

There's a logical path to a productive year
in office which utilizes active foresight
in attaining your goals...

Seven Steps To

Success!

by Sir Knight Jay Cole Simser

There are many ways to have a successful year as the head of a Masonic organization. There are about as many definitions of the word *success*. For my purposes I am going to define success as the feeling you get when the year is over and the organization is in some way better off than it was because *you* were at its head.

It doesn't have to be a large change for the better. Perhaps the good you do as head will not be fully realized until time has passed, and there is even the possibility that you will never know all that you have accomplished. But the year will be a success if, when you are done, you have a feeling that you did the best that you could do.

To help you to have that feeling at the end of your term of office, I am going to recommend seven steps. I do not think that they are *all* that is necessary, nor do I think that they are all-inclusive. There are other ways to reach your goals. I just feel that these are good steps to take and recommend them for your consideration.

Step One

Get a sense of the history of the organization. I mean this in two ways: know about its development from the beginning and, second, know about your own local history. A Grand Lodge library can help you with the first part of the assignment. The minute books will help you with the second. Read the minutes. I don't mean that you have to read every word, nor do you have to know everything noted in the minutes, but skim them. Get a sense of where your organization has been and who has been a part of it. You really do need to know some of this before you can plan on where you want to take it during the year. You will also find that the minutes are a rich source of ideas for programs and plans for your year.

Step Two

Give a lot of thought to your officers. Choose the best you can. Don't worry about offending someone by not reappointing him to the same office which he has held from time

immemorial. Change is good. An officer who has held the same position for more than three years may not be growing, and he may not be helping your group to grow. Look for officers you can work with -- someone who will care about the job and will be willing to help you to accomplish what you want to accomplish. He does not necessarily have to be a ritualist; except for the opening and closing, we can use degree teams for our ritual. You are looking for someone who will accomplish a certain task and help you to set and achieve your goals for the year.

Goal No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Activities
						#	Bylaws study and revision
			#				Masonic Fellowship Nights
			#				Hospital Visitor
	#	#		#			Sponsor CPR training in Lodge
					#		Study Club for Ritual
	#						Committee for Refreshment
	#		#				Monthly or Semi Monthly Programs
			#	#			Honor fifty-year members
	#			#			Publish a newsletter
				#			All-Masonic Fun Night
	#		#				Family picnic
				#			Bus trip

Step Three illustrates the ease with which goals can be attained when they are specifically matched to activities.

Step Three

Set your goals with the help of those carefully chosen officers. Do some thinking and then write down what you think the organization should be trying to accomplish. Next, think of several ways that these goals could be accomplished. After you have some possible goals in mind, call a meeting of your officers to discuss these plans. Invite any interested members to the meeting. You may have overlooked someone, and by opening up the meeting to others, an interested member may be found who will be a sparkplug for some of your ideas.

Go over your list of goals and suggest others. Take suggestions from the group. Drop those that do not seem to have support. The main idea is to get the discussion going and allow the ideas to begin to come.

Possible goals could be:

1. Increase membership involvement in the meetings.
2. Perform a community service.
3. Increase fellowship activity.
4. Serve the membership.
5. Fulfill the grand body requests.
6. Increase efficiency of operations.

Next list possible activities for the year and coordinate them with the goals. The activities are to fulfill your goals and some activities will help to fulfill more than one. Keep the discussion open and free. You are doing three things here, as you are stating the goals and proposing a plan of action to accomplish these goals and you are also involving your officers and members and getting them to invest in your goals and plans and make them goals and plans of their own. You will be surprised at what this can accomplish.

Don't be afraid to change these as you discuss them with your officers and members. They are not chiseled in stone and are often not the only goals you can accomplish, nor are they the only ways you can accomplish these goals. The important thing is to have goals and a plan for achieving them and most importantly, to have the help and support of your officers in accomplishing them.

Step Four

Follow through. It all too often happens that the best laid plans go awry. At this point you have been a leader,

Now you must become a pusher. This is the hardest for some people. I have seen many plans for the year laid out which really sound terrific. Then when the year is over and you look back, nothing was done. Why? Because no one got behind the group and pushed. It is not enough that we say we should do this or that. We have to push to see that the job gets done. I don't mean do it yourself. You are trying to get some good done for your group and doing that means involving as many as you can in achieving your goals. Everyone must be pulling together or the organization will not grow nor will there be any long-range good to come from your year. Push – call the members up and remind them that they have a job to do and see that they do it. Hound them until it gets done. Don't do it for them. The need that sense of accomplishment also, and they will feel much better about it if they do it themselves.

Step Five

Praise. When you take a dog to an obedience class, the instructor repeats over and over that you need to “praise your puppies.” I am not implying that the officers are good doggies or that you are a trainer, but praise does work and

“Praise does work and giving a man credit makes him feel good about himself.”

Giving a man credit does more to make him feel good about himself and what he has done than anything else you can do. I will guarantee one thing will happen if you take this step: you will leave office with more friends than you had when you went into office. And believe me, in a Masonic organization that in itself can be a major accomplishment.

Step Six

Along the same lines as the above is an important preventative measure to take.

Avoid the negative. If by chance you get an “againster” in the group, do everything you can to combat his negativity with positive statements. There is nothing that will hurt your organization more than the guy who is always against what the others want to do and who puts everything down. This attitude soon spreads to others and you'll find that nothing gets done. You must constantly be on the alert and work to make it positive.

This is not an easy job either. Turning negatives into positives is something you really have to train yourself to do. When someone says, “No, we can't,” you must reject that thought and say, “Yes, we can,” as loudly as you can, even if that loud shout is only a mental one. Feel good about things instead of bad. Drive out the negative and replace it with the positive. This leads directly to the seventh step.

Step Seven

Generate enthusiasm. Along with fighting negativism and praising and pushing, make everyone feel that what they are doing is fun and let them know that you would really miss them if they weren't there helping. Do this sincerely. These are our Brothers and Companions. Your goals will be accomplished by and through their efforts. You won't be able to do it alone.

The future of your organization can be greatly affected by you and your officers. Make that future a bright one so that at the end of your term of office you can look back with pride and feel that you have really earned the accolade, “Well done, though good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21a KJV)

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