

Chapter Development Ideas Gleaned from Facebook Sharing

Michael Testa

Just food for thought: I am a board member and associate director of a 30-member chorus in a retirement community where the median age is 76 and the average age is 79.

We do not proactively seek or recruit “younger members,” although we would - of course - love to have them. But as people retire and move to our community, as long as they find us, we do not care how old they are.

So... we do everything we can to be found. Some things we do:

We have a website and we maintain it.

We've started a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram which now has several hundred followers.

We have optimized our site so that when someone searches “barbershop in (town)”, we are the first site that comes up.

We try to sing as much as we can in the community, and we contact the local paper when we do so they can run a story on us... they are always looking for content.

We also partnered with the continuing education group at our city's parks and recreation department and offer a “learn to sing” class through them.

And when they do come, one of the things we do on the first night is teach them how learning tracks work. One of the biggest barriers to entry we see is that members worry about how they will learn the music, especially if they can't read music. Showing them how the learning tracks work puts them at ease quickly and makes singing more accessible to them.

The results have been just what we wanted: net membership is up, and those who have joined us - *including new members in their 70s and 80s* - have been enthusiastic and dedicated. We had a guest in his 70s come to our rehearsal last night and tell us that he hasn't sung in an organized group in over 30 years and was grateful to have found us.

From my point of view: Make it easy for people to find you, and then extravagantly welcome whomever walks in, no matter their age. If you do that well, much of the rest will take care of itself.

Brandon Hall

Oftentimes I see chapters wanting to get younger members involved into an existing way of doing things without thinking about the problem the other way - why aren't younger people wanting to join in the first place?

Financial, social, and musical barriers (ie: the chorus doesn't sing at a level the individual enjoys) tend to be the biggest obstacles. Don't be that chorus that rushes a new person and tries to get them to sign up immediately - desperation is gross and will turn off any person, not to mention the money you're telling them to spend right away.

Instead, get them singing and falling in love with our style of music and the people in the chorus. Have musical leadership that inspires people. Have a board that is efficient and stable and helps things run smoothly. Have a mission of who the chorus is, do things to

meet that goal, then people will come (also advertise, show up and help with your community, work with other musical groups, etc) - if you become a group that appeals to everybody then you'll be a group who appeals to nobody.

[Christian Hunter](#) > Top contributor

[Brandon Hall](#) all of this. you really should have your house in order before looking to invite company over for dinner

[James Estes](#) > Top contributor

I agree with all of this, and also definitely recommend that in most cases, having a fun afterglow can be the stamp on the envelope, so to speak. The informal tag-singing and hanging out that happens after the chapter meeting is done, can often be the most impactful part of the evening.

[Christian Hunter](#) > Top contributor

Just recruit. For demographics, if you have a compelling event, advertise everywhere you can and tailor the messaging/marketing for the demographics you want. One time I wanted dads and sons, so I created a meme and blasted it out to like 50 Facebook groups....

Pedal to the metal. Set up a calendar of recruiting and outreach. Oldies but goodies like guest night and sing with us at the ball park, or new ideas to see if they work, like Choir Karaoke and Open Auditions. Just. Do. Something.

ATTENTION SINGERS:
Open Audition Days
Private and All About YOU!

HUNTERDON Choral Alliance

SCHEDULE YOUR TIME WITH THE MUSICAL LEADERS OF THE CHORAL ALLIANCE. ALL VOICE PARTS WELCOME. OUR CHOUSES OFFER YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEVEL UP YOUR SINGING.

Sat, 10/5 9:00 am to noon DICK LUTHEMAN EDUCATION BUILDING 10 BELLE AVE. CLERICE, NJ	Sat, 10/12 9:00 am to noon HUNTERDON COUNTY CHARGE BY DEMANDS, 1544 BUILDING TOP MAIN STREET HUNTERDON, NJ
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All it takes: (1) prepare a 45-60 second portion of a song to be sung solo and a cappella; (2) demonstrate singing awareness (breath and intonation); (3) Q&A with directors; and (4) receive supportive feedback and learn about our choruses.

Step 1: SIGN UP FOR AN AUDITION SLOT AND COMPLETE THE AUDITION FORM. WWW.VOCALCONFLUENCE.ORG	Step 2: PREPARE YOUR AUDITION PIECE. BEY SONG WILL DO THAT DEMONSTRATE YOUR VOCAL RANGE AND SKILL.	Step 3: ARRIVE AT THE AUDITION LOCATION EARLY, RELAXED AND READY FOR A SUPPORTIVE EXPERIENCE.
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[vchoralalliance.org](#) [singwithchoralalliance.org](#)

Choir Karaoke Nights
3 Nights, 3 Choirs to Sing With!

HUNTERDON Choral Alliance

It's your time to sing! Don't just sing in the shower or the car. It's much more fun to join your voice with dozens of people like you, to songs you'll know and love, in a judgement free zone - FOR FREE!

Tues, 10/1 7:30 pm Numbered Nonmembers All voice is equal Americana barbershop	Wed, 10/2 7:30 pm Evolution in Harmony Sing in a cappella with a fresh take on barbershop/harmony	Mon, 10/14 7:30 pm Vocal Synergy All voice Pop and Contemporary cappella
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LIVING WATERS LUTHERAN CHURCH 10 OLD YORK ROAD FLEMINGTON, NJ

Evolution in Harmony **VOCAL Synergy**

Marla Crawford marla.crawford@vocalconfluence.org 09/20/2024

My name is Marla Crawford and I am the VP of Marketing and Public Relations for Vocal Confluence. We do not actively recruit, but I think having a robust social media presence is key to attracting new members and making sure you have a good online presence in general, because that's how most of our members find us. Also be sure to do plenty of gigs in your local community with more modern barbershop and non barbershop arrangements. We are now over 50 members when we started with 19 in January 2022.

Check out our social media and website to see what we do!

www.vocalconfluence.org > Social media: Tiktok, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube

[White Rose Chorus](#) ·

Get out to where the singers are. Go out to a karaoke night and talk to singers that show promise. Do not just hand them a card and hope they contact you or just show up. They won't. You need to get their contact info and contact them. Sometimes it takes months of

nudging them to get them to finally take the plunge. Also try bringing a quartet to an open mic.

Regardless.... keep your contact list growing and keep sending them emails to let them know what is going on.

This is something every member can do to grow your contact list.

Elizabeth Louise Gordon > Top contributor

I think that younger members don't come to you, you need to go to them. Visit the schools, perform, show videos, get them singing. Invite them to a rehearsal or bring your rehearsal with them at a school. Hold a school choir day and get youth from all the surrounding area.

Charlie Davenport

The book(s) have been written so pick one and follow it. No need to reinvent the wheel. From district leader point of view, establish an active link with all your chapters, contact them regularly, supply them with ideas on how to recruit, where to recruit, when to recruit... The last is critical and that being, you must be Ready to recruit .. an attractive place to bring in new people is key.. without it being attractive to whomever visits, they aren't going to stay... There are many items written on Are You Ready To Recruit, mostly by me, but right now I am traveling in Europe and they're not at my fingertips ... Send me Direct Message and I'll try to connect you with them... I may be slow to respond, being off by 8-9 hours and limited Wi-Fi, but we can try...