

GUESTS AND NEW MEMBERS

Love 'Em or Lose 'Em



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There is NO ONE right way to conduct a membership campaign, nor is there only one way to handle your chapter's guests. This material is designed to be a guide to assist your chapter and its members in thinking through the entire process and to assist you in formulating YOUR way of doing things. It is made up of things I have implemented myself, seen in use, or heard of other chapters successfully using.

Not all of the contained information should be presented to a guest on the first night- we don't want to intimidate them nor scare them away, but chapters need a plan and should have all information available, so if a guest asks, you have it at hand and can provide it to them.

GUESTS

The challenge is to make your guests feel comfortable with the chorus, at ease with themselves, and ensure that they have fun and want to return the next week.

The guests are probably feeling a bit apprehensive if they have never sung barbershop before. They probably will not know where to go or what to do, and they may wonder if they will fit in. To soothe some of their worries, several steps should be taken to help ensure a positive first impression of barbershop.

♪ ESTABLISH AND EXECUTE A PLAN TO RELIEVE FIRST NIGHT JITTERS

- ♪ Make the guest feel at home
- ♪ Assign him a buddy within his section
 - Buddy should assist him in any way he can - introduce him to members, help with music, answer any questions - be a friend to the guest!!!
- ♪ Give guest a nametag and **make sure members wear theirs too!!!**

♪ NEVER LEAVE HIM ALONE

- ♪ Involve him in the singing as much as possible such as in the chorus, octet, 5th wheel, or quartet – wherever he feels comfortable

- ♪ Introduce him to the director, section leaders and board members
- ♪ Provide him with necessary music and make sure he is ready with the music before starting the song
 - Don't want the chorus starting a song when the guest is still flipping through the book looking for the music
- ♪ Have a member assigned to the parking lot to assist guests
 - Have reserved spots for guest parking
 - Walk with them into the building
- ♪ ALWAYS be sure the meeting site is well-marked and easily found
 - Nothing is worse than a guest finding the school you meet at and not knowing which door to use or what room you meet in etc. This should happen EVERY chapter meeting night.
- ♪ Provide the guest with a souvenir of the night
 - Society Card (_____ Sang with _____)
 - Photo in quartet/chorus (Polaroid, Digital Camera)
 - Something else (pen/pencil, mug, CD)

IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

Every member of the chorus has his own role in making the first night for a prospective member a success!

♪ Membership Vice President

- Welcome all guests
- Gather information in the guest book
- Provide literature on the Society and chapter
- Provide music
- Arrange voice placement (even just a chorus of Happy Birthday) to place them in the proper section
- Introduce them to chapter at break

♪ Director

- Welcome all guests
- Encourage them as they sing, noting the strong singers
- Place them into a quartet or octet in front, depending on their ability or comfort level
- Thank them at the end of the night

♪ Section Leaders

- Introduce them to other section leaders
- Check how the guests are doing (is the part too low, too high, etc.)
- Suggest a new section for a guest (if needed)

♪ Music Librarian

- Have all necessary music labeled and filed appropriately
- Maintain guest books with current repertoire
- Make music easily accessible for guests (songs numbered, or pages numbered)

♪ Board Members

- Welcome the guests
- Converse with them and LISTEN

♪ Chapter Members

- Introduce yourself to guests
- Be sociable and LISTEN as you talk with guests
- Assist and encourage those around you
- Be genuine
- Stay after the meeting and engage the guests in singing
 - Tags, 5th wheel in quartet, etc.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION SHEET

The membership information sheet should provide your guests with any and all information possible about your chapter and membership within it.

♪ Explain the procedure for membership

- Voice audition
- Board approval

♪ Costs of membership

- Dues and payment options
- Uniforms
- Conventions and Travel
- Harmony Round Up

♪ Expectations of the chapter

- Provide learning tapes
- Provide music
- Provide instruction (director, section leaders, coaches, etc.)

♪ Expectations of members

- Learn music (words and notes)
- Learn choreography
- Participate in annual show, conventions, coaching sessions
- Enjoy themselves

♪ Establish and Publish Membership Guidelines

- As a chapter, you must follow Society regulations regarding membership, but you may also have your own requirements provided they are spelled out in your code of regulations. Be sure the requirements for chapter membership and performing chorus (attendance, audition tapes, etc.) are clearly defined, explained and followed.

♪ Any other Pertinent Information

- What is SPEBSQSA? - Stock # 4244
- SPEBSQSA Information Sheet - Stock # 4224

At the close of the evening, thank the guests again for attending. Answer any questions and ask of any concerns such as a part being too high or too low, etc. (although hopefully caught before then, voice tired, sore throat).

Make sure they are welcomed to return next week and inform them of any necessary changes (time, date, location, etc.).

FOLLOW UP

This is a major item of any new member program. Each guest should receive at least one letter **ASAP**, which thanks him for his interest and attendance, and welcomes him back the following week. A phone call a day or two after the night asking basically the same questions as the letter and perhaps another one a day or so ahead of the next meeting lets him know that you are interested in him. **I believe that THIS is THE most crucial part of any membership program.**

RETURNING GUESTS

Treat the guests the same as the first night in regards to assisting and friendliness. Buddy should again accompany them at all times and make sure they are as comfortable as they can be.

♪ Chapter Development Vice President

- Answer any questions the returning guest has. Provide him with the chapters' Membership Information Sheet

♪ Chapter Members , Board Members , Director , Etc.

- Engage the guest in **all** activities that they are comfortable joining

Again, at the close of the night, returning guests should be thanked for attending and welcomed back the following week.

Follow up should again include a minimum of a letter and/or phone call encouraging each guest to return the following week.

ORIENTATION

Once a guest has become a new member, it is important that they be oriented to your chapter, the district and the Society so that they can understand and feel a part of the organization.

A key to this is to make him feel that he is contributing to the forward direction of the chapter, and this can be done through much encouragement and support from all chapter members. One way to do this and get the new members involved is by giving them a job. Possible jobs could include helping with attendance or passing out nametags. They will involve the new member, yet it won't overpower him. These jobs also enable him to interact with every member each week. Being asked to serve on a committee or a subcommittee will involve a new member but may be intimidating for some. Place your new members carefully – you don't want to scare them away by placing them somewhere they are not comfortable.

As soon as possible, the new members should be provided with all necessary music, tapes, uniforms, list of current repertoire, and should be taken through any requirements that must be met in order to begin performing.

Your chapter's orientation program may be before the chapter meeting, or as a pull-out of the new members during a part of the meetings. You will need to decide what works for your chapter.

The orientation process should include instruction to the new member in at least the following areas:

- ♪ What Makes it Barbershop?
- ♪ The Society- History, Districts, Harmonizer, Harmony Foundation, Conventions, Judging, Kenosha WI.
- ♪ The District-History, dates of key gatherings, newsletter

♪ The Chapter- History, awards received, community service, bulletin

♪ Opportunities – Harmony Round Up, Conventions, Harmony College etc.

Once again, this is NOT all inclusive or a magical way to perfectly run a guest/new member program, but I believe it will assist you greatly in formulating what will work best for you and your chapter. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at:

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