

Do Less & Sing More

Chris Rimple

President, Voices Incorporated

Class Information

- ▶ Name: Do Less & Sing More
- ▶ Length: 1 session of 90 minutes
- ▶ Size: Unlimited
- ▶ Participants: Any, but targeted to chapter leaders
- ▶ Prerequisites: None
- ▶ Materials: PowerPoint slides
- ▶ Description: Is your chapter spending more time on non-singing “jobs” than on singing? Is it getting harder to find volunteers for those jobs? We’ll review ways in which you can increase member and audience satisfaction by doing less and singing more, and how to get off the “financial hamster wheel” so that decisions are not driven by chapter financial needs.

Objectives

- ▶ Provide participants with information and tools to become more effective chapter leaders
- ▶ Provide participants with an overview of generational and societal changes, and their impact on barbershop
- ▶ Provide participants with an understanding of the Do Less & Sing More concept
- ▶ Provide participants with specific examples that can be applied to their chapter

Participant Expectations

- ▶ Basic knowledge of the barbershop world and terminology
- ▶ Basic knowledge of chapter operations

Instructor - Chris Rimple

- ▶ Barbershopper since 2003
- ▶ Former chapter VP Music and VP Marketing, District VP Marketing, BHS Marketing instructor
- ▶ President of Voices Incorporated chapter, HCNW instructor, Harmony U instructor
- ▶ Disciple of Chuck Greene and J.R. “Digger” MacDougall - focus on generational/societal impacts to barbershop
- ▶ 51, married, no kids, work in high tech - in our “target market” for recruiting
- ▶ First barbershop experience at 18, but didn’t join for 20 years - plant the seed, it will grow
- ▶ Email - chrisrimple@yahoo.com

Agenda

- ▶ Logistics
- ▶ Class Demographics
- ▶ No Time Like The Present
- ▶ Overview
- ▶ Chapter Finances
- ▶ Just (Don't) Do It
- ▶ Share The Load
- ▶ Schedule
- ▶ Example Chapter
- ▶ Summary
- ▶ Q & A

Logistics

- ▶ Class is 90 minutes with no breaks
 - ▶ If needed, step out and rejoin quietly
- ▶ Ask questions at any time
 - ▶ Please raise hand and be acknowledged
 - ▶ There is also 10 minutes at end for general Q&A
- ▶ Silence the noisemakers
 - ▶ Phones, pagers, etc. can be on but in silent mode

Logistics

- ▶ **Talk about it**

- ▶ Post to social media using #HCNW2017

- ▶ **Video recording**

- ▶ Class is being recorded for later viewing online

- ▶ **All materials available**

- ▶ Slides, recordings, and all materials can be accessed online

Class Demographics

- ▶ How many in BHS? SAI? HI?
- ▶ How many years in barbershop?
 - ▶ 1-10? 11-20? 21-30? 31-40? 41-50? 51+?
- ▶ How many chapter administrative leaders?
- ▶ How many chapter music team members?
- ▶ How many at HCNW for the first time?

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No Time Like The Present

Generational Groups Alive Today

- ▶ Born before 1945 - Traditionalists
 - ▶ Grew up in times of scarcity
 - ▶ Have more time than money
 - ▶ Expect hierarchical leadership
 - ▶ **Affiliation** is important to most
- ▶ Born 1945+ - Boomers, GenX, GenY, Millennials
 - ▶ Grew up in times of plenty
 - ▶ Have more money than time
 - ▶ Expect participatory leadership
 - ▶ **Achievement** is important to most

Societal Changes Since 1945

- ▶ Suburban living and sprawl
 - ▶ Neighbors are unknown, less bonding with people who have similar values and interests
- ▶ Vocational class balance
 - ▶ Shift from agricultural and manufacturing to knowledge and service industries has flattened traditional hierarchies
- ▶ Speed up of everyday life
 - ▶ Work is no longer 9 to 5, overall free time significantly reduced
- ▶ Electronic media
 - ▶ Speed and availability of information
- ▶ Entertainment choices
 - ▶ No longer reliant on self-entertainment

Impacts Of Changes

- ▶ Affects all non-profits and fraternal organizations
 - ▶ Volunteerism and membership have fallen dramatically
- ▶ Music has lost importance
 - ▶ Replaced by other entertainment forms
 - ▶ No longer included in many school programs
- ▶ Barbershop is not immune
 - ▶ Membership has declined for many years
 - ▶ Even with the recent popularity of televised singing contests, Glee, and Pitch Perfect, barbershop is not seeing a meaningful positive impact

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Overview

Origins Of The Concept

- ▶ **Founded a new chapter in 2016**
 - ▶ Focused on singing quality
 - ▶ Only rehearse 2x/month, Saturdays 12-5pm
 - ▶ Members coming from 3 states/provinces
- ▶ **Time is a very limited resource**
 - ▶ Wanted members to focus on singing skills
 - ▶ Wanted to maximize at-home rehearsal
- ▶ **Standard practices clearly wouldn't fit**
 - ▶ Needed to minimize non-singing “jobs”

How It Works

- ▶ Based loosely on modern engineering processes
 - ▶ Tasks are ignored/deferred until truly important
 - ▶ Non-singing work is minimized to avoid “waste”
 - ▶ Communication is favored over artifacts/records
 - ▶ The finished task becomes the specification
- ▶ Assess every potential task
 - ▶ Does it advance the chapter goals?
 - ▶ Is it needed now? Can it be delayed?
 - ▶ Can it be simplified, automated, or replaced by a tool?
- ▶ Do only those tasks that advance chapter goals
- ▶ Some tasks, delayed long enough, become irrelevant

Chapter Finances

Get Off The Financial Hamster Wheel

- ▶ Finances often drive chapter behavior
 - ▶ Most income is from paid performances
 - ▶ Shows earn enough to last 6 months, then another show is required
 - ▶ Always preparing for the next show, so little time left to improve singing, get coaching, etc.
 - ▶ Not improving, so struggle to retain and grow audience
- ▶ With alternate income sources, the chapter has more options

Dues Should Reflect Their Value

- ▶ Many chapters undercharge
 - ▶ \$5/month (\$60/year) provides a member with a rehearsal facility, Director, 10 hours of participatory entertainment (2.5 hours/rehearsal), fellowship, and much more
 - ▶ That's just \$0.50/hour!
- ▶ Compare that to golf, bowling, movies, etc.
 - ▶ Clearly, most chapters should be charging more
- ▶ Dues should mostly/fully offset the cost of basic operations
 - ▶ Rehearsal facility, Director, music licensing, and BHS insurance
 - ▶ For an average chapter, that's probably \$20-30/month

There Will Be Resistance

- ▶ Traditionals, some Baby Boomers, those on limited or fixed incomes, and others may oppose a significant increase in dues
- ▶ But you may be surprised by the number of members that support it, when they understand the benefits
- ▶ You should consider implementing youth/senior discounts and establish a Financial Hardship Committee to assist members that need it

Member Contributions

- ▶ Your chapter is a 501(c)3 non-profit
- ▶ Rather than charging dues, ask for “member contributions”, which are donations
 - ▶ Receive contributions directly, not through BHS/SAI/HI
 - ▶ All contributions are tax-deductible
 - ▶ Employer matching can add 50-100%
- ▶ You will need to issue tax receipts

Donations Are Easier Close To Home

- ▶ Donations (separate from member contributions) should be solicited from members and supporters with financial means
 - ▶ Receive donations directly, not through BHS/SAI/HI
 - ▶ All donations are tax-deductible
 - ▶ Employer matching can add 50-100%
 - ▶ You will need to issue tax receipts
- ▶ 30% of member donations to Harmony Foundation can be earmarked for your chapter
- ▶ Note that donations to a Financial Hardship fund are not tax-deductible, since they will benefit individual members

Don't Underprice Your Product

- ▶ Many chapters undercharge for their products - performances, singing valentines, etc.
- ▶ Compare what you're providing and your pricing to arts organizations in your area
- ▶ With good marketing, you may find that your audience has a far greater willingness to pay than you imagine

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Just (Don't) Do It

Record Less But Communicate More

- ▶ Many chapters produce artifacts that are read once (or not at all) and never reviewed again
 - ▶ Newsletters, Board minutes, committee reports, etc.
- ▶ Often, they are only distributed at rehearsals, slowing the speed at which important information is delivered
- ▶ Using modern tools, communication can be streamlined and improved

Centralize Everything

- ▶ Store all member content in a single, online location so it can be easily found at all times
- ▶ This includes the member handbook, sheet music, learning tracks, repertoire qualification, attendance records, event logistics, and so on
- ▶ Google Drive, OneDrive, and Dropbox are all free storage solutions - BHS also offers a discount on Choir Genius

Notify Quickly And Broadly

- ▶ Ensure that every member has an email address and is checking it regularly
- ▶ Stop publishing a chapter newsletter and use email instead
- ▶ Google Groups and Yahoo Groups are free tools for email mailing lists - both offer a “daily digest” option and message search

Capture Only What's Needed

- ▶ Slack, Google Hangouts, Skype, or another multi-user chat application is great for Board communication between meetings
- ▶ Information and files can be easily shared, polls can be taken, and motions can be proposed/voted
- ▶ At the end of a month, copy/paste the results to a document that becomes the Secretary's minutes for the next Board meeting

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Share The Load

What Is An Alliance?

In the context of *Doing Less & Singing More*, an alliance is...

Any relationship between a chapter and an individual or group, that benefits both, at little or no cost to either

What Are Easiest Alliances To Form?

- ▶ In your local community
 - ▶ Feel a kinship to other local groups
- ▶ Struggling with the same issues
 - ▶ Choral groups, arts organizations, other non-profits
- ▶ Looking for solutions

Alliance Benefits

Group Discussion - 10 Minutes

What Benefits Can We Offer?

It's often easy to see what a barbershop chapter can get from an alliance, but what benefits can we offer?

Benefits We Can Offer

- ▶ Performances
- ▶ Volunteers
- ▶ Leadership training
- ▶ Music training
- ▶ Experience toward education/employment

Alliance Partners

Group Discussion - 10 Minutes

Who Are Alliance Partners?

A neighboring chapter is an obvious choice,
but who are other possible alliance partners?

Choral & Arts

- ▶ Other barbershop chapters - BHS/SAI/HI
- ▶ Other choruses - a cappella or otherwise
- ▶ Other musical groups - musical theater, symphony, etc.
- ▶ Other arts groups - theater, dance, etc.
- ▶ School choral programs - middle, high, college/university

Civic & Charities

- ▶ Senior centers / living facilities, community centers, hospitals, etc.
- ▶ Local non-profits
- ▶ School groups
- ▶ Boy/girl scouts, other youth-oriented organizations
- ▶ Fraternal organizations

Educational & Business

- ▶ Middle/high schools
- ▶ Colleges and universities
- ▶ Businesses and business groups
- ▶ Businesses that provide arts funding

Alliance Benefits

Group Discussion - 10 Minutes

What Are The Benefits Of Alliances?

Thinking about the alliance partners...

Choral & Arts

Civic & Charities

Education & Business

What specific benefits could we receive and what benefits could we provide in exchange?

Choral & Arts

▶ Benefits for them

- ▶ Reduced effort - shared hosting, smaller repertoire
- ▶ Exposure to potential audience
- ▶ Publicity for supporting the community

▶ Benefits for us

- ▶ Reduced effort - shared hosting, smaller repertoire
- ▶ Potential income
- ▶ Free rehearsal space?
- ▶ Exposure to potential audience
- ▶ Exposure to potential singers
- ▶ Publicity for supporting the community

Civic & Charities

▶ Benefits for them

- ▶ Free performances
- ▶ Fundraising opportunities
- ▶ Publicity for supporting the community

▶ Benefits for us

- ▶ Free rehearsal space
- ▶ Exposure to potential audience
- ▶ Exposure to potential singers
- ▶ Publicity for supporting the community

Educational & Business

▶ Benefits for them

- ▶ Experience
- ▶ Potential school credit
- ▶ Free performances
- ▶ Publicity for supporting the community

▶ Benefits for us

- ▶ Expertise and free labor
- ▶ Potential income
- ▶ Free rehearsal space?
- ▶ Exposure to potential audience
- ▶ Exposure to potential singers
- ▶ Publicity for supporting the community

Alliance Examples

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Common Alliances

▶ Barbershop chapters

- ▶ Share a show - reduce hosting, reduce repertoire, grow audience, improve ticket sales, etc.

▶ School choral programs

- ▶ Invite onto show - grow audience, potential singers

▶ Senior living facilities and hospitals

- ▶ Perform in exchange for free rehearsal space
- ▶ Perform at no charge and bring a reporter - free publicity

▶ Sports teams

- ▶ Perform national anthem - free publicity, grow audience

Uncommon Alliances

- ▶ Non-barbershop choruses
 - ▶ Invite onto show - grow audience, potential singers
- ▶ Musical theater, symphony, etc.
 - ▶ Be singers for a production that includes a chorus
- ▶ Local non-profits, school groups, etc.
 - ▶ Perform a fundraising show with 50% or more to the charity - free labor, free publicity, grow audience, potential singers
- ▶ Schools/colleges/universities
 - ▶ Provide experience and possibly school credit to students - free expertise, free labor, free publicity, potential singers
 - ▶ Examples include choral directing, vocal coaching, script writing, stage management, costume design, makeup, logo/flyer/program design, event photography/videography, website design

Uncommon Alliances

- ▶ Fraternal organizations
 - ▶ Perform in exchange for free rehearsal space - grow audience, potential singers
- ▶ Owner of empty office/warehouse space
 - ▶ Provide “occupancy” in exchange for free rehearsal space
- ▶ Chamber of commerce, city council, etc.
 - ▶ Perform national anthem - free publicity, grow audience
- ▶ Businesses that provide arts funding
 - ▶ Perform a free show for community in exchange for grant money - free publicity, grow audience

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Schedule

A Schedule That Supports Your Goals

- ▶ Many chapters have a very full annual schedule - two shows, singing valentines, Division and District contests, unpaid performances, and weekly rehearsals
- ▶ There is little time left to improve singing, introduce and refine repertoire, etc.
- ▶ A less busy schedule will allow more time to focus on singing and singing skills

Guest, Don't Host

- ▶ Hosting a show involves facility coordination, ticket sales, program content, ad sales, and much more
- ▶ Avoid all that by guesting on another chapter's show, and maybe even get paid
- ▶ Your chapter can headline or fill out a show
 - ▶ You get more time for rehearsal
 - ▶ Host chapter has less repertoire to prepare and can be more polished
- ▶ You can also take turns hosting with another chapter

Plan For Alternating Years

- ▶ Avoid burnout by not doing everything every year
 - ▶ Year 1 could include Division and District contests
 - ▶ Year 2 could include singing valentines, International contest, and a holiday show
- ▶ This provides sufficient time to focus on singing quality, not just quantity

Perform With A Purpose

- ▶ Leading up to a contest, guest on other chapter shows for practice
- ▶ If trying to grow your audience, perform a short set on a non-barbershop arts show or open mic night
- ▶ Ensure that every performance serves the chapter goals

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Example Chapter

Voices Incorporated

VI Tools

▶ Choir Genius

- ▶ Member information, mailing lists, schedule/calendar, member attendance
- ▶ Music sharing, riser placements, qualification tracking
- ▶ Project and task management, invoicing/dues collection

▶ Google Drive

- ▶ Public - event flyers, files shared with other chapters
- ▶ Members - member handbook, performance/contest logistic details, rehearsal recordings, photos, logos and marketing items
- ▶ Leadership - operations manual, accounting, marketing and other items

▶ Slack

- ▶ Members - announcements, channels for every major activity/event
- ▶ Leadership - motions, channels for every major activity/event

VI Income

▶ Member Contributions (“Dues”)

- ▶ \$15/month (\$180/year)
- ▶ Collected via Choir Genius invoicing (not BHS)
- ▶ Tax-deductible donation, eligible for employer match

▶ Donations

- ▶ Some members give beyond expected contributions
- ▶ Also receiving quarterly disbursements from Harmony Foundation

▶ Headlining

- ▶ VI handles 50% of the stage time for a flat fee
- ▶ Allows host chapter to do a better job with less repertoire - focus on ticket sales, program ad sales, and maximizing profit
- ▶ Allows VI to spend time singing, not hosting

VI Schedule

2017 to Midwinter

HCNW performance
International contest
A Cappella Joy show
District contest
Youth Chorus rehearsals
Fundraiser show (host)
Midwinter contest

2018

QCED performance
Division II contest
Federal Way show
HCNW performance
International contest
Holiday rehearsals
District contest
Holiday shows

Summary

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What Have We Learned?

- ▶ Other chapters have the same issues - share your good ideas and copy theirs
- ▶ Societal and generational changes are having huge impacts on barbershop
- ▶ With changes to income structure, a chapter can regain control of its finances and schedule
- ▶ Combined with other changes, a chapter can spend much less time on non-singing jobs and more time singing

Additional Resources

- ▶ Harmony College Northwest

- ▶ <http://www.harmonycollege.org>

- ▶ EVG Regional Leadership Academy

- ▶ <http://evgadmin.org/members/Calendar.php>

- ▶ BHS Healthy Chapter Initiative

- ▶ <http://www.barbershop.org/education/healthy-chapter-initiative>

- ▶ BHS Education (Harmony U / HU Online)

- ▶ <http://www.barbershop.org/education>

Questions?

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