

# Reaching out to the Under 40 Group

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One thing has become clear, membership is getting older and the younger people are not active. In this session we are going to brainstorm some things that the younger generation is looking for and what we can do to retain the younger members that we have.

For the sake of time I have listed a few things that are pivotal if we want to ensure that our organization and Chapters are still in existence in the years to come.

**Is it easier to find new members or retain current members?** The correct answer to this question is...It is easier to retain current members. Let's make a list of things we can do to make sure our younger members of the organization are being retained.

1. Assign a mentor. Use your sideliners as a mentor to your younger people. By assigning an elder to a younger person, they can help them with their ritual, be a babysitter or substitute in their station should they not be able to attend a meeting. The mentor can also guide them on Chapter traditions, mentor them in duties/responsibilities of their station, and help them learn their memory/floor work.
2. Setup a babysitting program. Use a youth group to have organized activities for young children while the meeting is in session. This can even be done by elder members of the Chapter.
3. Accept differences. Things have changed since many of us have joined. Today's younger people have crazy hair colors, tattoos, piercings, different sexual preferences and even want to wear pants. It is our responsibility to accept these changes and be open to it so we do not chase the newer generations away. It is ok to accept changes to our traditions. Differences are good, and so is change. Embrace it and make them feel welcome and by all means, **DO NOT STARE AND DO NOT JUDGE!**
4. If you have members who are away at school, **DO NOT** forget them. They are there studying hard and working their tail off to keep up with the workload of schooling, the pressures of their new schedule, and adjusting at times to a new style of living. Call them and take them to dinner, send them cards, send them care packages during mid-terms and finals, just keep in contact. While these members may not be able to attend the meetings due to their school schedule. They still need to know they are valuable and thought of and Eastern Star will be top of mind when they do have the time because you took an interest in them.

5. Think about the economy. Most of today's under 40 are living paycheck to paycheck. It's sad but true. Your members may be avoiding coming because they feel nickel and dimed to death. This dinner ticket, that dinner ticket, this fundraiser, that fundraiser. It can become daunting to someone who is having trouble keeping food on the table and a roof over their family's heads. Instead of having a ticket price, just put out a donation basket. Have a clothing exchange, send left over food home with members who have families waiting for them at home. Do what you can to lighten the financial burden.
6. I have heard this one from MANY younger people. Pick your clothing wisely. Younger people are not as excited about formal floor length gowns and glitter, and sequin gowns are "Old Lady" to them. Think outside the box when you are picking chapter dresses. Come up with a way where you can have your Chapters identity without forcing younger people to dress like they are 20 - 30 years older than what they are. Find a way to meet in the middle.
7. Communication Methods. This is another sticky issue with many Chapters and the younger people. Today's younger people are communicating via text, email, and social media. Survey your members and make a list of the preferred way of communicating for each person. Match up your committee members with the same style. Have a person who prefers email to communicate with those who prefer it that way. Have a person who likes to text communicate with the members who like to text. Have a person who likes to be on social media communicate with those who like that style etc.
8. Take an interest in the member's employment. People today spend more hours at work than they spend with their own families. Take an interest in what they are doing. Do you know what kind of work your members do? Do you support them in their vocation? Do you go to Suzy's Salon for your hair or Nancy's Nails for your nails to be done? I have heard many younger members say they do not feel supported by their Sister and Brother Star members as they see their Sisters and Brothers going to competitors of theirs. Let's support them in their vocation!
9. Don't just let the Chapter take care of it. Every member has milestones in their lives; Ex: Graduations, babies, marriage, new jobs, awards, ect. Many Chapters send out bulk cards for sickness, but do you send out cards for milestones? Throw a baby shower, have a family social night where members bring the kids, or even a night where the kids of the members are treated to something special. As individuals, are you taking an interest in these members, or do you just let the committee take care of it?
10. Out of sight, out of mind. Your Chapter probably has many younger members who are raising families. Do not forget them. Many of them wish they could be at a meeting rather than taking care of a screaming infant or a 3 year old miniature

terrorist. Call those members. Take them for coffee, take them to lunch, or drop off a care package to them or imagine offering to babysit for a night so they can get away. Ask them to help the chapter by tracking registration for something or assembling decorations or pin-ons from their home. Many of these members need and want to be involved, they just feel pulled between raising a family and volunteering their time. You can even use these members to help other members learn their ritual work. Just ask them, they want the break from family!

11. Rides. Most of us think about the older members needing rides to Chapter. In today's world, many families share one car or have trouble keeping gas in the gas tank and a trip to Chapter will take away the gas they need to get to work or go to the doctor. Offer rides to help take that worry away from them.
12. Reach out. If each member makes a point to reach out to every member of the Chapter both active and non-active every quarter, imagine how many times a non-active member will hear from someone at the Chapter.
13. "We have always done it that way." This is a statement younger people HATE hearing. Younger people want to make a difference. They have great ideas that are relevant and appealing. Are you shutting them down each time they suggest something to replace that out of date bake sale or sale of plastic canvas items? Think outside the box and try something new. Listen to ideas of fundraising, they know what people their age are buying and what appeals to their generation. Your ideas and traditions may have been fantastic in your days, but the fact is, today is not yesterday and things change. Are you changing with it or are you forcing the younger members to do things so old school that they are made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, and unappreciated?
14. Give them something to do. The worst thing you can do is ignore them. Keep the younger members of your Chapter involved. Ask them to be officers, committee members, greeters, etc. Ask them to head a fundraiser (But make sure you embrace their vision). Years ago it was normal to have a new member be a sideline for a year before being asked to get involved. Today there are so many options out there for people to spend their time, if the Chapter does not utilize them, someone else will. So many organizations compete for their member's time? What is your Chapter doing to make sure you are engaging those younger members? They joined for a reason. Don't give them a reason to leave.
15. Advertise in a high school year book, if you have a young member of your Chapter, take out an ad in their yearbook letting them know you are proud of them.



# The number one reason people join Eastern Star is...\_\_\_\_\_

Members who are 18-30 are looking for something different than members who are 31-40 or even higher age groups. Do the following activity. Without repeating an answer:

- Make a list of what **YOUR** Chapter offers members ages 18-30?

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- Make a list of what **YOUR** Chapter offers members ages 31-40?

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## **New Membership**

Earlier we said that it is easier to retain membership, but the cold, hard truth is that we still need to find new people to keep the organization in existence in the future.

Here are some ideas to get you thinking of ways you can attract new people.

1. Purchase an extra ticket for your fundraiser. Give it to a prospective member. (People LOVE free things!)
2. Have a power lunch with a prospect. Gather 2 or 3 member from the Chapter and invite the prospect to lunch. Let them talk about themselves. People love talking about themselves. Use this as a time to let them talk about themselves. They will feel you really care about them.
3. Take a basket of muffins or other baked goods to the wife of a Mason or an OES member who now lives in your town.
4. Features or Benefits? Long ago people were attracted to features, as the world has gotten more and more self-centered with instant gratification, people are looking more towards the benefits. They are giving up their precious limited time and they want to know it is worth it. So that is what you need to show them. They do not

necessarily care that they can attend a dinner for only \$10. But they do care that they can bring the family and not have to cook. They may not care that the Chapter has a tradition of seeing a certain play every year but what they do care about is that THEY get an opportunity to see a show at a group rate. Keep your conversations about THEM. Today's younger people subscribe to the WII FM Radio station (What's In It For Me?).

5. Host a Ladies lunch or Fashion show and go to the local lodges and give FREE Tickets to the men for their wives. (Remember, people LOVE free things!)
6. Put an emblem on your vehicle. People will ask you questions.
7. Reach out to the Masonic Youth groups. Host a coming of age event. Make it something special where every youth cannot wait for their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday so they can be invited to this special occasion. Have fun, laugh, and play with each other. Young ladies in the Masonic Youth groups have spent years building relationships with their youth sisters and now they need to start all over. They need to see that because they are entering a new age group of people, they are opening their resources and possibilities of mentorship into the "Real" world.
8. Take advantage of social media. The best way to get the word out in social media is to share something of interest. Statistics show that more engagement is made on videos and photos. Take photos and videos and post them on Facebook. Make sure you are careful to not post a lot of things that do not appeal to the target audience though. I was showing a friend the Nevada OES FB page and as she sped past the photos of receptions and pretty much all photos that were taken inside a masonic lodge, she did slow down and looked at photos of Shilora and Jann unloading the back of the pickup truck. Post more photos of "real" fun. Not the scripted stuff. Show the relationships in the photos that you post.
9. More on social media...Like, Share, and Comment in that order. If someone posts something that shows the true spirit of the order, Like it. Then click on the Share button and make a Comment of endorsement. There is a saying that every person has a circle of 200. 200 people will come to your wedding and 200 people will come to your funeral. If you see something that you think could benefit the order, Like it, Share it, and with the share Comment your endorsement. Help that posting be seen by your 200 by doing those simple steps.
10. If your Chapter has its own Facebook page, invite prospective members to have a three day trial on your page. You can remove them in three days. They will look to see what the engagement is on the page and if they feel they can bring value to the page themselves. I have seen many fence sitters make a decision and become members when the 3 days is up and you take it away from them. People want what they cannot have. In addition the Chapter members need to use their FB age for real social engagement, it just announcement!

