

BROTHERHOOD CONVERSION

What is Brotherhood Membership?

Becoming a Brotherhood member marks the completion of the induction into the Order of the Arrow. It signifies an Ordeal member's desire to become more involved in the Order by their commitment of future service to their lodge, while continuing to serve their unit.

Brotherhood members do not enjoy any special privileges that are not open to Ordeal members, other than being able to attend Brotherhood ceremonies. However, Brotherhood members do have additional responsibilities and obligations: service to the Order of the Arrow in addition to continuing service to his unit.

What is Brotherhood Conversion?

The term "Brotherhood Conversion" refers to the process of Ordeal members becoming Brotherhood members - it is often referred to as a percentage.

Why is Brotherhood Conversion important?

Studies and statistics show that Arrowmen who become Brotherhood members are more inclined to stay active in the Order of the Arrow. While an Ordeal Arrowman's sole responsibility is to his unit, there is an undeniable fact that if your lodge is to be effective, it requires the commitment of members to fulfill the lodge's mission and the Order's purpose. Those that obtain Brotherhood membership are likely to be active in chapters and lodges, providing the leadership and manpower required to operate effectively.

Remember! Each lodge must manage and control its own Brotherhood Conversion process. Arrowmen cannot meet the Challenges of Brotherhood membership or become Brotherhood members outside of their home lodge.

2019 JTE Brotherhood Conversion Metrics

Bronze - 29%
Silver 36%
Gold - 43%.

Methods for Improving Brotherhood Conversion

- **Mentoring:** Ordeal members rarely decide for themselves that they want to become Brotherhood members. It often takes the encouragement of another.
- **Opportunities for Ceremonies:** Your lodge should provide a Brotherhood ceremony opportunity at every lodge, district and council event as well as each week at summer camp. Frequency of opportunity has proven to make a difference.
- **Guide to Inductions:** The Order of the Arrow Guide to Inductions offers valuable information regarding Brotherhood including Stages in the Journey to Brotherhood, The Brotherhood Induction, Elements of a Good Brotherhood Program and the Brotherhood Hike.
- **Accurate Records:** Update your lodge records every year, making sure to keep "non-dues paid" members separate or eliminated from your member database. Accurate records allow a lodge to target Ordeal members upon their eligibility. Remember that each lodge must manage and control its own Brotherhood Conversion process.
- **Remove Barriers:** Try to eliminate barriers that might prevent an Arrowman from achieving Brotherhood. The Brotherhood ceremony must be accessible and available - keep in mind brothers with special needs and an Arrowman's religious obligations (e.g. weekend travel). Also keep in mind distance to the ceremony. Remember that the lodge cannot make changes to the Challenges of Brotherhood membership either by adding or removing requirements!
- **Cost of Sash:** A common barrier to some Arrowman is the cost of the sash. A lodge can create a "Brotherhood Scholarship" either in the lodge budget or through donations. A lodge could also consider paying for the cost of the Brotherhood sash.
- **Chapter/Lodge Recognition:** Recognize new Brotherhood members at all opportunities: lodge events; in lodge publications; in district/council newsletters; present certificates at the annual lodge banquet.
- **Letters to Ordeal Members:** A personalized letter from the lodge chief mailed to eligible members, extending an invitation to begin their journey to Brotherhood is an effective reminder to Ordeal members.
- **Phone Calls/Email to Members:** Emphasize constant contact and communication to your membership, inviting Ordeal members to a lodge or chapter event where they can obtain their Brotherhood.
- **Articles in Newsletter:** Within each lodge newsletter, recognize new Brotherhood members and promote future opportunities where members can obtain Brotherhood.
- **Brotherhood Class/Training Session at Lodge Events:** At every lodge event, provide a fun and energetic discussion where Brotherhood members can work with new members and help them with the Challenges of Brotherhood Membership.
- **'Challenge' vs. 'Test':** Ensure the use of correct terminology. The term 'Brotherhood Test' is incorrect and can be intimidating to some. Ordeal members should not feel pressure and have to 'cram' to understand aspects of Brotherhood membership.
- **Brotherhood Chairman (under Vice Chief of Inductions):** Create a position that strictly focuses on developing lodge programs centered on helping members obtain Brotherhood membership. This can increase your lodge's conversion rate as well as boost participation at chapter and lodge functions.
- **Troop/Team Representative:** Utilize these representatives to reach more Ordeal members and help personalize the promotion for them to obtain Brotherhood. Recognize Troop/Team representatives who play an active part in encouraging members from their unit to become Brotherhood members.
- **JumpStart Program:** A great web-based program that will help answer new members' questions and guide them along the journey to Brotherhood (<http://www.jumpstart.oa-bsa.org/>).
- **Brotherhood Challenge Worksheet:** A Brotherhood Challenge Worksheet is a one-page handout that some lodges distribute to their new Ordeal members. It outlines when the Ordeal member is eligible for Brotherhood membership and discusses the Challenges of Brotherhood Membership.
- **Lodge/Chapter Incentive:** Provide incentives if the lodge or chapter reaches its conversion goal. Some ideas include a free, low cost, or discounted fellowship, a pizza party, special t-shirt, etc.
- **Lodge Image:** Image and first impressions are important to a new member. People want to be part of an organization that welcomes them and has a good image. Have prepared unit election teams and impressive ceremonies.
- **Pre-Ordeal meeting with candidates:** Hold a meeting with candidates prior to the Ordeal to discuss the Induction process and to clarify any concerns of the candidates or their parents/leaders. This will help to establish the mindset that the Ordeal Ceremony isn't the end of the induction process.