

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. A thin, light gray diagonal line runs from the bottom left towards the top right, intersecting the green shapes.

# 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. We’ll look at free and low-cost resources available to aid with chapter operations, performance, marketing, and other needs, and we’ll review tools, services, and other solutions that you can begin using immediately.

# 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
- ▶ 52, 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](mailto:chrisrimple@yahoo.com)

# Agenda

- ▶ Logistics
- ▶ Class Demographics
- ▶ No Time Like The Present
- ▶ 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
- ▶ **Silence the noisemakers**
  - ▶ Phones, pagers, etc. can be on but in silent mode
- ▶ **Ask questions at any time**
  - ▶ There is also time at end for general Q&A

# Logistics

## ▶ Talk about it

- ▶ Post to social media

## ▶ Video recording

- ▶ Class may be recorded for later viewing online

## ▶ All materials available

- ▶ Slides, recordings, and all content is 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?

The background features a large black triangular shape on the left side. On the right side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent green geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, in various shades of green. Two thin white lines cross each other in the lower right quadrant of the image.

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



# Overview - Do Less & Sing More

# 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

The background features a large black triangle on the left side. On the right side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent green shapes in various shades, ranging from light lime green to dark forest green. Two thin white lines cross each other: one is a diagonal line sloping upwards from the bottom left towards the top right, and the other is a steeper diagonal line sloping downwards from the top right towards the bottom left.

# 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

# Chapter Income

What are your chapter's income sources?

- ▶ Annual show, holiday show, other shows?
- ▶ Singing valentines and other quartet activities?
- ▶ Program ads, grants, and other sources?

Is your chapter on the financial hamster wheel?

- ▶ Could you eliminate an annual or holiday show and survive?

# Chapter Dues

What are your chapter's dues?

What does that include?

- ▶ Rehearsal facility?
- ▶ Sheet music?
- ▶ Learning tracks?
- ▶ Director fees?
- ▶ Coaching fees?
- ▶ Uniform fees?
- ▶ Other?

# 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



# Pricing Your Products

What does your chapter charge for...

- ▶ Annual show tickets?
- ▶ Singing valentines?
- ▶ Program ads?
- ▶ Other?

# 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

# What's A Singing Valentine Worth?

- ▶ Imagine the very best gift you ever gave for Valentine's Day...
  - ▶ Then imagine giving a gift that would be remembered not just days or weeks, but for a lifetime
  - ▶ A gift that is unique and customized for the recipient
  - ▶ How much would you pay for that?
- ▶ What if it was personally delivered to the recipient's home or work at a time of your choosing?
  - ▶ How much would you pay for that?
- ▶ What if it was not just one person delivering, but 2? 3? 4?
  - ▶ How much would you pay for that?

The background features a large black area on the left and a complex pattern of overlapping green triangles and polygons on the right. Two white lines cross each other in the lower right quadrant.

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



The background features a large black triangle on the left side. On the right side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent green shapes in various shades, ranging from light lime green to dark forest green. Two white lines cross each other: one is a thick white line that starts from the bottom left and extends towards the top right, and the other is a thinner white line that starts from the top right and extends towards the bottom left.

Share The Load

# What Is An Alliance?

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

# Benefits We Can Offer

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

# Alliance Partners

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent green triangles and lines. A prominent light gray line runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. The green shapes vary in shades, from a pale lime green to a deep forest green, creating a layered, geometric effect.

# 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

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the slide, with some extending towards the left. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

# 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

The background of the slide is white with abstract green geometric shapes on the right side. These shapes include overlapping triangles and polygons in various shades of green, from light lime to dark forest green. A thin grey line also crosses the right side of the slide, intersecting the green shapes.

# 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





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

# Example Chapter

Voices Incorporated

# 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 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 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

The background features a complex arrangement of overlapping, semi-transparent green triangles and lines. The colors range from light lime green to dark forest green. A thin, light gray line runs diagonally across the lower right portion of the image, intersecting several of the green shapes. The overall composition is modern and minimalist.

# 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>

- ▶ BHS Healthy Chapter Initiative

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

- ▶ BHS Education (Harmony U / HU Online)

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

- ▶ BHS Everyone In Harmony

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

# Relevant Articles

## ▶ Do Less & Sing More (Overview)

▶ [https://issuu.com/theharmonizer/docs/hzr\\_march-april\\_2017-final](https://issuu.com/theharmonizer/docs/hzr_march-april_2017-final)

## ▶ Tech Talk: Smart Apps For Smart Rehearsals

▶ [https://issuu.com/theharmonizer/docs/harmonizer\\_vo\\_l78\\_no2\\_marapr2018](https://issuu.com/theharmonizer/docs/harmonizer_vo_l78_no2_marapr2018)

Questions?

