

## MEMBERSHIP RETENTION IDEAS

*These Retention ideas are gleaned from a class at the 2003 IES facilitated by Toulia Oberlies, but apply and are still true today.*

Most choruses are busy with the musical part of the Sweet Adeline activities and don't always feel they have the time to "bond" in social settings. After all we are here to sing not visit. However, I think getting to know who is standing on the risers next to you is an important aspect of unity.

Begin a rehearsal by asking for something positive that happened to a member. Take 3 or 4 and acknowledge them and praise them for their efforts.

Put out a Newsletter and feature a member each week. Make every member feel important and it helps everyone get to know each other. Now days, this can be done electronically via your personal chorus email account.

Riser buddies – if each person feels responsible for each other, they will help each other through difficulties. This is especially true with first year members.

Retreat – Use this to improve music as well as team-bonding time. Plan a "party" after rehearsal and play games, do skits, sing camp songs, anything that will help bring members closer together.

Rising Star Program (rookie program) - Develop a yearlong rookie program with specific goals to be met each month. At the end of the year, present awards to the new member who has completed the program. Include a big sister riser buddy.

The chorus should give monthly and annual "Awards" to recognize achievement of individual members and teams within the chorus

The chorus needs an innovative goal setting session to make sure all members feel part of the planning and goal-setting process. Set up a 5 year plan and refer to it yearly to chart progress.

Every member needs to be appreciated/recognized for achievements.

Develop a chorus-wide "no idea is a Dumb idea" philosophy

Have an open mind and involve all who would like to be involved

Approach members to take on positions/jobs instead of waiting for them to come to you

To fill key positions, members without positions should take over smaller jobs, freeing aspiring chorus leaders from their already busy chorus jobs

Follow your dreams and goals

Develop an atmosphere of trust and acceptance

Remember – There is no "I" in TEAM

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Kaye Pledge, Membership Coordinator

Schedule a strategic planning session that will lead to the development of an Action Plan – using an outside facilitator

Plan social activities to strengthen relationships and enhance sense of belonging

Promote performances and rediscover the joy of Barbershop singing

Use social functions to re-connect and build morale

Encourage everyone to bring a guest

Improve level of musical product

Have an outside consultant evaluate how guests are really treated

Allow prospective members to learn music at own pace within a reasonable timetable

One on one connection with the director

Mentoring vocal program

Change timing of visitor night to June, July or September due to the early timeframe of contest in Region 10. This will give the new members time to adjust to the idea of singing on stage at their first contest.

Look at your vision plan (revise if necessary) Maybe you like your size.

Are you targeting the right people?

Get membership to buy into membership growth – make it fun

Work toward a specific musical improvement goal

Make sure your chorus has a modern image and repertoire

Have a social night once a month

Communicate expectations clearly. Be sure all members know

- A. Money - be honest about costs at the beginning
- B. Time – let new members know the amount of time they will be expected to give, but allow members to give at their own level.
- C. Audition – help potential members through this scary experience
- D. Educational opportunities – be sure everyone knows of regional and international level opportunities as well as chorus level education
- E. Support – be sure every members feels important and supported

Use an Exit Interview/Survey to determine if there are unknown issues that are causing people to leave

Be sure those transferring out of the chorus know about the dual membership option.

Encourage member to become Chapter-at-Large members and come back when time and family permit

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For a member who has moved, help her to connect with choruses in her new area