

Grange Success

A Journey of Excellence in Leadership

I. Leadership



Why do People Join the Grange?

Needs:

Start by understanding why people sign their name on the dotted line and join organizations. It doesn't matter if you have membership fees or how much your dues are to most people. For a sizable portion of society it isn't a concern if you have an initiation ceremony. What will matter to everyone is if your group fills their needs.

All people have the same basic needs. Abraham Maslow took this idea and created his famous hierarchy of needs. Following is a simplified version of the needs as they relate to the Grange.

There are different levels of personal needs and as each level is filled, the person looks to fill the need of the next level. These levels

are set up as a pyramid and to reach the top level, you must have all the lower level needs filled.

Level 1: The basic or first level is the physical need for food, shelter, and clothing. Every human must fill this basic need for survival.

We are very fortunate that in America these are relatively easy to fill.

Level 2: The second level is the need for security. People want to feel safe, have an income, protect themselves for the future.

Most people get a job, have a career, and start families to provide for this level. Yet because of life-style choices, many people live paycheck to paycheck and a layoff or job



change can impact them at this level.

Historically, the Grange has often provided material benefits that filled this need and as a result has experienced great growth at those times. Co-ops that provided supplies or marketed members crops, insurance companies that protected Grange members, and Credit Unions that give financial opportunities are just a few of the ways that the Grange helps to fill the need for security.

Look to current benefits as tools to both recruit and retain Grange members. Be alert for new benefits that will benefit both the membership and the Grange.

If level 2 is threatened, the member may cease participating or drop out unless the Grange can offer reassurance and assistance to them during their time of stress.

Level 3: The third level is the need to be social. Belonging to a group that is accepting of you is important to everyone. Being a part of a group is critical to a healthy lifestyle.

This level is where many people will join the Grange. While some may use their career as their primary social outlet, most people desire to have a “life” outside their job. If the Grange can meet their needs at this point, they are far more likely to join.

Does the Grange welcome new people and make them feel at home? Do members go out of their way to explain the Grange and to let new members know that they are now part of the “family”? Is fun and fellowship a major part of the Grange?

How the Grange fills the need to be social is crucial to long-term success.

Level 4: The fourth level is the need for approval. People need recognition, a sense of achievement or of status. Gaining the re-

spect of your peers for your achievements or effort is significant for most people. The knowledge that you are making a valuable contribution to an individual, the Grange, or the community makes life much more special.

People often join or continue their membership because they see this need being filled by the Grange. They may also develop into the leaders of the group at this level as they search for approval.

Do your members thank those who help get the job done? Are the officers congratulated on jobs well done? Each Granger should remember to thank publicly those who give of their time and efforts to build the organization. However, it is often inadvisable to give recognition to those not contributing as then respect for the achievement is downgraded to the lowest level given.

Level 5: The fifth level is the need to be beneficent. This is where people have developed the confidence to be selfless in their actions. They don't need rewards or recognition in order to give purpose to their lives as they believe that their actions reflect their life.

They often feel a debt to others that they can not repay directly and choose to add value to the Grange in order to repay that debt.

These people often develop into the Grange's great leaders. Having achieved success in their own lives, they seek to share their experiences with others. They often give far more than anyone ever expects to ensure the success of the organization. They are normally mentors of other members.

Conclusion: The more needs your Grange can fill, the more reasons a person has to become a member.

If your Grange is failing to fill the different needs of your members, it is time to evaluate your programs and activities.

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Purpose:

People often join the Grange for specific purposes. While some will join just because they are asked, most will want to know, “What’s in it for me?”

These purposes are part of their needs and will vary depending upon interests. The following interests are grouped in two areas, (1) Family and (2) Community.

1. Family

The family group includes all the reasons that a person and their family may benefit from Grange membership.

Material Benefits: The National Grange offers several benefits, ranging from cancer and long-term care insurance coverages to internet access and long-distance telephone savings.

Many State Granges offer a wide variety of benefit packages ranging from insurance to credit unions to purchasing groups.

Some Pomona or community Granges offer important benefits to their members in the form of discounts on products and services.

The Grange offers many personal benefits to its members. They include, but are not limited to the following.

Education: The Grange is an educational opportunity. We teach leadership skills to our members through practical experience. These skills are transferable to your career and other interests that you have.

Speaking opportunities are abundant and even those who dread public speaking are encouraged to share their opinions within the Grange family in a safe and friendly atmosphere.

You learn how to create action in a meeting by working with your fellow Grange members. Making motions or writing formal resolutions are taught by regular usage to every member interested.

You have the opportunity to hold office or committee positions at your community Grange, your Pomona (county or district) Grange, or even in your State Grange. Each office has specific duties that aid you in growing personally. As with everything in life, what you put into an opportunity will be reflected in what you get out of it.

Fellowship: The Grange membership is an extended family. As a Grange member you will meet many new friends and you will be treated as family by them.

Many young members act as if they have 6, 10, or more sets of grandparents because of the interest shown in them by the older members. Many older members feel that they have many children and grandchildren because of the relationships formed in the Grange. Parents often rely on fellow Grange members for emergency help when their family members live outside their community.

Members often come to the rescue of Granges having trouble. A car problem in an unknown town is not a terrible thing when

you can call upon a Grange member who lives there for help.

Many Granges are noted for their potlucks and dinners where they share good food and fellowship on a regular basis. For many seniors these meals represent a varied and balanced meal with their extended family.

Fun: There are many opportunities for fun activities in every Grange.

Each Grange meeting has a short Lecturer's program which often features music, educational materials, physical or mental games, and inspirational items. Members are encouraged to share their talents during these programs.

Some Granges have regular events, such as bowling, softball, darts, or camp outs. Sharing your interests with your fellow members are a great way of starting a new fun activity.

Many Granges have regular events such as get-togethers, holiday celebrations, and parties for the benefit of their members and the community. They may also have activities such as ritualistic teams or other Grange related activities that bring the members together in fun and fellowship.

Many Granges also offer contests such as art, photography, or talent for the enjoyment of their members. These contests also further develop the members skill in these areas.

2. Community

*“The Grange Provides the Opportunity,
The People Provide the Leadership,
The Community Reaps the Benefit”*

There are two major benefits to the community. They are through community service and legislative action. Each allow a member to better the place they live by working with like-minded people.

Community service has two parts, education and service projects. Legislative action takes place locally, statewide, and nationally.

Educational Community Service: Service to the Community is often done through education projects.

Granges can hold education opportunities for their communities. The type of event can be varied but will give important knowledge to people locally.

Home activities such as food preservation, and sewing or handicrafts are traditional educational projects.

Other opportunities may include car care, driver safety courses for seniors, first aid/CPR, nutrition for diabetics, or child care.

Community Service Projects: The projects that Granges take on range from small one day projects to massive multi-organizational endeavors.

Community Granges perform a wide-variety of different types of community service. If you can imagine it, there is probably a Grange doing it somewhere in the nation. Granges fill the needs in their community.

Legislative Action: The Grange is a non-partisan organization. This means that while we do not take a position on candidates for office, we do take positions on the issues. As a grass-roots organization, Grange policy is set by the local members and works its way up to the higher levels.

The Grange reacts to actions taken by city councils, state legislative bodies, and Congress. In addition, the Grange also proposes needed changes to these elected bodies for their consideration.

The Grange also works on initiatives and referendums in states that use these grass-roots legislative tools.