

Creating Appeal for Your Grange



Steps you can take
to improve your
appeal and get new
members



Produced by the
National Action Grange Advisory Committee
June 2002



Creating Appeal

Appeal! Now there's an interesting word. Webster defines appeal as a noun meaning having interest, desire, and demand. As a verb, it means petition or application. No wonder we consider this word so important to the future of our Granges.

Leaders are responsible for creating appeal. This means they are responsible for creating demand. Creating demand is the definition of marketing. So let's see: If creating appeal is the same as creating demand, and creating demand is the classic definition of marketing, then we must be talking about marketing or promoting your Grange.

Waaa-laaa! You got it. That's what leaders do!

So, we can learn a lot about creating appeal if we can remember some of the ideas we may have learned in Marketing 101. Indeed, this knowledge is vital and this is where we are going to start.

A fundamental concept

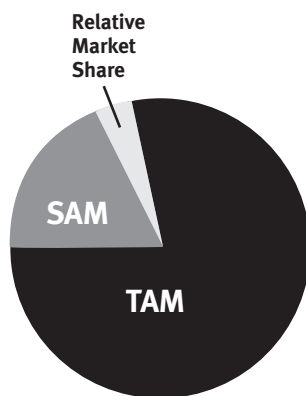
We cannot even begin to think about marketing or promoting our Grange, about creating interest or appeal, about seeking new members until we first understand the fundamentals of promotion and demand.

1. You must be able to tell your members (customers) concrete benefits of your organization in terms the customer (in the market) needs and understands
2. Your Grange "products" need to be loaded with value if you expect customers to give you their money or their time (see May Help Guide on the Value Proposition)
3. You must make it easy and uncomplicated to own (purchase) your product
4. Your product offering must be at least as good as the nearest significant competitor (which may not be another organization and could be television or TIME)
5. Your marketing message needs to show how Grange fits into the meaning of their lives
6. You need to be able to handle their objections of "no time"
7. You need to reinforce their joining decision by providing ongoing customer service
8. You can advertise and promote, but a one-on-one approach may be more fruitful
9. Your price is not too high; your value may be too low
10. Not everyone in your total market will want or use your "product"

Don't get angry!

Some Grangers get angry or upset when we speak about products and customers, markets and demand. Please don't. We're using everyday words from a very well understood discipline (marketing) and we hope you will give it a try.

Remember, too, your total available market (TAM) may be everyone who lives in your area. Your served available market (SAM) will include only those who might ever join your Grange or any similar organization. Typically, across the US, only about 24% of all people have any interest in joining any organization! Your market share is how you compare to your top 3 "competitors."



More on the fundamentals

Promoting your Grange by appealing to your potential customers may not be rocket science, but it's not a "slam dunk" either. Here's another way of looking at the situation you may be facing.

You can attract people to an organization like the Grange, if there is a solution in your Grange for a need your potential member has. No one ever joined anything just for the heck of it, and, because people are all different, they may each have different needs. Your Grange needs to be a solution to one of their un-met needs.

This does not need to be as much a hit and miss game as you might think. We know for example, thanks to market research, that the 24% of the population who are interested in joining have a lot of needs in common.



- Nearly all of them want to meet, make, or have fun with friends
- Almost everyone in this market wants to enjoy the fellowship of being with neighbors and friends
- All want to be involved with their family to a greater degree than they are today.
- A significant majority want to be proud of their organization in the community they serve
- In addition, all are looking for organizations that are attractive, well led, and do not waste time

Advertising may not pay off

Lots of Grangers are hopeful that by advertising their Grange and the good work that they are doing, they can attract new members. This type of mass marketing, while exciting, costs a lot of money and most of your purchase goes to inform the 75% of the potential market who said they would never join.

If you put a billboard up beside a popular highway, you may increase the awareness of the market about your Grange, but you will do so in the context of "wasting" \$0.75 out of each \$1 you spend on those not interested.

"Sales" methods can vary

You may find that any of the following may be more productive than advertising. Discuss the advantage and disadvantages of each with your team.

- Direct mail –Mail to a special list of likely candidates
- Direct appeal—Phone or visit people you know who might join
- Open house or friend's night—special events planned to attract non-members to your Grange
- Staffed display booth at state or county fair

An appeal audit

Before you actually begin your marketing effort, you want to make sure that your Grange is READY to accept new members. Let's try defining the current level of appeal for your organization by doing an audit of your Grange. An audit is not always about numbers like it is in accounting. We are going to ask you to do an analysis of your Grange using this seven-step appeal audit. It's subjective, but if you score high enough, you are probably well on your way. If you do not, then this may help show you where you need to focus your energy.

The objective: To determine the appeal of your Grange in six key result areas. Do your analysis with your Audit Team and then look at the next page.

Category

Readiness or Achievement 5= very high 1 = very low

Exterior building and grounds

To what degree have you made an effort to keep your Grange hall in good repair, well lit and pleasing to look at? Do you have adequate parking, clear signage and the day and time of open meetings posted?

Interior, furnishings, kitchen and accessories

To what degree is the interior of the hall and the rooms in the hall well maintained, clean, attractive, and decorated in good taste so that it is pleasing to new members and their families when they first visit your Grange?

New member programs

Does your Grange have at least three programs directed at making new members feel welcomed, feel at home and comfortable with their new organization? Is there a greeters' program and an effort to help people make new friends?

New member communications

Does your Grange prepare and distribute specific communications to new members and their families to make sure they feel welcome and part of your Grange? Are your membership records on the computer for easy access?

Grange programs

To what extent does your Grange have programs for new members that will please them and reinforce the decisions they made to join? How do you determine the scope of these programs to make sure they are right?

Time management

How do you measure the amount of time you use or waste? Members join hoping for an efficient, organized and well-led organization. How do you view the quality of these three factors especially the quality of "well led"?

Assessing your results

Chances are that your scores were not consistently high or low. Most Granges have a mixed level of readiness when it comes to appeal. Therefore, the next step is to DO something with what you KNOW about your Grange. Too many organizations KNOW what they should do but fail to create the actions that are necessary.

Typically, you can make real progress if you break the important goals down into actions or achievable tasks. For example, if your Grange lacks “curb appeal” you can fix that problem with a team of members, each assigned limited but specific tasks. Like the maintenance of the grounds, painting, trimming and... well, you get the idea. Now take each of your findings from your audit on the last page and outline the actions you plan to take to meet your goal. Be as specific as you can. Include both the tasks and the start/finish date and who is responsible for seeing that the work gets done.

<i>Audit Area</i>	<i>Actions to be taken</i>	<i>Start/Finish Responsibility</i>
-------------------	----------------------------	------------------------------------

Exterior building and grounds

Interior, furnishings, kitchen
and accessories

New member programs

New member communications

Grange programs

Time management



***Bowling Alone* has some of the answers**

Robert Putnam, in his outstanding book *Bowling Alone* deals with the changing nature of American society. He explains the changes in joining behavior among Americans and suggests what we can do with what he has discovered. You may want to borrow this book from your library and read the sections you feel are most interesting. Here are some of his key ideas.

No two ways about it, more and more Americans are non-joiners. Those born to parents who grew up in the 60's are the very worst joiners, but nowhere is the news about joining good.

Putnam claims that those men and women who were adults at the time of Pearl Harbor were the last great generation of joiners. In fact, they joined organizations, met with neighbors and have continued these memberships and friendships to this day. But they failed to pass this joining behavior on to their children. In addition, their children, now in their 60's, failed to pass it on to their children who are at the perfect age to become members.

Therefore, we have had two generations of non-joiners and there is little hope for change in this fundamental behavior—despite the potential that arose out of 9/11.

What does Putnam say about making new members that can be applied to our Granges to make them more appealing, and what can we do with what we learn?

- Americans have lost the satisfaction that comes from neighborly relationships and visiting with friends and family. We are a stay-at-home nation and becoming more so all the time. Putnam calls this the loss of “social capital.”
- Americans watch far too much TV even when the quality of programming is generally terrible. To a large segment of the population, even bad TV is better than “going out.”
- Communities that begin to stress neighborly behavior—visiting, socializing, and meeting with friends (as in a Grange) gain many advantages over communities that do not emphasize this neighborliness. They add to their social capital.
- Communities that stress the importance of neighbor-to-neighbor relationships have the highest social capital and have the lowest rate of crime, delinquency, teenage-pregnancy and other undesirable characteristics.
- Adults connecting with their children and their friends through the school represents the single greatest opportunity for increasing social capital and the Grange can make a real difference in this area.

Try This

Meet with your leadership team and discuss the following three questions. Record your responses here and on other sheets if you need to.

1. How can we use our Grange's location and our meeting facility to our greatest advantage to improve the people-to-people connections in our town or community?
2. Around what topics or subjects might we get the community to join in a discussion sponsored by our Grange and what means could we use to appeal to our neighbors?
3. Each member has friends that are part of his or her “circle of influence” that are not in Grange. How can you include them in your communication and ask for their support of your Grange?



The Case of the wanna-be-members

Here is a short case study similar to one Grangers considered during the Action Grange Seminars. Grangers have found this case realistic because while there are ways to appeal to this family, it is also not a sure thing that they will join and is typical of many new-member situations. Study the case and then see if you can determine how you might attract this family to your Grange. Study the list we have provided on the next page for ideas.



The Case of the New Guys in Town

Todd and Melissa and their two children moved into Rollins (a town near your Grange), in September of last year. Todd works his small orchard and serves part time on the State Commission on Land Use and Irrigation. Melissa has a part time job in the local day care center but tries to be home when their two children, 12 and 14, are not in school.

They own 80 acres in the valley by the river and have spent a tough winter restoring their home and fixing the place up after years of neglect. Neither has had time to make many new friends because they are so busy.

Todd, 41 and Melissa, 39 moved here after her parents died. The kids have adapted pretty well to school although they both miss their friends and it's tough to get to meet people because Rollins is 12 miles away and they have to be driven everywhere to be with friends.

Todd and Melissa have never joined much of anything since they were married. They felt they had so little time and what time they did have they liked to spend with the kids and each other. Besides, they felt most organizations were for older people and there was plenty of time for that later on. Todd joined a fraternity in college but had found the results unsatisfying especially when he did not live on campus and was really not connected to the other guys.

He had his hobbies, which included fishing and hunting, and he had recently become hooked on the computer after his kids showed him how it can be used. Melissa was not much of a joiner either. The fact of the matter is, they seem to be real homebodies and that was just that!

Both had met other couples through their orchard association and the Extension Service tried to get them involved. Still, both realized that they could become almost hermits living on the farm, watching TV in the evening and working all the time. In addition, they had to consider the kids. Chances were the children would not follow their parents into the apple business and that could be a problem for them as they grew older and were not able to do the work the farm required.

Questions for your leadership team to consider.

1. Why do you feel this family should be a part of your Grange? Are there reasons why they should not?
2. What specific benefits could your Grange offer if this family was in your community?
3. What might be the best way to approach this family? What methods do you feel would not work?
4. What objections would you have to overcome when you approached them?
5. Which member(s) of the family seem to have the most potential for joining?
6. Identify the specific benefits each member of the family might receive as a member of your Grange and what each might offer your Grange as a new member?

Finding New Members

Here are 25 sources for new members. Most of which do not happen successfully without some effort. Work with your team to develop another 15 from your good experiences.

1. Develop a Friend-to-Friend program using each existing member to recruit one friend
2. Host a membership booth at your State Fair and staff it with good people and materials
3. Sponsor an important community events day and include recruiting as part of the program
4. Align with a non-competing community organization and “purchase” their list of members
5. Host a new member day special event in your community
6. Set up a week for displaying information about the Grange in your local library
7. Develop a direct mail letter campaign using a selected community list. Mail at least four times to this list
8. Sponsor and host three consecutive evening or daylong events at your Grange that include a membership drive
9. Sponsor a membership contest among the younger members of your Grange to attract their friends (and parents)
10. Establish an information booth at a large agricultural, nursery or related establishment with information about the Grange
11. Host a Friends Night in your Grange and ask members to each bring two friends
12. Ask to have an insert about your Grange included in a mailing or local magazine or newsletter
13. Work with a local agricultural supplier or agent and make sure he/she has information about the Grange and is willing to extend an invitation to customers
14. Work with a local high school extension or agricultural teacher to refer students to Grange or to enter Grange contests
15. Put every name you can locate from any event or occasion into a database and prepare monthly mailings to each for 6 months
16. Develop an “informational” newsletter or communication from your Grange and mail it to selected non-members you can identify in your location. Note who attends
17. Take the lead on local issues in your location and use your Grange hall or meeting location as a forum for community meetings or discussion. Note who attends
18. Plan and host a new member day at your state or county fair with the goal of adding new members on site. Begin their education as Grangers after the event.
19. Sponsor a community spelling “bee” in your Grange in cooperation with the local school
20. Develop a display about the Grange in your local school. Include how the Grange can be attractive to young people and adults and indicate how to join and whom to contact.
21. Partner with FFA or 4-H to sponsor a community event
22. Arrange for a display in your local school to identify the Grange program for young people and show them how to join
23. Ask potential new members from your church to consider joining your Grange
24. Sponsor a community dance or other social event and make sure there is a display that indicates how people can join
25. Assign each of your members a new-member goal and host a special night in which all of these members and their friends come to your Grange for an informational meeting

Good luck and good marketing!

