

Leadership Wisdom for the Future: Membership in the New Millennium

“In a moving world, re-adaptation is the price of longevity.”

Why have Choruses Pursued Creative Chorus Model Development?

1. Diverse geographic locations make weekly rehearsals or extra rehearsals difficult and deter membership
2. Members want a more family-friendly or less constrictive rehearsal schedule
3. Vision and/or goal of the chorus may lead to different needs and ways to meet those needs.

What are the International Rules that dictate how Choruses operate?

1. 15 or more members + Director
2. Pay the charter or renewal fee for the chapter
3. Compete for scoring or evaluation once every 3 years
4. Completion of tax forms for IRS
5. Required Board or Team Management Governance

Let's note what International By-Laws or Standing Rules does not dictate on Chorus operation:

1. It doesn't tell us what kind of music to sing.
2. It doesn't dictate any particular meeting schedule for the chorus
3. It doesn't provide restrictions for membership (audition practices and acceptance is up to the chorus)
4. It doesn't require any particular kind of contest experience every 3 years – could be International Division, Open Division, Evaluation only or Evaluation only by video.

Vision or Goal of Chorus:

1. Strictly competitive in nature
2. Very competitive, but like to perform for community as well
3. More focused on performances and performance development

4. Enjoy singing and performing, but highly value the time for friendship development and supportive relationships

Calendar/Scheduling:

1. Some meet once a month as a group; may include small group rehearsals in between as possible.
2. Some take off a month or more in their summer season
3. Some meet weekly, but at different locations for their membership, so each member may only meet for rehearsal every other week or other time frame.
4. One meets on a “term” or “semester” basis – mid-January to June and September to mid-December, much like a community theater or school semester.
5. Some offer coaching *only* on normal chorus rehearsal times
6. Some allow part-time members that attend by media means or by review of video and recordings. One even has a director that attends rehearsal by Skype twice a month and coaches while asst. directors direct.

“Normal is just a cycle on the washing machine.”

Musical and Administrative Set-Ups:

1. Administrative and Musical team functions independently with financial and event planning cross-over
 2. Administrative and Musical team share personnel and have input into all areas
 3. Musical Director/Artistic Director/Administrative Director
- Musical Director Responsibilities –

- Musical Selection, Research, Purchase
- Musical Teaching
- Vocal Skill Development
- Repertoire Maintenance & Development
- Audition requirement development & conduct auditions
- Music Team Development
- Chorus musical vision and planning
- Rehearsal planning
- Interfacing with Artistic and Administrative Directors
- Providing Budget needs to Administrative Team

- Joint Meeting with Admin Team once a year

Artistic Director Responsibilities –

- Event/Show Development
- Staging or Choreography
- Costuming and Make-Up
- Scripting
- Emcee Choice and Development
- Artistic Team Development
- Interfacing with Musical and Administrative Directors
- Providing budget needs to Administrative Team
- Joint Meeting with Admin Team once a year

Administrative Director Responsibilities –

- Develop agenda and run Administrative Team meetings
- Coordinate budget development with Musical and Artistic Directors
- Advises and mentors Administrative Team (Membership, Finance, etc)
- Develops Goal Setting and Visioning as needed
- Develops/Coordinates joint meeting with Musical and Artistic Directors
- Seeks out and appoints people for jobs, committees, etc.

Strategies that Result in Membership Growth and Retention:

- Flexibility in Membership
- Flexibility in Attendance
- Everyone contributes in some way to chorus life (buy-in)
- No-Guilt Membership or Attendance
- Effective and Timely Communication of Expectations or Requirements
- Energized, Positive, Productive and Fun Rehearsals
- Developing clear goals and objectives that reflect chorus desires and priorities
- On-going and effective communication between members and leaders
- Celebration!
- Inclusive and supportive culture that provides rewards and recognition consistently
-
-

“The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from the old ones.”

What ideas or changes would excite your members? What do they need? What do they want? How can you serve them in those desires? If you could do anything differently in your chorus, what would it be?

Remember.... ***“The question is not whether our ideas are crazy, but whether they are crazy enough.”***

Ask Questions. Experiment. Explore. Attempt. Discover.
The Future Awaits!!!