



LODGE SUCCESS TEAM

Preparing for the Hot Seat in 2022

Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better. - Harry S Truman

You are a lucky man if you've been in an officer line for several years, with good leaders serving before you. Hopefully, you have been able to keep notes on the things that worked, those that didn't, how those ahead of you in line dealt with adversity, and what you can incorporate during your year in the East. And, if yours is like most lodges, you have a cadre of Past Masters willing to help you be successful.

You're also a fortunate man if you've taken the time to read and re-read "Planning for the East" from the Michigan Masonic Manual (follow this link and sign into the MichiganMasons.org web page to download a copy: <https://members.michiganmasons.org/media/ut5my5r0/chapter-19-planning-for-the-east.pdf>). Developed and published by the Masonic Service and Education Committee in the early 2000s and updated through several staff and Grand Lodge Officers' efforts, the Michigan Masonic Manual is an extremely valuable tool for every lodge officer. "Planning for the East," Chapter 19, is an absolute read for Deacons and Wardens; most especially the Senior Warden.

While I'll not recap the entire chapter here, I can offer some keys for a successful 2022 – when you may be the one on the **hot seat** as Worshipful Master. Five (5) key actions you can take include the following:

1. **Develop a calendar of activities for the entire year, publish it regularly to your officer team and your lodge members, and keep it updated on a regular basis.** Consider posting it to the private (members only) side of OurLodgePage for your lodge, for easy access by your members. You will naturally start with more details for events planned early-on and fewer for those planned later in the year, but you'll be surprised at the number of nights that will already be committed to mandatory activities or lodge traditions. Examples include 10-12 Regular Communications, degree practices, degrees that may be in queue, Temple Association meetings, an annual memorial service for members, the next installation ceremony, a Mason of the Year dinner and any number of other regular activities. Education and fellowship nights may be important to your lodge members. If your lodge is active in the community, consider a dinner for scholarship recipients, a dinner honoring first responders, a veterans recognition event, or any number of programs outlined in the Lodge Programs section of the MichiganMasons.org website, at: <https://members.michiganmasons.org/members/lodge-programs-folder/>.

2. **Incorporate regular officer meetings as part of your calendar.** Communication with your officer team will be key to the success of your year. Communication supports team building, in-depth planning, and ensures that everyone is on the same page. Officer team meetings also allow you to groom junior officers and contribute to other officers' success.
3. **Plan a budget and ensure that the lodge sticks to it.** If you've not already completed a budget and need some ideas, contact your Lodge Success Team member (Corey Curtiss or Fred Kaiser) and ask for a copy of the Financial Planning Toolkit and Financial Planning Spreadsheet. They'll give you a lot of key questions to ask, a suggested methodology and a format for budget preparation. Don't be shy about asking your Treasurer, Secretary, Worshipful Master, Past Masters and the officers following you for ideas and input. In the end, the budget is yours and once the lodge passes it, the members have committed to supporting your spending plans. Then, be frugal and committed to staying within it in the coming year.
4. **Develop methods of regular communication with lodge members, if you don't have them already, or use those vehicles the lodge has found to be successful in the past.** Officer meetings are one such communication vehicle. A trestleboard - electronic and written -- is another. Planned, regular e-mail blasts to the membership are effective. Your web page, Facebook page, and social media are other key vehicles for communication. Some lodges also supplement with phone trees, robocall systems, and texting applications to keep folks informed of upcoming activities.
5. **Plan not only for your year, but also help those following you to develop plans for theirs.** Any leader quickly finds that he can only begin to implement things during his year in the East, and it will behoove you to enlist the support, participation, and perpetuation of good ideas offered by those who are following you. One of Clint Eastwood's classic lines in the movie *Magnum Force*, was, "A man's got to know his limitations." That includes you – you can't do it all. No one can. Ensuring that those who follow you in the officer line are properly trained, coached and supported can also help ensure that you leave a positive legacy with your lodge.

Please be patient with yourself and others. No matter how carefully you planned for 2022, there will be things you didn't see coming, things no one ever told you about, and for which everyone will expect you have an answer. They didn't mean to bushwhack you. You didn't mean to forget things. But how you react will tell them a lot about your character and whether they should follow you.

One of my favorite quotes is from Maya Angelou, an American poet and civil rights activist. I've found it to be absolutely true: ***"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*** Leave people feeling good about themselves, and your time at the helm.



Want to ensure that your year is a good one? Want to ensure that those who follow you are successful? Want to develop a positive path for your lodge? We'd love to work with your lodge and you to make things happen; to plan for success. It is why we're here. Let's work together. Please contact Corey Curtiss at curtiss@michiganmasons.org or Fred Kaiser at fkaiser@michiganmasons.org. Or give Outreach and Member Care a call at **(800) 321-9357**.