

Engaging Music Educators

LO'L Leadership Training Academy

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Kirk Young's Advice

- I can tell you that until you earn a music educator's trust, your chapter will be seen as little more than one among many entities vying for their attention.
- The process that follows outlines:
 - How to stand out
 - How to build trust
 - How to help music educators in their mission to change lives through singing



Before asking “How?” > ask “Why?”

- A chapter has to do some soul-searching before contacting a school or a music teacher.
- If your goal is to recruit young men into your chapter, **stop right now!**
 - Membership growth is for a different chapter committee doing a different kind of outreach
 - And definitely among a different pool of candidates.
- Youth Outreach is about giving with *no strings attached*.
- Any other motive, and teachers will shut you out.



Be Careful!

Be certain that music educators have no reason to infer that your motive is to:

- Recruit their students and/or steal away their best male voices
- Use their auditorium for a discount or for free
- Compete with the music educator in the community
- Evaluate the music education program or alter the curriculum
- “Force” this teacher to like and use barbershop in their program



Don't Apologize – BUT Be Respectful

- You need not downplay your chapter's love of barbershop!
- But educators must be confident that your help is unconditional.
- They'll get to know barbershop as they get to know you
- Remember: high-quality barbershop sells itself!
- But music educators need to come to barbershop on their own terms.
- **Never forget that your mission is to help music educators change more lives through singing – on *their* terms – with *no strings attached*.**



Understand the Realities of Music Education

- Don't expect success if you simply show up and say, "We're here to help your program!"
- Music educators hear that all the time > and most have been burned.
- To stand out as different, you have to **be different**.
- Each music educator already has a vision for their program
 - Much of it is dictated by state and district curriculum standards.
- **This is not your program to take over!**
- *No strings attached* means you believe the music educator knows best how to run their program and you will support them 100%.



Bear in Mind...

This process, to be effective, is going to take:

- **TIME**
- **EFFORT!**



STEP ONE:

Chapter Survey



Ask Some Questions

A chapter has to do some soul searching first:

- ✓ Survey the Chapter membership.
- ✓ Find out what level of interest there is for a YIH program.
- ✓ If there is at least **80%** buy in, proceed.



Pick a YIH team

Appoint someone to head it up – some titles:

- Vice President of YIH
- YIH Committee Chairman
- YIH Coordinator, or whatever you decide to call him...

Recruit 3-5 guys who have a heart for young people

- Consider HFI contributors – they've made a commitment to YIH!

Find ways to include everyone in the chapter in the efforts!



Determine the Type of YIH Program

The chapter has to decide what type of YIH program it wants to build:

- A **“passive” program** can be primarily monetary donations to a local school.
- An **“active” program** requires research, member involvement, traveling, support and logistics and more.



STEP TWO:

Demographic Research



Demographic Research

- Identify the schools within the city/county you call “home.”
- Are there any natural connections to any of the surrounding communities and school districts?
 - Chapter members employed by any of the school districts?
 - Is there a wife of a member who is connected to a school?
 - Does anyone in the chapter know an administrator/teacher/staff?
 - Does anyone have a professional relationship with the school district?
 - Does anyone have students who attend any of the schools?
 - Did anyone graduate from the school and/or sing for the ME?



Evaluate

Cross-reference the connections in the chapter and the geographic locations of the schools

- Discover if there is an advantageous situation already existing.
- If there is, this could be your **target school(s)**!

In Manitowoc, we have 4 schools where we already have a relationship

- Some members sang for the current director
- Their chorus has sung at our Christmas Show
- We're providing coaching to their S&EF quartets

We are free approach their ME's because we already have a relationship!



Evaluate: More Research...

On the other hand, IF:

- You don't have any current relationships with music educators
- Or, there are no obvious connections
- Or, you want to expand into other schools

YOU NEED TO DO MORE LEGWORK!

- You need to get some more demographic data on your local schools.

BUT STAY AWAY FROM THE SCHOOLS!



Additional Demographic Research

Research the high schools in your area (use their websites!)

- Look for an arts department or a music department.
- Ask:
 - What kind of programs are out there?
 - How many students attend the school?
 - Is it a consolidated school or not?
 - How many concerts do they program in a school year?
 - Which schools have a thriving music department? A struggling one?
 - Which schools have more than one music faculty member?
 - Which schools have more than one choir?
 - Which schools have more than one band? An orchestra?
 - Which schools produce a musical each year?



Narrow Your Search

Cross reference your school data to the chapter's intended program.

- Narrow your field to no more than five schools.
- Once you've narrowed your field, you need to take some road trips.

The process ahead will help you identify your TARGET SCHOOL



STEP THREE:

Field Research



Field Research

DO NOT CONTACT THE MUSIC EDUCATOR(S)!

- The following tasks are to be completed without ever speaking to a music teacher.
- It is important that you be knowledgeable about the program prior to initiating the relationship.
- **At this point in the process, your chapter still has nothing substantial to offer, and you might damage your chances by pushing the wrong way.**



Field Research

1. Locate a school calendar for each of the schools in your field.
 - Using this calendar:
 - Find the next, upcoming concert for each school
 - It can be a choral, instrumental, or orchestral concert, even a musical.



Field Research

2. Break your chapter up into teams and assign each team a concert.
 - These teams are to attend this concert as a discovery mission.
 - **Do not dress in chapter uniforms.**
 - **Do not wear membership nametags.**
 - **Do not bring recruitment materials.**
 - All of this comes much, **much** later.



Field Research

3. Gather copies of all programs, hand-outs, materials.
4. **Take copious notes** on everything you see, good & bad:
 - Does the school have a music or arts booster program?
 - Equipment and logistics – risers, stands, chairs, choir robes, music folders, stage, curtain, concert programs, sound system
 - Audience – parents, community members, administration from the school, other students, snack table, ticket table, ushers
 - Students – decorum, involvement, attitude, attire
 - Other concerns at you may see them.



Field Research

5. Leave when the concert is finished!

- **Do not try to introduce yourself to the teacher.**
- **Do not hang around trying to talk to the kids or recruit them.**
- Remember, you are on their turf!
- If educators or parents see some strange person hanging around and trying to talk to the young men in the chorus, this can paint your organization in a horrible light.
- Moreover, "sales pitches" at a school sponsored event may be a form of solicitation that could be met with legal action.



Identify Target School

6. Gather all of the data from these concerts and present it to the chapter.
 - Using the data, cross-reference each concert experience with the kind of program the chapter wants to build.
 - Pick the **one school** that best fits your paradigm.
 - This becomes your “target school” for your chapter’s YIH program.



Important Note!

While the demographic and field research steps may be unnecessary in some cases – because you already have an easily target school, **the "Target School Research" steps that follow are vital – even if the music educator is a member of your chapter!**

- Attend the concerts
- Write the letters
- Do the homework needed to learn how to truly help the program.
- There's no better way for the chapter at large to gain an accurate picture of the program, and these steps speak volumes to educators.



STEP FOUR:

Target School Research



Target School

Once you have your target school established, you need to refocus your efforts and begin the research portion again.

- This time, the research is specific to your target school.



Target School

1 Identify every single musical event at the school

- Marching band
- Concerts: choral, jazz, instrumental...
- Musicals
- Talent shows
- Fundraising concerts
- Guest artists
- Student recitals



Target School

2. Assign a team of chapter members to attend each music event at your target school.

- **Do not dress in chapter uniforms.**
- **Do not wear membership nametags.**
- **Do not bring recruitment materials.**
- **Do not attempt to recruit anyone, parents included.**



Target School

3. Gather materials & take copious notes
 - Note positives and negatives



LEAVE WHEN THE CONCERT IS FINISHED!

- **Do not try to introduce yourself to the teacher!**
- **Do not try to get acquainted with the volunteers!**
- **Do not hang around trying to talk to the kids or recruit them!**



Homework

When you've returned to your chapter:

- Compile your notes into a detailed file about your target school
- Keep your observations together
- Keep the paperwork organized



The Goal

The goal is to evaluate the overall health of the program:

- ✓ How well does the school support the program?
- ✓ Did you see the concert advertised in the local media?
- ✓ Does the school have a music or arts booster program?
- ✓ What about equipment and logistics – risers, stands, chairs, choir robes, music folders, stage, curtain, concert programs, sound system



STEP FIVE:

Contact the Educator in Writing



Contact the Educator in Writing

After each and every concert, draft a letter of appreciation from the chapter to the music teacher.

- Thank them for their efforts to put on such a wonderful concert, and name something SPECIFIC that happened.
 - Citing a specific song or moment from the concerts lets them know you were actually in attendance.
- Tell them how proud you are to have such a strong music department in your community and how much you appreciate their hard work.



Stay Focused!

- This letter **SHOULD NOT INCLUDE**:
- A request to come in and sing for the kids.
- recruitment information.
- your show information.
- **ANYTHING** but appreciation for the teacher and the students.
- This letter is about them, their efforts and your appreciation – nothing more.



Remember!

- You are only beginning to establish trust and intention.
- Your letters show your knowledge and support of their work.
- Trying to insert yourself into their curriculum, particularly at this early stage, undermines your intention of trust.
- It also shows them you don't truly care what they are trying to accomplish.



Send Copies to:

- Music Educator's department head
- Principal
- Superintendent
- Local school governing board and
- Local newspaper that covers this school district.



Do this After Each Event

- By that time, the music educator will recognize your chapter's logo, president's name
- And wonder who your organization really is.



Bear in Mind!

- No single concert or season will give your chapter the full picture of what this program is trying to accomplish.
- You need to see the full spectrum of their musical efforts
- Now you're in the perfect position at the end of the school year.



STEP SIX:

Reflection and Action



Reflection and Action

Consolidate what you've learned.

- At the end of the school year, gather all your information about this school system.
- Bring together your field research, demographics, visitations and notes
- Construct a total picture of the school's music program.



Reflection and Action

Consolidate what you've learned.

Look over all your data for trends >> both positive and negative.

- Identify an area where you think you might assist the school.
- You know about their strengths and weaknesses.



Last Letter > Introduction

- Carefully write an end-of-year summary letter to the Music Educator.
- In this letter, introduce him/her to your chapter.
- Tell them about your mission statement
- Share your passion to support music education.
- Tell them how much you've enjoyed their body of work this year
- Tell them you want to help.

Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is!



Here's the KICKER!!!!

Include a big, fat donation check in this envelope

- Provide for needed resources: Tell the ME you noticed (for example)...
 - ✓ they're going on a trip...
 - ✓ they needed choir robes...
 - ✓ they're lacking a good microphone for the concert...
 - ✓ the jazz band needed a new baritone saxophone...
 - ✓ the marching band won their regional DCI competition...
 - ✓ they're unable to get a good concert program...
 - ✓ they're sending students to a summer music camp...
 - ✓ ANYTHING that would require money!
- **The quickest way into a teacher's heart is money. Period!**
- Nothing else will endear you quicker.



Provide needed resources

Give them this donation – **NO STRINGS ATTACHED!**

- Encourage them to spend it on however this money might best support the program.
- Show them how happy you are to give them this money.
- Be as excited as possible to know you are helping.



That's it!

- As with the other letters, this letter **SHOULD NOT INCLUDE**
- A request to come in and sing for the kids.
- Recruitment information.
- Your show information.
- **ANYTHING** but accolades for the teacher and the students.
- This letter is about their efforts and your appreciation – nothing more.

Do not send this letter to anyone else.



Share Sincere Praise With Others

- Send a **different** letter to the department head, principal, superintendent, local school governing body and the local media
- This letter should detail:
 - How hard this teacher has worked
 - How brilliant the students are
 - How lucky this district is to have such a fine program
 - Your appreciation as a community musical organization for the fine music education happening with the children and families in your area.
- Send a copy of THIS letter to the music teacher.



Share Sincere Praise With Others

You must work to establish that you're there to support the teacher.

- There is **NOTHING** in it for you.
- It is not about the chapter
- It is about your philanthropy and blind advocacy for music education.
- The teacher can't feel threatened, moved-in-on, used, or manipulated.
- You are there to help >> **NO QUESTIONS ASKED!**
- **NO STRINGS ATTACHED!!**



STEP SEVEN:

The Following Year



The Following Year

- This path will allow you to contact the teacher directly the following year.
- He/she will welcome your contact, if only to thank you for your support.

Schools can change a great deal from year to year.

- Your approach should be just as you did the previous year.
- Send a chapter team to every musical event again, as before.
- Gather identical data and build the current picture of this school.



The Following Year

Now that you have established a rapport with the teacher you can offer assistance.

- Send him/her a letter (avoid email)
- Using last year's data, offer something small to the teacher for each and every concert.
 - ✓ Offer to create their concert programs
 - ✓ Offer to usher at the concert
 - ✓ Offer to set up the stage before and clean it up after the concert.
 - ✓ Offer to sell concessions and give all the money to the school.
 - ✓ Offer guys to be at the beck and call of the music teacher.
 - ✓ Offer something else suggested by your data or the skills of your membership.



Take a Breath and Wait....

After you send this letter/email, wait for a response.

- If the teacher responds in the affirmative, that's awesome!
- If the teacher says "No, thanks" that's fine as well....
- The most difficult part of this process is the potential that the teacher isn't interested in your help.
- **If that's the case, move on.**



If Need Be, Refocus

- Rejection by this teacher means that you will then refocus your efforts on another school and begin with the field research.
- Choose another school from your original, narrowed field and start all over again.



Kirk Young Says....

- If you do this right, I can't think of a single teacher I know who wouldn't take you up on your offer.
- More importantly, this teacher will talk to his/her other teacher friends about you and your support.
- Pretty soon, teachers will be calling YOU and asking for your help.



What You've Accomplished

- Because no strings are attached, music educators will feel safe exploring other potential collaborations that may boost their program.
- No matter what, you're now a music educator's ally.
- Educators can discover barbershop harmony at a pace that suits them as you boost their program and help them change more lives through singing.

It's All About Building a Relationship!



Questions?

Comments??

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