

**From:** John Loayza  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2020 11:18  
**To:** Belleville Masonic Lodge; John Loayza  
**Subject:** Loayza/Some Preliminary Questions and Ideas

Dear VEDGC Smith:

1-Although it's past time to revitalize Illinois Templary, are all your Grand Commandery Officers, especially those going up the line from the Wardens through the dais officers and the divisional commanders totally committed to your plans, and are they willing to accept a 5 year Commandery Business Plan with reasonable goals and procedures to implement them? If so, great, but if not, then all your good work and intentions could be destroyed. As a retired military officer you definitely know that to win a battle or war, everyone needs to be working as a cohesive unit. Tweaking a plan along the way to ensure success.

The divisional commanders need to be seen more often, and not just at an inspection. This problem exists in lodge, chapter, council, and commandery. Example, when I was a DDGHP, I visited every chapter in my district once a month and wrote a monthly good business practices email to each chapter. Communications and visitations are a key element to influence success. Of course, it's up to the local group whether or not to implement the ideas. Nevertheless, we generally don't see our DDGMs, DGHPs, Grand Inspectors, Divisional Commanders or Educational Officers on a regular basis nor do they communicate on a regular basis.

2-Since each step in the York Rite builds upon the previous steps, Templary needs to build upon each previous step. Of course, the most direct steps for Templary concern Capitular and Blue Lodge Masonry. Through the years, we have seen each group take the others for granted, yet, many of our commanderies really don't try to educate Companions and Brethren about the importance of the teachings of Templary. Although I don't mean to leave Cryptic Masonry out, it has been the weakest link within the York Rite for decades, and will probably take even more time to coordinate its activities with the rest of the York Rite. Somehow we need to bring in an educational process throughout our entire Masonic system, and have a parallel program developed within each group. Nevertheless, we are also dealing with a mindset that every group fears that the others will take away their members. This is not necessarily true in all cases, if we provide the proper guidance, and especially if we try to avoid officers trying to do similar parts in two, three or four groups at the same time because it causes burn out.

3-Believe that we all need to understand that membership depends on a good marketing program throughout Freemasonry, and doing noteworthy activities within our communities that can be publicised through the local media. However, everything fails if we don't provide good value to our members, and most Masonic Bodies don't know their members because they don't successfully communicate with them. I.E., our groups don't do periodic surveys to learn what current or potential members are looking for nor even consider if we are providing good values and pride in our Masonic Bodies. Furthermore, neither do our groups keep members updated on what's happening within the local body or around the state.

4-Doubt that many commanderies even have a local educational program about the history of Templary, the expansion of the ancient knights, what they learned from their activities and

cultures of other countries, know that the Knights Templars were responsible for modern banking techniques for travelers through the use of Letters of Credit. They don't know much about how the Templars went to Spain, Portugal, England, Scotland and defended those kingdoms from extremist conquerors, and even became part of Freemasonry. They don't even know about the good relationships that were developed between the Illinois Knights of Columbus and the Knights Templars, as well as Freemasonry in general when Cardinal Cody was in charge of the Chicago Archdiocese.

5-During the past few years, we have seen programs for Masonic and Shrine Pride by wearing caps and shirts. Some of our members participate in cancer walks or marathons, and local or international food drives where some of those items could be worn (after the Pandemic Issues cease) or at community events. Pictures should be taken and media news releases made as part of the marketing/public relations activities. If we want a good public image for all of Freemasonry and an uptick in membership, then we have to participate in good public events. I.E., we have to invest in ourselves and become innovative, because we don't see crowds beating a path to our doors and saying I want to join lodge, chapter, council or commandery.

I think this is all for now and will step off my Business 101 soapbox, and will contribute more later.

Have a good day,

John  
John Loayzza, EPC