

# Unit Sound – What’s the big deal, anyway?!

As a *cappella*'s popularity rises, audiences become more knowledgeable and discerning. Accuracy and blend become even more important to show off the ringing beauty of barbershop.

Any one person not executing any one element will draw attention away from the unit.

Spontaneous precision needed in all elements: (All happening simultaneously by every singer!)

- Freedom from tension in the vocal instrument
- Oceans of air under the sound (support, not muscle tension!)
- Common, matched approach to vocal production
- Breath at the onset of sound
- Shared/common resonating space
- Open vowels
- Open resonance – **relaxed** and ringing
- **Matched** vowel production –open and appropriately shaped for range/ring/style
- Consistent (*i.e.*, the same) vocal quality throughout the whole singing range – head through mix through to chest
- Blended vocal qualities
- Full vocal **presence** and commitment
- **Pitch** accuracy
- **Instant** interval/chord accuracy
- Instant chord synchronization (striking the chord together)
- No consonant leaks
- Vocal and physical energy
- Appropriate barbershop balance on all pitches and volume levels
- Appropriate vocal textures that enhance the sound, not detract from it
- Vowel modifications enhance unity, rather than disturbing the match

***When vocal unity occurs, we hear the group SOUND, not the individual VOICES.***