



## **STRATEGIC PLAN – Vision 2020**

Narrative for Grand Lodge Annual Communication – March 19, 2010 - Topeka

---

*“If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.”*

### **[Title Slide] Introduction**

Brothers. This is a short update on your Grand Lodge’s endeavor to provide a strategic plan to the Craft. R.: W.: Bro Kent Needham wrote an article on this subject that appeared in December’s Kansas Mason. In it, he outlined the necessity of planning, the planning steps taken over the past 2 years, and the next steps. The latter is detailed in the Strategic Plan entitled Vision 2020. A brief overview of which I’m providing for you here.

### **[Slide: Vision 2020] 2020 Vision – Strategic End State**

By the year 2020, the Grand Lodge of Kansas will be known by the following outstanding traits:

- First, we’ll see a resurgence of interest in an institution that promotes harmony among men, faith in God, non-government charity, returning to the landmark principles of the country’s founding documents, self-rule through self-discipline, and free thought without fear of retribution, in a national environment that has taken so much of that away.
- Second, we’ll have a Grand Lodge facility in Topeka which is a center of state-wide Masonic support, a showplace to attract prospective members, a media focal-point for positive aspects of Masonry, and an archive of Masonic books and artifacts in a controlled storage environment that our achievements may be known to future generations.
- Third, we’ll be part of a growing 30,000 member institution with a median age well below 60 years of age with 10 new lodges having been formed in high-growth communities throughout the state.
- Fourth, Grand Lodge will be a friend and enabler to all Blue Lodges so that the local lodges are the center piece of community Masonic activities and the core of harmony across all Masonic bodies. If it doesn’t directly benefit the lodge, Grand Lodge should not be doing it.

Not only does this vision have a ten-year horizon, but it is a clear set of goals – a 20-20 vision, so to speak. We’ve all heard the expression that hindsight is 20-20. It is our belief that if we envision the future we want for ourselves, lay down the designs on the trestle board, and superintend the work, we can accomplish by then what we see now: The forward vision is 20-20.

**[Slide: Priority Areas of Concern] Findings of the Strategic Planning Group**

To put us on the correct trajectory toward our vision, Strategic Planning identified **nine** areas that need action:

- The first five areas are **Leadership, Membership, Image, Masonic Experience, and Communication**. These five areas must be addressed immediately as indicated by the short, red bar. The two action lanes that were deemed most urgent and important were **Membership** and **Leadership** and are marked with a yellow star.
- **Philanthropy** is more intermediate in nature, requiring about three years planning and implementing as indicated by the yellow bar.
- The remaining three are **Governance, Financial Stability and Unity and Alignment** will take up to five years to plan, implement and realize results. They are important but can be given a longer planning horizon as indicated by the green bar.

It is the opinion of the Strategic Planning Committee that Leadership will beget Membership, when supported by good communication and a better image of the fraternity. Leadership is the most key element.

That leaves us with four areas that must be addressed now. We have four objectives, one for each area. These objectives are to ensure we're headed in the right direction and at the right speed.

*"You can't manage what you can't measure."*

**[Slide: Strategy] Four Directions of our Strategy**

**Strategic Objective 1 – Leadership**

By the time of the Annual Communication in 2013, each lodge will have a sound strategic plan to guide them toward long-term growth, sound financial footing, capital improvement, fresh faces in positions of leadership, and solid reputation in their communities. Measurements will include having an overarching plan as well as addressing each of the components. The latter will provide insight on what support activities need to be stepped up in the years leading up to 2012 in order to make the overall objective.

**[Slide: Leadership] Leadership**

Leadership is the paramount action. Great corporate leaders require coaching and continued education. If they cannot find it among their peers, they seek experts, teachers, and coaches outside their comfort zone in order to grow. The demands of a lodge Master and the officers in its progressive line are far beyond normal management. Besides the normal planning, budgeting, personnel management, meeting facilitation, and new member programs, the leader must also be a master of the degree work, keeper of the landmarks, presiding officer in all committees, spokesperson for the lodge, fundraiser

extraordinaire, liaison to Grand Lodge, representative to outside organizations and other entities, be well vested in his lodge by-laws and that of the higher authority, keeper of the charter and all matters pertaining thereto, and the list goes on.

Who is well equipped to do that? Not many. And that's the fundamental problem. If we cannot find the well-groomed leader among us, we must make our own. We need leaders and managers who are willing to invest their time in a way that makes the difference many years into the future. Gone are the days when a Master plans only for his year in the East. He must be accountable to the future of the lodge. He must leave a legacy that carries the lodge through five or more years beyond him. It will require that the progressive line work in harmony, each successive Master part of a whole, much larger than himself.

In order to do that, a Master must have acquired the necessary skills and prerequisite experience well before he ascends the third step. He must have planned his year before he dons the Master's hat. And most of all, that plan and its solid execution must fit solidly as a building stone in the future of his lodge. This is where the immediate plans of the Grand Lodge must focus. Grand Lodge must provide the following support to its constituent lodges:

- Develop leadership programs and curricula that will fill the leadership void
- Establish the balance between providing lodges and members with a set of standards to enable their future success while avoiding anything that would stifle the independence and creativity of lodges to find their own way
- And, finally, capture best practices and make these available to other lodges that need them

Developing leaders and holding them to certain standards of ability and accomplishment will not only benefit the lodges, but Grand Lodge and the members themselves in their other endeavors. Imagine the benefit a man with accomplished leadership skills will provide to his church, normal avocations, and his other affiliations. Developing leaders for Masonry is a win-win for both Masonry and the Mason. For Masonry, it increases its reputation as an institution that develops men into master builders. For the Mason, it gives him additional credentials to be able to travel as a Master Mason and earn wages as such, literally and allegorically.

**[Slide: Communication] Strategic Objective 2 –Communication**

In the age of Internet, email, instant messaging, and wireless phones, our communications, particularly the formality of disciplined communications, seems to have gotten worse.

Before the start of the Annual Communication in March 2011, the Grand Lodge will have a comprehensive, coordinated calendar of all district, area, and Grand Lodge events planned for the 2011-2012 year. Schedules will be available via multiple means to reach the entire Craft on demand.

Calendar efforts during the execution year then shift to communicating the events to prospective attendees, honorees, and media. This would also allow for sufficient planning and correspondence. Correspondence would include invitations, programs, letters of instruction and appreciation as a minimum.

**[Slide: Image] Strategic Objective 3 - Image**

By the Annual Communication in 2012, a survey of the non-Masonic population will determine that the both the recognition level and the positive impression when they look at the square and compasses, a Mason wearing an apron, or other common representative mark of a Mason will have improved by targeted amount.

**Image**

Let me say one word about Image. “Toyota” Consider how in just a few week’s time the iconic company, went from the world’s largest and most respected automaker to the butt of a lot of jokes. Their image, carefully guarded and built up was left tattered as quality and safety issues have been made public.

Now consider our brand. Our symbol, the Square and Compasses. It is the most recognizable of our symbols whose display or mention should immediately evoke a positive response about Masonry. The square and compasses are our corporate logo which has been diligently safeguarded over long periods of time, providing positive assurance to all who know and understand its meaning. A Mason is charged to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied.<sup>1</sup> Although the goodwill and positive aspect of the fraternity is a fact, lack of that knowledge being wide spread may be the one reason that lodges are not sought out in the proportions we need to sustain our membership and build our strength. In life’s car lot of so many interests competing for the good men we want, what differentiates us from the next car over? Therefore, there must be an active approach to extending our circle of notoriety and capitalizing on opportunities, such as the recent Dan Brown book release sure to be a movie, to have dialog with a greater portion of society and promote the many positive aspects of Masonry.

Two such recommended approaches are:

- Developing a promotion mantra such as the Friend to Friend used in Pennsylvania a few years back. One recommendation was a program entitled “On the Level” to make us more open to prospective members.
- And starting a marketing/advertising task force to look at this and other possible ways to make it easier to approach desirable men of character and, more importantly, motivate those men to seek us out and make it easy for them to ask us the most difficult question of all, “How do I become a Mason?”

**[Slide: Member Life Cycle (text)] Strategic Objective 4 – Membership Lifecycle / Masonic Experience**

By the time of the Annual Communication in 2011, there will be a comprehensive toolkit in use that has made significant impact on membership attempts and has filled the voids in the Aware/Learn and Self-Actualization portions of the Member Life Cycle. Measurements will include members added by age group, by geographic area, and other measures as appropriate.

**[Slide: Member Life Cycle (chart)] Masonic Experience throughout the Member Life Cycle**

Masonry is very unique in that the primary benefit of membership is totally intangible and even the richest reward recipient can't spend that capital in this world. But to hold a Mason's attendance, we must hold his interest. A Mason changes as he wends his way through life, the lodge, and his other affiliations. The challenges and discoveries he meets today will quickly become mundane unless the lodge meets his needs through the next phase of his Masonic life cycle.

Applying proven business principles to our membership problem, our membership must be viewed as valued, paying customers whom we want to keep happy throughout their "contract" term. Over time, our members pass through various stages of the member life cycle. Failure to deliver what they need from the institution and the lifecycle ends prematurely. Except for death or moving from the state, the rest of the causes for a man to end his Masonic relationship are assumed preventable.

**[Slide: Next Steps] Next Steps**

The first steps in our crisis resolution have begun. First, we have recognized that there is a problem. Our membership and resources are steadily declining to a point that our institution will pose significant challenges over the next ten years. Second, we have evaluated the problem. Immediate, focused, and sustained intervention is required to turn the tide. Anything less than a full-court press is inadequate. Third, we are planning a way to get there. Four objectives have emerged: Grow our own leadership, formalize our communications, enhance our image, and build a comprehensive membership toolkit.

The Next Steps are to:

- **Provide much greater detail to the objectives**, including well defined measures of success and setting year-to-year targets
- **Marshal the resources**, including making the hard decisions what we will put on hold or stop in order to concentrate the majority of our effort toward our strategic aims
- **Rally the brothers to the cause**. We will need to have every Grand Lodge officer and blue lodge officer know and embrace the plan, communicate it to the lodges, and get their buy-in/feedback. If we cannot convince our Craft that this is what we must do, the plan is doomed.

Conversely, getting everyone to pick up the rope and pull in the same direction will most certainly get us to the 2020 Vision.

- **Stick with the plan.** One positive anomaly in the plan is that our incoming Grand Master and all four future Grand Masters in the progressive line are in unison with this plan. That means that the Craft will not have to anticipate a change in Grand Lodge direction with each new Grand Master. There will be a continuity, and most importantly, cohesion, communication and cooperation from year-to-year. A member cannot game the system. Delaying tough but necessary action by waiting out this year's Grand Master will not work and will certainly be counter-productive. We will all know what is at stake and what needs to be done.
- **See it through to Success.** Brothers: There is no legacy if there is no institution. We must win the battle of attrition. We will win the battle of attrition and make the next ten years the best era in Kansas Masonry. You will not want to miss it. Only those who have been in the fray can earn the combat patch and tell of their victory to the generations of Masons to follow.

[Slide: (none) Black]

We know where we want to go. We now have a plan. There are some tough objectives along the way. But we have at least a five year commitment from all the officers in the Grand Lodge progressive line. You'll start to see programs today going forward that link to the plan. We invite you to be part of the solution. Make this plan your own. Communicate it to your lodge. And be an integral part in reaching our vision by 2020.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charge to the Candidate in the Master Mason's degree.