

The Director's Role in Recruitment

The director plays a pivotal role in membership recruitment. No matter how hard the membership teams work to arrange publicity and marketing, meet and greet prospective members, and hand out attractive guest packets director's personal connection with each prospect is the most critical.

In order for the membership plan to succeed the director's enthusiastic involvement, support and willingness to cooperate are vital to the plan. The director is in the primary position of leadership, which ultimately sets the overall tone of the chorus. Tone means not just the sound of the chorus but the mood they exude. Chorus members and visitors rely on the director to motivate and uplift them, so they yearn to come back for more. Each director's positive influence creates the unique dynamic that makes Sweet Adelines choruses fun and attractive to members. The director influences the bulk of the guest's experience. After all, the chorus' musical product is largely a reflection of the director's skills and style. Ultimately, it's the music that grabs a prospect's attention and keeps her coming back.

Although chorus members have a duty here, it's primarily up to the director to provide exciting and energizing musical experiences for potential members. The director's awareness of what's going to appeal to the target prospects should be reflected in the rehearsal plan. Consequently, guests will connect with the chorus and the music if they are noticed and validated by the director. Eye contact and a smile will suffice if it's not possible to talk to each individual. Personal words of encouragement and appreciation are even better.

In the end, people flock to organizations where the leaders have charisma, talent and the ability to develop skills. Sweet Adelines choruses are no different. The director influences the bulk of the guest's experience.

Director's Role in Member Retention

The director is the most highly visible leader in the chorus. Everything a director does either encourages or discourages a member to stay. As such, leaders must ensure that the culture portrayed by the director is in line with the goals of the chorus.

Training

In order to gain the respect of the members, directors should be competent and willing to improve with ongoing training. Leaders should help the directors become the most capable, enthusiastic and dynamic musical leaders that they can be by providing educational opportunities for them. Pay expenses to regional and international workshops, seminars and conventions. Bring in regional and international faculty to coach, motivate and train members.

People Skills

Directors must possess excellent people skills. A director needs to frequently recognize and show appreciation to members who go the extra mile for the good of the chorus. Developing an atmosphere of reward and accomplishment and seeking opportunities to give verbal recognition to as many members as possible is a formula for success.

Musical Excellence

Directors that are committed to musical excellence and to producing a quality musical product will plan stimulating and productive rehearsals. In order to achieve this, assistant directors and section leaders need to be utilized on a regular basis. The director must demonstrate flexibility and be open to alternative suggestions if they are deemed to be in the best interest of the chorus.

Promptness

Start and end rehearsals on time. Respect member's time by planning each rehearsal with a balance between the concentration and drill needed for learning with humor and fun. This is best accomplished by making sure that the chorus sings more than talks during rehearsals. There is a great deal of competition for our members' time, so proper use of that time is important.

Additional ideas for directors:

Provide new member orientation in music and choreography. Help them get performance ready. Make it a big deal when a new member is qualified for her first chorus performance. Give some type of award.

Develop a good education program for current members. Plan education events within chorus (judging categories, etc.).

Keep a positive attitude; it increases energy and each member's self-esteem.

Source: Real Growth SAI – Harmony College NW 2014

Introduce new music throughout the year. Plan exciting repertoire for performances.

Dispense with mandatory rehearsal requirements; use recorder qualifying and visual qualifying as the means to know that a member is ready to perform.

Laugh at yourselves. Know when to break the tension. Watch for humorous moments – let them be a healthy part of the rehearsal.

Find ways to give more individual recognition in front of the chorus.

Treat every member with respect. Understand the differences in time, energy and financial sensitivities of all of the members.

Encourage quartet singing. Use tag quarteting at rehearsal once a month.

Provide choreography assistance outside of rehearsal time.

Offer personal vocal instructions (PVI) on a weekly basis, given by designated music staff members.

Constantly train and develop future chorus musical leaders.

Provide 100 percent accurate (notes, words, in tune) repertoire learning tracks.

Have a passion for and understand the music and the art form.

Remember, it's a privilege to be a Sweet Adelines director. Insist, praise and take half the blame.