

Be an Effective Fifth Ear and Coach!

Common Traits of Good Coaches

- Analytical
- Know their topic inside & out
- Always hungry to learn from others
- Understand their own strengths
- Flexible
- Can think on their feet
- Confident
- Passionate
- Excellent verbal skills
- Approachable
- Upbeat
- Can go with the flow
- Observant
- Diplomatic
- A good sense of humor

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Helpful Hints

- Have a variety of ways to say the same thing
- Be sensitive about feelings -- they are trusting you with their voice
- If something isn't working...move on!
- Looks for signs of stamina waning--breaks can revitalize
- After intense work, give them a right brain type of task
- If unsure of where to start:
 - * Break it down (single section/duet)
 - * Ask them to sing it again (or a portion of the song)
- Be very aware of your language -- keep it POSITIVE
- Direct comments to the voice -- depersonalize
- Don't try fix everything at once...prioritize what you work on
- Periodically ask the group questions -- make it safe to ask if they don't understand something
- Be willing to experiment
- If demonstrating -- always end on the correct way (it's the last thing they hear to emulate)
- Record yourself and then...listen to it!
 - * What did you do well?
 - * What do you wish you had said?
 - * Were you clear/concise?
 - * Did you talk too much?
 - * Any annoying habits?

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Ways to get started

- Be a 5th Ear
- Invite chorus buds to come over & let you practice
- Observe as many coaching sessions as possible
 - * Call other choruses and ask -- most are open
 - * Take notes (this can augment your bag of Tricks!)
- Note the coach's style and MIMIC
- Beef up your listening skills by analyzing CDs/DVDs
 - * Regional library
 - * Old chorus competition videos
 - * YouTube -- many choruses post their comp video
 - * SAI/BHS HQ -- they have many CDs/DVDs for sale
- Ask to 'shadow' with a coach
- Attend other musical events --what can you 'borrow'?

Other Considerations

Define your fee schedule. Be consistent.

Clarify expense reimbursement, if applicable.

i.e. Mileage? Food? Beverages?

Meet your obligations. Rescheduling is a last resort.

Have a solid grasp of start/end times.

Do not talk out-of-school. What happens in Vegas...

Have fun -- being a coach is a gift!

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Coaching session Guideline

- Observe warm-ups. What are the vocal strengths/needs?
- Have the group sing a couple of songs
- Say something positive!
- While group is singing, make notes -- notice broad trends
- After complete, review your notes and create a plan
- Take a confident breath and dive in!
- Work on the most important issues first
- Applaud the successes
- If not getting your vision, pull out your bag of tricks
- Be sure to spread the coaching love around
(i.e. don't pick on one person/section)
- Periodically ask for feedback -- see if they are getting it
- Before singing the whole song, ask the group to recap
- Have them perform the song
- Discuss -- what did they remember? What can they do better next time? Make it an interactive discussion.

At the end of the session, ask overall what they learned. There are NO wrong answers! Add any additional items. Wrap up with encouraging comments and a plan for them to work on.

Genuinely thank them for sharing their heart and voices with you!