

BUILDING A HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM!!!

- ✓ **Teams need talent.** To have a strong team you need a variety of personalities, experiences and abilities, using each person's strengths to round out your team. Work with new members of the team to uncover the skills that best contribute to the team's success. Doing team training bonds the team and helps put everyone on the same playing field. Be sure to keep refining your individual and team "talents". Look for every opportunity to provide or obtain the additional training to keep your team growing and developing your individual and team strengths. Keep looking for the talent that can help your Chorus reach its full potential, meeting the needs of your membership.
- ✓ **Provide an orientation.** An orientation will help start new team members off on the right foot and bring them up to speed as soon as possible. Get to know them. Help them get to know you and the way your team operates.

New members on the team should be briefed and thoroughly oriented to the team, its goal, the history of its achievements, its strengths, and its future plan. New members can also be assigned a mentor to assist in their orientation process. In this way, unnecessary conflict can be avoided. On the other hand, revisiting ideas through the naïve questions and ideas of new members may be a valuable way to review how decisions were made. New members may even contribute a fresh perspective and surprising insights into problems the group thought it had addressed completely.

- ✓ **Encourage two-way communication.** Communication is vital to a successful team. Ensure all members receive important information instantly. Teleconferences and use of email are good outlets for resolving situations, answering questions that arises, as well as, listening to new ideas.

Listening? You ask. The most important leadership skill for us may be taken for granted most of our lives. Conflicts often occur because people are listening poorly, and they often don't get resolved because people fail to listen while they're heatedly disagreeing. Effective listeners are those who are engaged and demonstrate to the speaker that they're being heard and understood.

To serve effectively as a team, communication must be open and honest. Sound **HARD**? Yes, but it can be done effectively if you kept these key words in mind:

H - Honest **A** - Appropriate **R** - Respectful **D** - Direct

- ✓ **Define your purpose and goals.** To function efficiently teams need a clear purpose, established goals and ground rules. Share your plan and mission statement with the whole team. Keep those goals and mission statement visible and use them to resolve tough issues and keep your team directed. By sharing these with your committees, your chorus leaders, your entire membership, you will be forced to stay true to these and your mission. Be sure to keep the Strategic Plan in front of you and revisit it at each and every meeting.
- ✓ **Develop camaraderie.** Set aside some time for the team to spend together outside the formal meeting setting. Team members will get to know one another better in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. The better they get along, the better they'll work together. Some team members may not see the value in this time together, so be sure to talk about the purpose of these activities and what can be gained by investing time in getting to know each other. This is especially important since the team only sees each other a few times each year.
- ✓ **Motivate your team to believe in their abilities.** Build confidence and self-esteem with regular words of encouragement for each other. When you see a team member doing something right, offer a compliment and point out her strengths. When you achieve a goal or receive a compliment, share it with the entire team. At the end of each session or meeting, list the accomplishments of the team. Don't be afraid to pat yourselves on the back. Publicize your accomplishments to the membership and "take a bow" when you've earned it. This will make the team members feel good about the time they've invested in their Regional contributions, as well as, it may encourage others to want to become a part of your team.
- ✓ **Keep an open mind.** Team members are a great resource for new ideas to make your team more efficient. LISTEN to each others suggestions and implement what you can whenever possible. Encourage team members to continuously review the procedures of your team and come up with better ones. Check yourself every now and then with some straight forward questions you can ask yourself and answer them honestly. Am I being open to others ideas? Am I honestly considering other members point of view? Am I being a TEAM PLAYER?
- ✓ **Create a climate of trust.** Trust is one of the most important intangible characteristics of a successful team. Team members must trust one another, and they all must trust the "team concept". Unfortunately, trust is like fine

crystal: it can easily be broken beyond repair! Building and maintaining trust must be a constant concern of the team to function effectively.

Why do we trust? What are the factors involved in someone choosing to trust another? What does it take for our membership to trust the Management Team?

Some things people mention when answering this question include keeping commitments, being trustful, consistent, dependable, fair, respectful, and being a good listener. Do you consistently behave in this manner? If not, you may need to improve in these areas to build trust between you and your team members. Team members should have self-discipline and hold themselves and each other accountable for completing tasks and achieving goals.

- ✓ **Monitor effectiveness.** This allows you to identify small problems and fix them before they have a chance to do any harm. Observe your team to make sure each person is contributing and that members are working well together. Handle conflicts immediately. Unresolved conflicts will only grow bigger. As part of closing your team meeting, take a moment to list what you've accomplished, what is working, what you can do better next time. Keep these notes and review them at the beginning of your next meeting.

I know you're looking forward to this next year together. It can be even more exciting and fulfilling than the last if we keep working at these, and other skills, as a team. Help make it happen.

Old Chinese proverb: "Hungry man opens mouth wide, expecting flying, roasted duck to fly into mouth." It won't come to you - you have to make it happen...

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