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Your Lodge's Online Presence

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER OF ROSE CROIX ORATION

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I decided to talk about something I know a little bit about and how it may relate or help our Lodges. I work in marketing as a Creative Technologist. Basically, it's my job to make things on the internet look appealing. To make you want to click. To make you want to buy.

In November of 1992, CERN launched this first [website](#) on the World Wide Web. The internet, and websites, have come a long way since in terms of content and design.

Does your Lodge have a website? Is it updated? How often? And with what content? Is it responsive? I don't mean the "ourlodgepage.com" pages that the Grand Lodge provides. I mean its own personal website that your Lodge maintains. The GL directory is a good tool to have but it only states your address, phone number and dates you meet. It doesn't tell a story. We all know every Lodge has its own soul, and that's what we want to show.

I did a quick search of a handful of local Denver Lodge websites. I found some that weren't responsive, some URLs that didn't work, some that looked outdated and some that hadn't been updated in two years.

Among other factors, updating your website increases your search rankings. I did a Google search for the keywords "Denver Freemasonry". The Denver Consistory was number 1. Denver Lodge No.5 was the second. Then you have a bunch of random news articles about conspiracies and the Denver Airport. The next Lodges don't show up until the second page of results. We can do better than that.

It's not just Freemasonry. Many organizations see a website simply as a box to check, like getting business cards. But your website should clearly explain your goals to potential prospects and members, have information about upcoming events, help generate followers on your social media accounts, and most importantly, if it tells a story that touches your visitors, it becomes a powerful recruiting tool, 24hrs a day for as little as 5 bucks per month.

Is your website mobile responsive? Does it look good on a phone? Do you have to pinch and zoom to read text? Is it cumbersome to navigate?

A recent survey found that millennials have little patience for sites that are not mobile-friendly, missing information, and the inability to find the information they want quickly and easily. This means your key demographic is walking away before they even know where to knock.

Does your Lodge have a Facebook page? What about Instagram? I found very few Lodges had Instagram accounts. Facebook is great and boomers are the fastest growing demographic on Facebook. But the majority of Instagram users are under 30, that key demographic we want to grow. Instagram is free and easy to set up. It's

even owned by Facebook so you can link the two accounts for your Lodge and post once in Instagram and its automatically posted on your Facebook page.

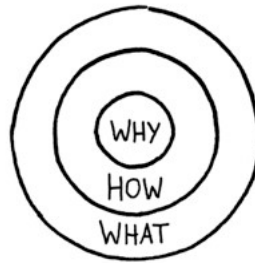
Freemasonry has long competed with technology for people's time. Television, then the internet and social media lure men to stay home rather than go out and socialize. Ironically, the things that we are competing against, we need to use to lure them back. Gone are the days of Masonic events posted in the newspaper or at the local post office. For better or worse, this is how society communicates. Our online presence is more important now than ever.

And now, coming out of quarantine, is the perfect time for us. These men have been locked indoors. They've had over a year of binge-watching Netflix, YouTube videos, political arguments on Facebook and now they are coming out. Out of the dark looking for more. More interactions. Connections. Fraternity. People are seeking more experiences. Last month restaurant sales surpassed grocery sales for the first time in one year.

So, we understand that the internet is the medium to communicate, but what's the message.

Apple released [this commercial](#), directed by Ridley Scott, in January of 1984. Notice there isn't a single product image, or even an explanation of what the product is, but you get a visceral feeling. You're excited know what's coming. You want to join.

The Golden Circle



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Simon Sinek is an internationally known speaker on business and leadership topics. He noticed that when average organizations communicate who they are, they start with what they do or make. (i.e. the products and services they provide) Then, how they do it and what sets them apart from their competitors. But almost no one knows WHY they do it. It's not the money/profits... that's a result. But what's the purpose or belief. What's the reason the organization exists. He found a connection between some of the world's most forward-thinking organizations, Apple among them. They always start with the "WHY."

If Apple did it like everyone else their message would be: *We make great computers. We make our products beautifully designed, simple to use, and user friendly.*

Want to buy one? Probably not.

In Freemasonry, we make our members wiser and better. We accomplish this by a means of a series of moral instructions, taught by types, symbols and allegorical figures.

Want to join? Meh.

Instead, Apple says: *In everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently. We make our products beautifully designed, simple to use, and user friendly. We make great computers.*

Want to buy one? That's *sounds* different. That *feels* different. Loyalty is a feeling.

So, what's our "Why"? I asked some brothers and a lot say charity, but I'd argue against that. Years ago, when our Deputy of the Supreme Council in Colorado, Karl Hinkle, was Grand Master of Mason in Colorado, I heard him give a talk. Something he said struck me and stuck with me ever since. I'll paraphrase here. The charity, scholarship money, volunteering. That's not who we are. That's not what we're about. Those are by-products of the men we are creating in the Lodge.

A by-product of the "Why." So then what is our "Why"? That's what we need to find and that is what we need to lead with as our single most important message to people.

The Northern Jurisdiction recently put out a new campaign titled "Not Just a Man, a Mason" and they created a [video](#) that does a spectacular job tapping into that visceral feeling. Watching it makes you want to join, to be a part of, to be more than just a Man. I spoke with them and they said that anyone is free to use it on their websites and social media as long as its used to promote Masonry. I encourage you to do so.

Denver Lodge No. 5 will be hosting *Masonica* on August 28th. We will have a series of lectures and workshops. I will be leading one titled *Your Lodge's Online Presence: How to Make Your Website More Impactful and Leverage Social Media* for any Masons that wish to discuss the topic further.