

## **Membership Begins With ME**

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### ***Mission Statement***

Sweet Adelines International is a worldwide organization of women singers committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education and performance.

### **Education and Performance!!! Who doesn't love that!!!**

#### **What We Know:**

- ★ If there are more members in your chorus, you sound bigger
- ★ You have more dues money to work with
- ★ It enlarges your talent pool
- ★ Many hands make the load lighter
- ★ It looks better in your competition photograph.
- ★ If a barbershop lover moves into your town, they are looking for a group that looks successful
- ★ You can take more performances if you have a balanced larger chorus to select from
- ★ If you have more singers on your risers, it is impressive.

#### **But (you may say)...**

- ★ We are such a happy group, we don't want to lose our sense of family
- ★ We don't want to add "bodies." We want to add "singers"
- ★ We might have to look for a bigger rehearsal space, and buy more risers and costumes
- ★ More women equals more problems.

#### **Let's do a Reality Check**

- ★ 15% of the members you have on the risers today may not be there next year (Sweet Adelines has a 15% attrition rate)
- ★ Not all the new members you recruit will stick it out in the first year (some will find the cost, time, or deadline pace overwhelming).

#### **Growth Takes Preparation**

- ★ It takes the commitment of EACH MEMBER to roll out the welcome mat
- ★ Look for the members you want at the places they might be
- ★ What is your chorus' personality? Select five adjectives
  - ★ Example: Sassy? Classy? Elegant? High Achieving? Trendy? Conservative? Funny?

#### **Ask the hard questions**

- ★ Where do you see your chorus in five years? Twenty-five years?
- ★ What are your future membership goals?
- ★ What are your future competition goals?
- ★ How do you want the community to perceive you?
- ★ What will it take to get there?

## **What is your Chorus Culture? One year ago? Now?:**

- ★ Education
- ★ Music
- ★ Performance
- ★ Administration
- ★ Membership
- ★ Marketing
- ★ Attitude

List five key strategies that need to be accomplished within the next six months to make the Membership vision a reality?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

## **There are three kinds of singers:**

- ★ Singers you know (family, friends, coworkers)
- ★ Singers you see but don't know (the woman in the church choir, the lady humming in the grocery store, the woman singing along with the music at the gym)
- ★ Unseen singers (at Starbucks, shopping or at concerts and theater productions).

## **Attracting Women of Color**

- ★ Women of color may initially feel uncomfortable, whether she shows it or not
- ★ There is no place for "mammy" or "Dixie" references in our repertoire
- ★ Be flexible with some traditional standards of uniformity in makeup
- ★ Make women of color feel included in all activities

## **Attracting Jewish or Islamic Women**

- ★ If you rehearse in a church, make sure potential members realize you are not a church related organization. You may want to search for a school or community center
- ★ Consider making your Christmas show an option – not a responsibility. Or leave your Christmas music to the church choirs
- ★ Avoid singing gospel songs and spirituals. Be aware and be sensitive.

## **Attracting Young Women**

- ★ Put some contemporary music in your repertoire
- ★ Get them involved immediately in administrative or committee work
- ★ Take a hard look at your costumes (put one of your young members in charge)
- ★ Understand their time and money limitations
- ★ Create chorus activities that are convenient to their schedules (weekends are tough if they work in retail or restaurants).

### Attracting Lesbian and Trans Women

- ★ Create an inclusive environment. Don't assume a woman has a male lover when singing a love song.
- ★ Invite their partner to events and rehearsals
- ★ Partner with GALA (Gay And Lesbian Arts) choruses

### Offer Incentives

- ★ The region has cash incentives for growth
- ★ The International organization has dues incentives for bringing in members
- ★ Does your chorus have an incentive program? St. Louis Harmony Chorus offers a free month's dues when a sponsored member marks their six-month anniversary.
- ★ Share some of your incentives.

### Ways to find New Members

- ★ Have the courage to talk to a stranger and tell her about your chorus. A personal invitation is the best way to feel welcome
- ★ Perform in your community, and invite women to visit
- ★ Social media works -- Use it
- ★ We don't use the phone any more. Put a cell/text number or a QR code on business cards and flyers.

### “Sell” instead of “Tell”

Tell	Sell
The Joyful Sounds Chorus is looking for new members	You'll make great music and great friends by joining the Joyful Sounds Chorus
The Joyful Sounds Chorus is having a show	Discover the unique thrill of barbershop harmony at the Joyful Sounds Chorus Show
Joyful Sounds Chorus is offering free vocal lessons	Learn how to sing in six easy lessons with the Joyful Sounds Chorus

### Get Organized

- ★ Allocate some budget for Membership Growth
- ★ Allocate some budget for Membership Retention
- ★ Have a specific Membership window for growth – Two Months and Ten Members
- ★ Talk about it at each rehearsal
- ★ Encourage guests to bring guests.

### Create a Member Service Culture in the Chorus

- ★ Know about your chorus (rules, go-to personnel, timetables, requirements)
- ★ Exhibit the kind of rehearsal discipline you want to attract
- ★ Know your music so expectations are realistic
- ★ Start on time
- ★ Respect your director.
- ★ Welcome new members enthusiastically
- ★ Talk positively to each other
- ★ Make a great first impression (and 2<sup>nd</sup> impression...and 3<sup>rd</sup> impression, etc.)

- ★ Show pride in your chorus and your organization
- ★ Take responsibility for new member recruitment.
- ★ Implement a new member mentor or big sister program
- ★ Don't ever let a guest sit or stand alone. Introduce yourself. Ask questions about what kind of music she likes. Find out her skills...and get her involved.
- ★ Have someone follow up after the rehearsal
- ★ Friend them on Facebook.

### Create a Guest Survey

Circle 1 for strong dislike and 5 for loving it					
Overall Impression	1	2	3	4	5
The types of songs the chorus sings	1	2	3	4	5
Chorus Personality/Attitude/Spirit	1	2	3	4	5
How I was welcomed by the chorus	1	2	3	4	5
How I feel I might fit into the chorus	1	2	3	4	5
Music education received	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of organizational information received	1	2	3	4	5
The way rehearsal was conducted	1	2	3	4	5
Do you think you'll come back	1	2	3	4	5

### What YOU can do

This entire class was taken from a free 200-page resource .pdf booklet titled *"Real Guide To Growth,"* published by Sweet Adelines International.

- ★ You can find it by Googling "Sweet Adelines Real Guide To Growth"
- ★ Share it with your membership team and make it available to each chorus member!

### When you leave this class:

- ✓ Arm yourself with chorus business cards and go "member hunting"
- ✓ Share your chorus love with family, friends and coworkers. Invite them to a rehearsal
- ✓ Be on the "hunt" for hummers in the store. If she sings with store music, she'll love your chorus.
- ✓ Remember how it changed your life? Be a chorus missionary and change someone else's
- ✓ Women NEED what we do. Share the love
- ✓ Share what works with other members of your chorus.
- ✓ Step up and serve on (or chair) the membership team
- ✓ Ask your chorus to set aside a block of free show tickets for prospective members, and follow up with those who attend
- ✓ Create a New Member Handbook.

### Wouldn't now be a good time to STOP HARMONIZING THE WALL?