

The Ring Quality Program

The Ring Quality Program (RQP) was introduced by the I.B.M. Board of Trustees in 1994 with the aim of:

“Providing Rings with a useful means of reviewing their operation and setting goals for development.”

If you feel your Ring can benefit from a good look at how it operates, this program is worth considering. Ideas from many of our most successful Rings and the wisdom of present and past Ring Officers have been drawn on to produce a checklist of “elements” which have been agreed by the I.B.M. Board of Trustees as good indicators of a Ring’s successful operation. These elements have been reviewed and updated to maintain currency.

Discuss the “Elements Which Indicate a Well Run Ring” and the items shown on the Checklist with your Ring Officers and Ring members. They make a useful focus for debate. As with any program of this type you may disagree with some of the selections and question why others have been omitted. If you go no further than this it will still be a very useful exercise in finding out what your members feel is important in running the Ring. You will get the most out of this program if you complete the Checklist as a means of comparison between the way your Ring operates and the operation of a number of successful Rings. This will likely show variations that may be helpful in improving your own operation.

The RQP gives you the tools you need to improve the operation of your Ring.

Ron Bell developed the Ring Quality Program and has maintained its currency by updating the “elements” and “checklist” to reflect changes in communications technology, management styles and I.B.M. philosophy.

ELEMENTS WHICH INDICATE A WELL RUN RING

Definition of a Well Run Ring

“A Ring where pride of membership is evident, where a majority of members attend Ring meetings, participate enthusiastically in Ring activities and unselfishly give their time and talent to the Ring’s effective operation.”

There will be as many definitions as people you talk with on the subject of what makes a Ring successful but most will convey similar expectations so this definition can provide a reasonable starting point for developing a list of elements indicative of a “Well Run Ring.”

Elements Indicative of a Well Run Ring

The following elements were developed with the above definition in mind. Rings are encouraged to use them as a checklist against which to compare their own operation.

They are grouped generically for ease of use and not in order of importance. Where appropriate a rationale is given for an element and some have additional details which might be useful for Rings wishing to introduce changes to their way of operating.

Ring Policy and Rules

The Ring has its own Bylaws and Standing Rules based on those of the I.B.M. but reflecting the laws applying in the State, Province or Country and the specific needs of the local group. This document is of high value in providing a broad set of guidelines for the operation of the Ring.

The Ring maintains a document such as a Policy and Programs Manual which contains specific policy applying to the routine operation of the Ring and gives details on the actions necessary to plan and conduct Ring programs and activities. Such a document draws on past experience and provides Ring Officers with the means of achieving a consistently superior quality operation. Such a document is dynamic. It must be reviewed annually and revised to meet current needs.

All Ring members must have a current I.B.M. membership. Charters are granted by the I.B.M. with the understanding that Rings abide by membership requirements as stated in the Bylaws and Standing Rules. This is good citizenship in the world-wide family of magicians represented by the I.B.M.

Ring Administration and Finance

The Ring Officers are elected democratically in accordance with the Ring Bylaws and Standing Rules and work with the members to achieve Ring objectives.

The Ring has a formal Induction Ceremony for new members. Membership should be considered a privilege open only to those who have demonstrated the required level of knowledge, interest and dedication. The intent of the formal ceremony is to impress on all members the significance of joining the world-wide family of magicians.

The Ring has a formal Installation Ceremony of the new Ring officers at the start of each Ring year. This reminds all members of the importance of having a well run Ring.

The Ring works through its Territorial Vice-President to get information, advice and support in the operation of the Ring and to give feedback to the I.B.M. Board of Trustees on matters which may be important to all Rings.

The Ring takes advantage of programs such as "Honor Rings" sponsored by Committees of the I.B.M Board of Trustees to enhance and achieve recognition for its operation and to strengthen its ties with the parent organization.

The Ring submits reports and information required or requested by I.B.M. Headquarters and other I.B.M. agencies. Such information is essential for the effective operation of the parent organization.

The Ring maintains and distributes to all members a current roster which at least shows the Ring Officers, member names, addresses, telephone/email numbers and I.B.M. #.

The Ring maintains control of its finances through such means as budgets, approval of expenditures, accurate financial statements and audits. The continued health of a Ring depends on well managed finances which provide for current and forecast expenditures.

The Ring evaluates annually the quality of its operation, identifies areas for improvement, sets goals and develops a plan with timetable to meet them. No Ring should be static. Rings should recognize any shortcomings and should take advantage of new ideas and innovations if they want to be the best they can possibly be.

The Ring keeps documents and photographs of historical value related to Ring activities and maintains a scrapbook/history. It is important to have roots. Reflection on past accomplishments gives a sense of pride and continuity.

The Ring maintains a Magic Library of books and, possibly videos/disks for use by Ring members only. There are ethical and possibly legal issues involved in setting up such a library which must be observed by Ring members. Reports from Rings with such libraries indicate they are useful in promoting knowledge and that Ring members are conscientious in protecting secrets. In many instances members have purchased their own books, videos or disks after seeing them first in the library.

Ring Communications

The Ring submits reports on meetings and special events for publication in The Linking Ring. Such reports provide a strong cohesive element for both local and distant members, increase awareness of the world-wide family of magicians, are an incentive to participate in Ring activities and become part of the Ring history.

The Ring produces a Newsletter or Bulletin containing at least information on current and future Ring activities which is distributed to members on a regular basis by mail, email, Internet or other forms of electronic communication.

NOTE: Many Rings have their own Internet website which allows for easy, rapid sharing of information in an attractive format. If your Ring has not already done so this should be considered.

Ring Activities and Programs

The Ring keeps the business part of its meetings short. Most business matters are handled separately at a Ring Officer's meeting. Meetings are conducted in accordance with

established procedures(most Rings follow Robert's Rules of Order) with Minutes kept and approved by the members.

The Ring has an annual calendar of activities which shows the major magical events for the year(e.g. Annual Banquet, Public Shows, Annual General Meeting). It also has a detailed agenda of activities for the Ring meetings which lets the members know as far ahead as possible what program is planned for each meeting. These are distributed to all members at the start of the year and at intervals during the year. The Newsletter/Bulletin provides the means of reminding members of upcoming activities and special events and alerting them to any changes.

The Ring identifies in its detailed agenda specific members to look after various preplanned activities that will fulfill the interests and needs of a majority of members. These could include activities such as mini-lectures, workshops, teaching, book reports, demonstrations and advice lines. It is important that the agenda include time for members and guests to perform magic. For many this is the most important part of the meeting and every effort should be made to encourage members to perform. Experience has shown that Ring meetings are more popular and better attended if well organized and if those involved in specific activities have been told beforehand and come well prepared.

The Ring brings in outside lecturers. These individuals do not necessarily need to be well known and possibly expensive figures. Other Rings within a reasonable distance will have eminently well qualified members who could be invited, possibly on a reciprocal basis.

The Ring sponsors a Young/Junior Magicians' Program such as the I.B.M. sponsored Magic Youth Affiliate. Such programs encourage the development of magic talent, provide a source of members for the Ring and are essential for the long term health of the I.B.M. and the Art of Magic.

Ring Public Support

Ring members become involved in activities supporting worthy causes such as Magic Therapy(Healing of Magic/Project Magic), "Operation Tricks Are Treats" (shows at hospitals, senior citizen or children's institutions), for charity, etc. Successful Rings share their talents with the disadvantaged rather than confine their activities solely within their own group.

Important Note: The I.B.M. has produced a number of very useful downloadable documents which can be found on the I.B.M. website under Resources to help Rings in their magic programs, administration and communications. These are recommended reading for Ring Officers.

Ring Quality Program Checklist **Information to Assist in Completion and Review**

Note: Item numbers relate to the Checklist form. For more details on individual items refer to Elements.

1. Ring Number: 2. Ring Name: 3. Ring Location: Town or City, State or Province and Country. For record keeping purposes.

4. Review Period Covered: The immediate past year of Ring operation. Give dates **From** and **To**. Need to have a fixed period of review.

5. Ring Members: Average number of Ring members **during review period**.

6. I.B.M Members: Number of Ring members who are **current** I.B.M. members. Number of Ring members who are not **current** I.B.M. members.

7. New Members: Number of new members who joined the Ring **during the review period**.

8. By-Laws and Standing Rules: Does Ring have its own Bylaws and Standing Rules document that is in compliance with the I.B.M. document(newly revised in 2013)?

9. Induction Ceremony: Does Ring Have a formal Induction Ceremony for new members?(see “Elements” for explanation). Does Ring have a formal Installation Ceremony for new Ring officers?

10. Policy and Programs Manual: Does the Ring have its own P&P Manual or a similar document which includes information on Ring operations and how to plan and run Ring programs and activities?

11. Newsletter/Bulletin: Does Ring have its own Newsletter or Bulletin which provides information to members on a regular basis through mail, email or Internet? Facebook, Twitter and similar communication systems are useful but it is not likely that all members subscribe to them.

12. Ring Reports: Number of Reports published in the Linking Ring during the review period.

13. Ring History: Does the Ring maintain a scrapbook/history?

14. Ring Library: Does the Ring have a Magic Library for use by Ring members only?

15. Working with the I.B.M.: Within the past year has Ring sent a report to the I.B.M Head Office giving a current list of I.B.M. members and names of Ring Officers?

16. Working with TVP: How many times has Ring been visited by its TVP during the review period? What is the name of Ring’s Key Contact who liaises with its TVP?

17. Annual Banquet: Does Ring have an Annual Banquet to honor past presidents and Ring Officers, present awards, etc.?

18. Public Shows: List Ring sponsored shows which include the general public during the review period.

19. Planned Ring Activities for Year: Does Ring have an Annual Calendar of planned major activities?

20. Planned Activities for Each Ring Meeting: Does Ring give its members, well in advance, a list of planned activities for each Ring meeting?

21. Lecturers: List lecturers who have come from **outside** the Ring during the review period.

22. Young and Junior Magicians: Does the Ring **actively** support a “Junior” program such as the Magic Youth Affiliate?

23. Worthy Causes: List Ring Activities in support of worthy causes such as Magic Therapy(Healing of Magic; Project Magic), “Operation Tricks Are Treats” (shows in Hospitals, in Senior’s Institutions, Homes for Sick Children), or for charity, etc.

24. Noteworthy Accomplishments: List any accomplishments during the review period of which the Ring is particularly proud. EG “Honor Rings” Award.

After completion the Checklist results should be reviewed keeping in mind the elements considered most important for successful operation of a Ring. Many “NOs” may indicate shortcomings in certain areas requiring attention. Ring membership numbers showing a failure of some members to maintain current I.B.M. membership must be addressed as a matter of urgency by the Ring Officers.

Ring Quality Program Checklist

1. Ring No: _____ **2. Ring Name:** _____

3. Ring Location: _____

4. Reviewing Period: From _____ **To** _____

5. Ring Members: _____ **6. I.B.M. Members:** _____ **7. Non IBM Members** _____

7. New Members _____

8. By-Laws and Standing Rules document: NO/YES

9. Induction Ceremony: NO/YES **Installation of New Officers:** NO/YES

10. Policy and Programs Manual NO/YES

11. Newsletter/Bulletin: NO/YES

12. Ring Meetings Reports to Linking Ring : Number in reporting period _____

13. Does the Ring keep a History/Scrapbook? NO/YES

14. Does the Ring maintain a Magic Library? NO/YES

15. Report(s) to I.B.M.: NO/YES

**16. TVP Involvement: Number of Visits in Reporting Period _____ Key Ring
Contact Name _____**

17. Annual Banquet: NO/YES Date(s) Held _____

18. Public Shows:

19. Annual Calendar of Major Ring Activities: NO/YES

20. Pre-Planned Activities for Each Ring Meeting: NO/YES

21. Lecturers:

22. Young/Junior Magicians' Programs: NO/YES

23. Worthy Causes:

24. Noteworthy Accomplishments:

Check List—By Whom Completed _____ Date

Reviewed by Ring President _____ Date