


The Barbershop Paradox

Land O' Lakes District – Leadership Academy

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Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
 - The Barbershop Paradox
 - Membership Growth Considerations
 - Wrap-up
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Welcome

- Purpose
 - Understand the Barbershop Paradox and share ideas about how to effectively grow our chapter membership
- Process
 - Describe the Barbershop Paradox
 - Group discussion related to growth opportunities
- Payoff
 - Thriving, growing fun chapter experiences!

Introduction

- Who is Jay? (Why should I listen to him?)
 - Overall 28 years of business management experience (20 as an executive of both Fortune 500 and smaller companies)
 - Held many leadership roles within the LaCrosse chapter (board member, president, show chair, etc.) and board positions with other non-profit organizations (church, industry associations)
 - Barbershopper my whole life – a member of the society for 39 years – currently dual member with LaCrosse and St. Croix Valley chapter, a member of Vocality and past LO'L District President

The Barbershop Paradox

- Sometimes we take ourselves too seriously.
 - The majority of us want to get together to sing, have fun and build friendships. When we get too wrapped up in contest scores or "driving for success" we likely lose members because we lose the fun.
- Sometimes we don't take ourselves seriously enough.
 - The positive impact we make on individual lives, communities and maybe even just civil discourse because our singing creates a forum through which we build relationships with a wide variety of people, is very important.
- So if we take ourselves too seriously we will may lose members. Yet if we don't take ourselves seriously we don't make the positive impact we could in our communities.
- Somehow we need to do both - hence, the paradox!

The Barbershop Paradox

- Take a couple of minutes to write down the top five things that make the barbershop experience most meaningful to you.
- Share – if comfortable doing so
- What would your life be like - what would you do if you lost some/all of those items?
- A Narrative.....

Narrative

As chapters, we think what we offer is a style of music, and that's partly true. Barbershop music is magic. The harmonies and the chords absolutely matter. The music is our medium, but ringing chords is not our greatest achievement. What we really provide is community and camaraderie. We offer people a sense of belonging in a world where belonging can be hard to come by. We provide a place that enables mental and physical health benefits. We provide a place where people can feel they are making a difference by coming together to be part of something bigger than their individual selves.

We live in a world, which on the surface, appears to be more connected than ever. With advances in technology, we can communicate with nearly anyone, any time, almost anywhere in the world. And that technology is incredible, but nothing can replace what it feels like to be in the same room with people, to look each other in the eye and create something real together.

And that's where we come in. Barbershop is a physical act. It requires meaningful human interaction. To sing barbershop, we must leave our homes and connect with living, breathing human beings. Our voices sound best when we join in person and raise them together. As leaders in your chapters you have tremendous power to help build and strengthen real communities. You have the power to create environments where someone feels safe, welcome, included.

Narrative

Everyone comes to barbershop with their own emotional baggage, whether they realize it or not. If we were a different sort of organization, if we were like stamp collectors or golf enthusiasts, all of that emotional baggage might not be as noticeable. But we're a singing organization. What we do here is make art together. If we're really singing from the heart, we can't help but let our emotional histories weave their way into the singing experience.

You are the people who will create spaces where a lost or lonely person might come and find a family . You, and your singing community, could be the reason someone gets through their divorce, or the death of a parent, or the loss of a child, or other deeply personal loss. Through our barbershop community, you can be the reason that someone says, "This is tough, but I am not alone." Sometimes, we're not just singing barbershop. Sometimes we're saving lives .

So how will we do it? How do we strengthen barbershop communities and make the biggest human impact possible? Let's work together now to use our collective experience and wisdom to create action plans that will help us do just that!

Discussion Topics

- How to balance “fun” and “good singing”
- Contests vs. Conventions
- How to grow membership
- How to tell the story of what a great opportunity exists for others to join us
- What community involvement results in positive experiences for our members
- Other topics?

Discussion Guidelines

- Break into groups of about 6 people
- Select a spokesperson
- Select topics
- Be respectful of all input/comments
- Move to next topic in a timely manner to cover several aspects
- Group Sharing
- Create a short “Action Item” list for your chapter

Wrap-up

- Class Evaluation – please fill out the form and leave it as you exit
- Continued discussions welcome
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Thank you!