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## Open House

### Open House Timeline

This timeline is derived from the Real Guide to Growth Membership Handbook – it refers to sections and action plan templates within the guide. For more detailed information, please refer to the handbook, which can be found in the Training Library of the online Marketing Center.

#### Five months or more before open house event

- Discuss the Open House campaign with all chorus members
- Select a committee to plan and organize the open house activities
- Decide upon date(s) of event and if there will be an event theme
- Create a general outline of the open house activities
- Determine how the director will play a role in the event and in the membership recruitment activities (Action Plan Template 3.9)
- Assess duties for volunteer members
- Identify target audiences – who would you like to attend the open house and how will you reach them (Action Plan Template 2.5)
- Decide how and where to advertise, through social media pages, website, local merchants, radio, newspaper, online, etc. (Action Plan Template 2.6)
- Plan publicity tactics, through press releases, radio interviews, quartet appearance at women's club meetings, etc. (Action Plan Template 2.9)
- Create an estimated budget (Action Plan Template 2.12)

#### Four months before open house event

- Begin publicizing for the upcoming event on chorus web site, bulletin boards, social media pages, etc.
- Begin planning the rehearsal schedule as well as entertainment for guests
- Decide what materials will be given to guests: sheet music, brochures, promotional items, other resources, etc.
- Start planning for decorations and refreshments
- Begin building an invitation list. Ask chorus members to submit the contact information for a minimum of three names of women that may be interested in attending the open house.
- Create and maintain a spreadsheet that will provide contact information for those who are sent an invitation, who will attend, who are unable to attend, who have responded to a promotional piece and will attend, etc.
- Send Save the Date announcements

#### Three months before open house event

- Purchase/order event decorations/supplies and guest materials, such as paper goods, giveaways, etc.
- Draft a schedule for volunteer members (Action Plan Template 2.13)
- Create, print or order promotional materials: posters, flyers, brochures, invitations, directions/map, etc.
- Alert community groups that will support your open house, ex. Chamber of Commerce, Community Center, Convention Center, women's groups, church groups, etc.
- Collect contact information for all community groups expressing an interest
- Look for community leaders or local celebrities to support and possibly endorse your campaign – invite them to the open house
- Research/find upcoming community events that are within six weeks of your Open House for volunteer chorus members to participate in to promote the Open House

#### **Two months before open house event**

- Publicize event on flyers posted throughout the community in recreational centers, churches, schools, grocery and/or department stores, work places, etc.
- Identify local reporters from newspapers, radio and television stations who cover women's interests and/or community events
- Compile a list of media contacts, including name, phone and fax numbers and email addresses
- Write a press release and distribute to local media (See Sample Press Release in the Members Only Marketing Center)
- Research/find community calendars and submit your information for your event to be listed
- Create/print event signage, such as directional signs for guests to find your rehearsal location, a sign to display at the front doors, etc.
- Place Open House promotional information in a prominent location on the chorus's website. Link it to a dedicated web page with information about the event, including ways to contact the chorus for additional information
- Make phone calls to community groups and others who have expressed an interest in your chorus to invite them personally to the open house

#### **Six weeks before open house event**

- Send a promotional letter/invitation or e-mail about the Open House to anyone who has:
  - Inquired about membership
  - Visited the chorus
  - Been introduced by a member
  - Has been a former member of the chorus
- Follow-up on press releases to primary outlets (ex: call your popular radio station to see if they received the press release and if they would be interested in an interview)
- Implement advertising plans as scheduled
- Have volunteer chorus members attend community events to promote the Open House

#### **One month before open house event**

- Create a final agenda for the Open House

- Provide final details of the Open House to all chorus members
- Prepare the members for guests (Action Plan Template 3.1)
- Record and acknowledge RSVPs as each is received
- Evaluate the estimated number of guests, and if too low, increase publicity efforts and/or double check publicity progress
- Send a second press release to your list of media contacts
- Create a script and make follow-up phone calls to those who have not confirmed
- Make sure posts and flyers are up throughout the community
- Continue to post information about the Open House on the home page of your website and all social media pages
- Confirm attendance of any local celebrities or community leaders and send them an agenda of the open house

#### **One week before open house event**

- Confirm all refreshments for the event
- Print out the guest list in alphabetical order
- Organize all event decorations
- Brief the greeters, escorts and event volunteers on their specific duties
- Continue to publicize event heavily through all appropriate venues
- Prepare supplies and materials for the welcome table and other activities, such as a sign in sheet, name tags, pens, notepads, music, brochures, etc.

#### **Day before open house event**

- Post Open House signage and decorations in appropriate areas
- Send a media alert to your list of press contacts

#### **Day(s) of event**

- All chorus members should arrive early to prepare
- Post all direction signs for event
- Bring the logistical outline, event schedule and agenda, instructions, directions, name tags, volunteer assignments, guest lists, etc.
- Set up Open House materials, giveaways, etc.
- Set up registration and welcome table
- Last minute briefing with chorus members

#### **One to four weeks after open house**

- Write and send thank you notes to all who attended the Open House
- Consider surveying attendees about their experience at the event
- Write and send follow-up notes to all who were invited but could not attend
- Analyze the results of the Open House (Action Plan Template 2.14)
- Conduct event debriefing with chorus members to determine success or ways to improve in the future
- Determine plans to turn as many of the Open House event guests into members (Action Plan Template 3.10)
- Share the news of your event with International headquarters and your RMT and send in your story, photos, press clippings or links, etc.