we persuade them to join Templary?

Action Plans - We might have learned that our beloved Commandery is not meeting the needs or expectations of some current, former, or new members. Our product may need to be “re-engineered” for the existing, and perhaps to be “redefined” for the new. We are not referring to changes in our Orders or our Christian teachings and principles, but progressive changes in operations that might be considered.

Perhaps we have learned that we need more programs at stated conclaves involving diversified topics of current interest, more family involvement and scheduled activities. We may also need more Masonic education, leadership training, and increased promotion of our good works. Perhaps support in community projects, programs and activities for our youth, and more joint activities with other Masonic organization. Maybe some “team building” is in order.

Discuss the results of your feedback with the commandery leaders, and decide what changes need to occur. Establish both short and long term changes, that should be implemented. Begin this implementation with enthusiasm.

Promote any Progressive Change - Begin to communicate the changes, and include all three groups in the implementation process if possible. You might be surprised at the enthusiasm change can create. You must develop effective programs that best connect with your key perceivers, Finally, follow up. Continually monitor the results of your efforts and make adjustments to achieve the best possible results. Ask for restorations, and seek new members to become part of the Order.

Once this has been accomplished, it is not a once-in-for-all activity. Perceptions, like anything else, can change over time. Changes in our social climate can have an ongoing impact on how your key perceivers get their information and form opinions.

That's why it important to continually track your efforts over time, making sure that our product offering meets the major needs of current members. Re-kindles interest to former members, and is attractive to potential members.

So What's The Point - Perceptual issues can be managed just as you manage finance, or growth of any enterprise. Taking this approach helps avoid the effects of "unfavorable opinions" by understanding the "needs" of your target audience, and implementing the changes needed to satisfy them.

With the implementation of creative new management techniques, we have the opportunity to re-examine our product and assure ourselves of the value received. **Until you learn to see your commandery through the eyes of others, you haven't seen one of your greatest opportunities for customer satisfaction and growth.**

District	Date	Location	Knighthed
1	19 Mar, 2011	Miami(17) Chap/Council	
2	8 Feb, 8 Mar, 12 Apr 10 May, 7 June 13 Sep, 11 & 25 Oct	Ft Myers YRB Chap/Council (11)	
3	5 & 12 Mar 1 & 8 Oct	Tampa Tampa	13
4	12 Feb, 12 Mar 30 Apr	Bartow, Lakeland- Winter Haven YRB	8
5	12 Mar 19 Mar 24 Sept 29 Oct	Sanford (Chapter / Council Leesburg(Eola) [Orders] Chapter/Council (Eola) Orders (Eola)	7
6	1-2 Apr 7-8 Oct	Fort Pierce YRB Melbourne YRB	36
7	28-30 Apr 20-22 Oct	Jacksonville YRB Jacksonville YRB	11
8	1,5,15,25,26 Feb 5,9,19,29,30 July	Gainesville Gainesville	4 8
9	12Feb(Chap/Council) 26 Feb(Orders) 20-22 Aug	Mariana Tallahassee Tallahassee	3 6
10	2 April & 7 May 17 & 24 Sep	Pensacola Pensacola	7
Total 2010 Knightings			165
Total 2011 Knightings			103

We recognize membership growth and retention is the life and purpose of all Masonic bodies. If we are to continue the good works of Christian Masonry, it must be up to every individual to accept the challenge Never underestimate the value and power of the ordinary being implanted with extraordinary zeal and diligence.

We cannot wish away our declining membership; we must be individually accountable for growing our business. Don't wait for someone else to do what you can do now.

If any of the above dates are incorrect OR if you have dates or numbers that should be changed, please let me know.

Henry A Adams
HENRY A. ADAMS
Eminent Grand Generalissimo
Chairman, Membership Committee

“Every Christian Mason Should Be A Knight Templar”

some excerpts, from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, reprint from Aug 2009, intro. and Grand Commandery of Florida., Beaderstadt, Jon L. Making Members, And from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

Hm Ph: 321-726-6971

Cell: 321-795-8316

Fax: 321-951-9680

E-mail: hadams1@aol.com