Chapter Development Report

**MEETING ATTENDANCE DATA**

**This report contains attendance data for three meetings: November 6th, 13th, and 20th.

Members:**

- Total Unique Members: 32 (previous period: 34)

- Average Members per Meeting: 30 (previous period: 27)

-- Average Tenors per Meeting: 5.0 (previous period: 4.0)

-- Average Leads per Meeting: 9.0 (previous period: 7.6)

-- Average Basses per Meeting: 10.7 (previous period: 9.8)

-- Average Baritones per Meeting: 5.3 (previous period: 5.8)

- Full Attending Members: 26 (previous period: 14)

**Guests:**

**-** Total Unique Guests: 5 (previous period: 7)

**Conclusions**:

Average attendance is up, which isn't surprising considering this contains the two weeks right before Cabaret.  Attendance was down a bit the week after, but it didn't drop too much.  I think this means that the Holiday Chorus is still enticing members to attend rehearsals, but we'll see what the December numbers look like for that.  The Full Attending numbers are partially misleading, since there were 5 meetings in the previous period and only 3 in this period.

**2014 YEAR IN REVIEW**

I'm analyzing both initiatives that were actually executed upon and ideas that were mentioned in the CD Reports that weren't executed upon.  Analyzing the former is useful to learn what went right and what could be improved upon, while analyzing the latter is useful to understand why we didn't execute on those ideas and see if some of those ideas should be done in the upcoming year.

**EXECUTED INITIATIVES**

**Cogscon**

Back in April, I spent a day at a small convention being held at a local technical college.  I also had three other guys show up and we did a brief quartet set based out of the polecats.  In conclusion, we saw very little benefit from this event.  We didn't attract anyone to the Vocal Clinic, which was the primary goal, and I don't believe we sold any tickets for our spring show, which was my secondary goal.  The people that listened to the quartet seemed well entertained, but not entertained enough to convert into guests or customers.

Lessons Learned:

- The target market for this convention is more youth-oriented than the standard market for Barbershop.  That's good, because we need more youth, but does make this more of a challenge.  I do feel that the target market for the convention tended towards artistic people, which is a match for our market.

- The booth I had setup was minimal at best.  I did have handouts for people to take, which was good.  However, I definitely could have improved on the visual attractiveness of the booth.

- I put everything together at the last minute, which meant that we weren't on the printed schedule of events, and we had to have our quartet demonstration in a suboptimal location.  This was partially due to how close to the event I was told about the event, but I could have execute on things faster and gotten integrated into the event more smoothly.

I'm unsure if we should take a booth at Cogscon again this year.  We definitely could have executed on it better than last year....

 **Vocal Clinic**

Starting on May 20th we held another Vocal Clinic.  This one our one (mildly) successful CD initiative, in that we got one member solely from the Vocal Clinic.

Lessons Learned:

- I failed to get very many people to attend the clinic.  We had only 14 attendees, when previous clinics have had 30 or more.  There were two problems that I've identified that interfered with this:

-- I scheduled the clinic to start the very next week after contest was done.  This prevented our membership from having the time to push the clinic and drive new attendees.

-- I didn't emphasize recruiting for the clinic to the chorus members.  This was in part because of the timing of the event and part because I didn't realize how important it was for the event.

- I can't do this alone.  Ultimately, I don't have enough social energy to guarantee that I can follow up with every single attendee to the level of detail required to try to convert those attendees into members.  I had a bit of help here and there, but I think I need to plot out a conversion strategy and get other people to help with that.

We should definitely host another Vocal Clinic this year, and I already have the dates booked on our schedule: May 21st to June 25th for a six-week program.  I've mentioned the Vocal Clinic to Paul, and he'd be happy to run it again, and Sean is also interested in being a part of the clinic.

**Holiday Chorus**

I made a push to bring in guests to join us for the holiday chorus.  Specifically, guests were explicitly allowed to join us for our sing-outs.

Lessons Learned:

- I don't think sing-outs actually work that well for attracting new guests.  I'm guessing it makes people more nervous than excited when they still haven't bought into the chapter.

We should definitely continue with the Holiday Chorus in future years, but as a retention measure for existing members, rather than an acquisition strategy for new guests.  I also think the Holiday Chorus would make a good tool for conversion of guests into members, but for that to be really effective we'd need to have a decent pool of candidates that we've acquired during the fall, which can be difficult with show/contest season.  I am very worried that our only effective acquisition strategy is the Vocal Clinic, but this doesn't seem to be an effective supplement.

**Sing-Out Emphasis**

While this wasn't so much an event that I executed upon, this was one of my big emphases for developing the chapter as a whole this year.  As I've stated before, I believe our dearth of sing-outs this summer was the primary reason why our attendance was so poor.  I believe our abundance of Holiday chorus sing-outs this winter is helping keep our membership energized and excited to sing.

I still believe we need to have a Booking Manager who actively seeks out sing-outs for the chapter.  He doesn't necessarily have to do the work himself, but he needs to drive it and make sure it happens.  Last I heard, Program was still working on this idea, but it's been months since I saw any updates, and I haven't really seen any progress on this at all.

**UNEXECUTED IDEAS**

**Mentor Program**

Back in January I mentioned that one of my first ideas was to establish a Mentor Program to ensure new members were integrated nicely into the chapter.  I still believe this is a good idea, but with our lack of new members, I haven't put the time in to setup this program.

**Guest Night**

This always gets tossed around as an idea that we should do, but it always means something different to every person that uses the phrase.  I think we should retire the phrase and come up with a new and more precise term for whatever thing we want to do on any specific night.

**Attendance as a Retention Strategy**

This was listed back in the summer as an idea to help ensure our members feel like we care about them.  I haven't executed on this idea just yet, but I do have plans in the works for 2015.  More details to follow when I discuss future plans, below.

**Chapter Development Survey**

I still think this is a good idea to help gauge exactly what problems people are having with the chapter.  I just haven't had the time to execute on it.

**2015 Plans**

**ACQUISITION, CONVERSION, AND RETENTION**

I've come to understand that the process of membership has three separate parts: guest acquisition, candidate conversion, and member retention.  I've always known this, but I'm emphasizing this distinction going forward.

With this distinction made, I am heavily emphasizing acquisition for 2015.  Our guest acquisition rate for 2014 was unacceptable and will hurt the chapter in the long run if it continues that way.

**CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

It's become clear over the past year that I can't input the time and energy required to perform my job at the level of execution required to be successful.  I'm finally starting to recruit people to assist me with executing on Chapter Development.

A specific goal I have for 2015 is to get the Chapter Development Team functioning as an independent unit, easing the burden I place on the Board for tasks that fall within my purview.  I don't think I'm going to aim for something as formal as the Music Team does with their monthly meeting, but perhaps a quarterly meeting or meetings for specific initiatives are worthwhile.

**Assistant Vice President of Guest Acquisition**

I'm creating a new position within the CD Team:  the Assistant Vice President of Guest Acquisition.  At this time, there are three responsibilities for this position.  The first, and most important, responsibility for the AVP of Acquisition is to be the primary driver of initiatives designed to attract new guests to the chapter.  Converting those guests to members is not a part of this first responsibility.  The second responsibility is to act as the Development VP's backup in cases where the Development VP is unable to perform his duties.  The third responsibility is to assist the CD Team with other initiatives that aren't within the purview of guest acquisitions.  The AVP doesn't drive conversion or retention, but should still help out with those tasks when possible.

I have filled the position of AVP of Guest Acquisition for 2015.  I have asked Jerry Wong to take up this position, and he has accepted.  The two of us will be working together over the coming months to really flesh out exactly what the AVP will be doing.  Since Jerry is now an official member of the Chapter Development Team, I will be forwarding the monthly Chapter Development Reports to him as well as the board, starting with this email today.

**Development Representatives**

This idea is still being shaped, so I'd like to use this as a launching point for a discussion.  This idea is the Development Representative, or Dev-Rep for short.  There are four Dev-Reps, one in each section.  I see the Dev-Reps as analogous to the Section Leaders as Music-Team Representatives within each section:  the Section Leaders encourage the goals of the Music Team within the sections, and the Dev-Reps encourage the goals of the CD Team within the sections.  Dev-Reps are the primary drivers behind member retention.  I'm hoping the Dev-Reps will ensure that everyone is being represented in the CD Team, to ensure that any problems that are causing people to become less invested in the chapter are explicitly brought up and handled.  The one concrete responsibility of the Dev-Reps that I see starting immediately is the taking of rehearsal attendance for members within their sections, including knowing the reasons why performing members miss rehearsals.  The Dev-Reps then also assist with CD initiatives that they aren't driving, the same that everyone on the CD Team does.

The major points of discussion for Dev-Reps regard how this position interacts with the Section Leaders.  I think some of these responsibilities are already sort of on the shoulders of the Section Leaders, and I want to make sure that this distinction makes their jobs easier rather than harder.  Also, I can see smaller sections having the Section Leader and the Dev-Rep as the same person.

**ACQUISITION INITIATIVES**

**Vocal Clinic**

As mentioned above in the 2014 year-in-review, we're going to be hosting another Vocal Clinic starting in May this year.  I will be working with Paul and Sean on determining the contents of the Vocal Clinic. I will also work with Jerry and Jeff on marketing the Clinic and driving new students for the clinic.

**New Acquisition Initiatives**

I feel like the Vocal Clinic, while a great and worthwhile acquisition initiative, is not sufficient for our acquisition needs.  I would like to figure out at least one further initiative to bring in new guests, if possible.

**OTHER INITIATIVES**

 **Chapter Development Materials**

I've been focusing a lot on big-picture initiatives in the past year, but I think it would be a good idea to spend some time on the little details, such as fliers to hand out to spectators at sing-outs.  I will work with Jerry and Jeff on this initiative.

**Mentor Program**

I still believe this is a good idea, and it may get rolled into the Development Representative initiative moving forward.

**Chapter Development Survey**

This is another good idea that I simply need to find time to execute on.

**Barbershop Development Network**

A stretch goal that I think is worth pursuing is developing connections with the other Barbershop chapters in the area.  Sharing tips for development between chapters should benefit everyone. Referring potential guests to other chapters if they can't attend rehearsals at a chapter should hopefully increase the number of guests at all chapters.  This idea is partially inspired by Jeff's idea for the interchapter marketing summit.

**Modernize Internet Presence**

This was an idea I was starting to run with early last year, but it got forgotten about when I started to get busy with the Vocal Clinic.  Jeff's plans for our web presence reminded me of this, and I generally just agree with everything Jeff has stated in his section on our web presence.

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As always, I am open to discussion about any of the reflections on this past year or the initiatives for the next year.  If you've got a good idea, I'd love to integrate it into my plans.  What I've stated above is my plans for next year as of now, but these plans are highly mutable as time goes by.

- Andy Maurer, VP of Chapter Development

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