



Chapter Marketing Toolbox



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1. Introduction

In this document, we will examine the current methods that chapters can use to increase awareness, for both marketing and membership purposes.

This document is intended to be a living document, with constant revisions ensuring the resource will always have the best practices to be shared among chapters and districts.

No amount of marketing will help your chapter if you don't know your product and target, so ensure that before you endeavor on your marketing journey, you understand the product you are selling and your target market. Also be sure to set realistic goals to ensure success, test, evaluate your results, then build on that success.

2. Setting Marketing Goals

It is so important to set realistic goals! Marketing is just one function inside the chapter, and can sometimes appear to the board as a drain on valuable resources.

Most of what we will present will be little to no cost, but will take some effort. Assess where you are, what has been done in the past, and build upon the successes. Don't be afraid to try something again that has failed in the past, with minor tweaks it may not work.

It is important to have clear goals written down, with deliverable dates.

3. Understand Your Product and Target Market

Yes you are a barbershop chorus, but are you a show chorus, a competition chorus, a daytime chorus? What is the average age? How is your singing quality?

You need to know answers to all of these, because when you are marketing for finding prospective members, you will want to find guys that will stick around. If 70 is your average age, guys between 60-50 year old will probably be your best target. Age is not the only consideration, so is singing quality.

- Rate your performance level
- Rate your activity level
- Determine what type of chapter you are

You may determine that your singing level needs to improve before embarking on a major marketing effort. Speak with your chapter counselor, director, and board. Gain consensus.

There is nothing worse then getting guys in the door via marketing and not having them come back, make sure the product is good and the target is right.

4. Marketing Your Chapter:

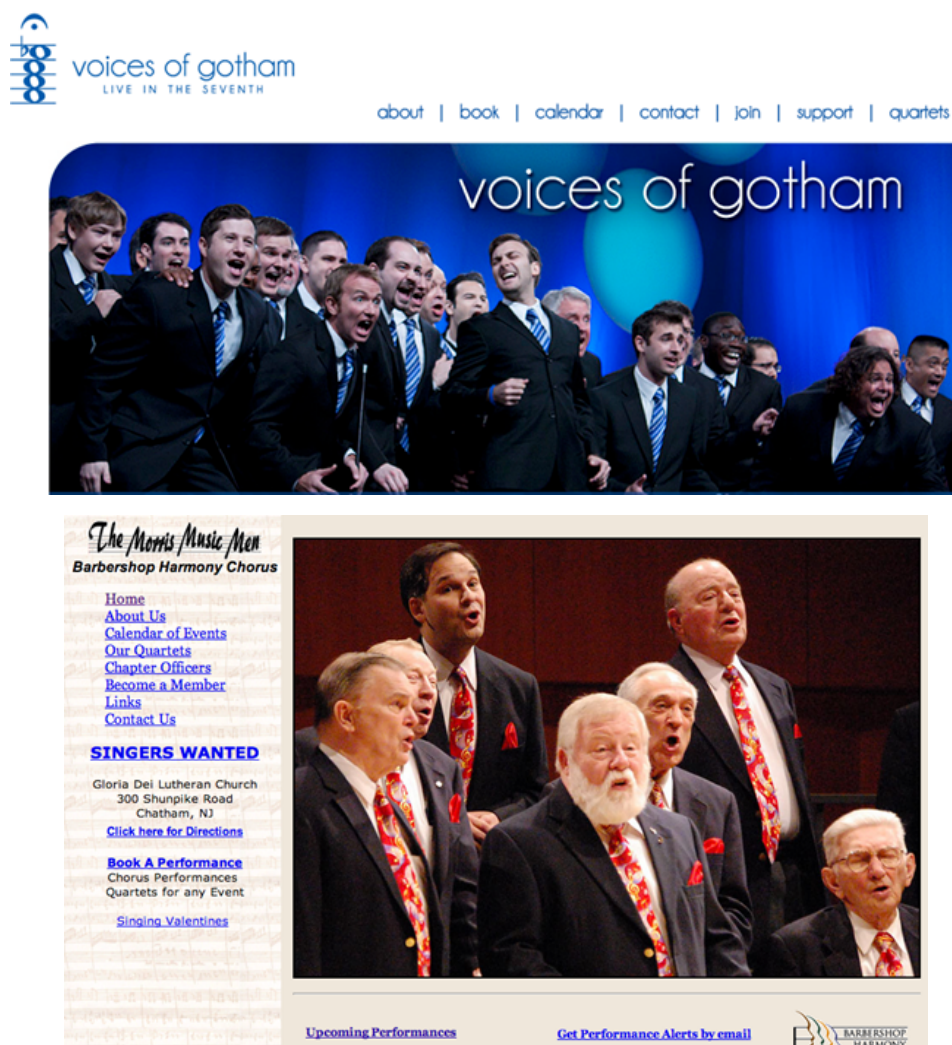
4.1. Signage

Most successful business wouldn't think of existing without a sign, yet most barbershop chapters don't have a sign telling people they exist. Get a banner or yard sign made, put it up the day you rehearse outside with the time rehearsal starts. One new member makes it worthwhile. "Barbershop Harmony Here Tonight, 7:30"

4.2. Websites

Your website is one of the first things someone sees before deciding to visit your chorus, and it must be compelling. It should convey the fun we all have singing. A nice home page photo is a good way to do this. As you can see from the picture below from the top of the Voices of Gotham's home page, it's not the static picture from contest before we go on stage, it's a picture taken with the chorus singing, and clearly enjoying themselves.

This picture can be from contest or a show, and it does NOT need to show the whole chorus as shown below from the Voices of Gotham website. Similarly, the Morris Men also display that they have diverse array of generational imagery. Both of these pictures can still convey our love for singing:



4.3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization is the process of getting your site higher in the natural search results of the different search engines. Google is the largest search engine, so we generally focus on them.

4.3.1. Natural Search vs. Paid Search

The search results can be broken into two sections, natural and paid. Search engine optimization (SEO) focuses on the natural search, the ones you don't have to pay for. Since the search engine is providing these links to your website for free, they are harder to get.

In the next picture below you will see three listings on top in tan, and listings off of the right side. Those are paid listings, which we will cover later. Everything below the tan box on the left are the natural search results. The higher you are on these, the more likely a searcher will find your site by searching.

Obviously, you would like to get your chorus's site to the top of the natural search results. Below you will find some strategies that can help.

The screenshot displays search results for the query "fireplace glass doors". At the top, there are three paid advertisements highlighted in tan boxes. Below these, the organic search results are listed. On the right side of the page, additional paid advertisements are visible, also in tan boxes.

Ads related to fireplace glass doors 07960 ⓘ

Fireplace Glass (855) 237-2063
www.elitecustomglass.com/
Huge Online Sale! Custom Glass Shapes & Sizes, Delivered To You.
Glass Table Tops - Custom made Mirrors - Tempered Glass

Fireplace Glass Doors - Huge Selection Of Fireplace Doors
www.woodlanddirect.com/
Free Shipping On Orders Over \$99!
Design Specialties Fireplace Doors - Diamond W Fireplace Doors

Lowe's® Fireplace Doors - Lowes.com
www.lowes.com/
★★★★★ 6,240 reviews for lowes.com
Visit Lowe's® Today For A Wide Selection Of Fireplace Doors!
Lowe's Home Improvement has 118,836 followers on Google+
Register for MyLowe's - Store Locator - Weekly Ads - Gift Cards

Fireplace Place - Wood, Gas, Electric Fireplaces, Pellet, Coal ...
www.thefireplaceplace.com/ ▼
Come visit our showroom and find over 30 burning displays, Many Electric Fireplaces,
47 Fireplace Glass Doors and Mantels/Surrounds. The largest display in ...
Gas Fireplaces - Electric Fireplaces - Wood Burning Fireplaces - Gas Logs (Vented)

Fireplace Glass Doors - The Fireplace Place, Fairfield, NJ - Stock or ...
www.thefireplaceplace.com/FireplaceGlassDoors.htm ▼
Fireplace Glass Doors - The Fireplace Place in Fairfield, NJ has a large selection of
Fireplace Glass Doors. From stock glass doors in standard sizes and ...

Ads ⓘ

Fireplace Glass Doors
www.fireplacedoorsonline.com/
(877) 373-6677
Buy Direct - Free Shipping
Wide Selection Of Fireplace Doors

Fireplace Glass Doors
www.ironhaus.com/
1 (866) 379 8348
Fireplace Glass Doors, Beautiful
Finishes. Satisfaction Guaranteed

Fire Place Glass
www.gaslogguys.com/
(877) 743-2269
#1 Fire Place Glass Retailer! Huge
Selection, Low Prices, Free S/H.

Morris County. #1 Chimney
www.aaa-superior.com/
Want a Better Price? Clean & Repair
Proudly Serving All Morris County

Fireplace Glass Doors
www.amazon.com/
Buy fireplace glass doors at Amazon!
Qualified orders over \$25 ship free

Fireplace Doors
www.kbfireplace.com/

4.4. On Page SEO

These are elements that you can change on your website's page to help your website rank higher on your top keyword searches, these are the easiest things to have your webmaster do. They may be beyond your understanding, but your webmaster should understand them.

4.4.1. Meta Tags - Title, Descriptions, Keywords

Title - this is your page title, looking at web browser, it's what appears at the very top of the browser window, you probably have never noticed it. The page title is one of the key elements telling the search engine what your page is all about. A lot of sites have "home" for their home page. That's why if you google the word "home" there are literally 12.5 trillion web results.

If you look at the image above of the search results, it is what is bold and underlined. You want to have your top keywords in there. This is Voices of Gotham's home page title:

Voices of Gotham - New York a cappella chorus (singing) - NYC - NY Chorus - all mens choir - nyc barbershop chorus

They are using their homepage to attract a broad base of singers, not specifically barbershop singers, they have a dedicated page just for that.

This is the title from that page:

barbershop chorus, NYC barbershop chorus, New York Barbershop chorus

Page Description - Page description serves two roles, it also contributes to telling the search engine what your web page is about, but more critically it tells the searcher what your page is about. If you look at the image below, the description is the several lines of copy below your page title that the search engine displays in the search results. The page description needs to have your keywords, be descriptive, and be relevant and compelling to the searcher.

Here is Voices of Gotham's home page description:

Voices of Gotham - Barbershop Chorus in New York City. We are an all male a cappella chorus and a chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Comprised of former a cappella singers, professional actors and singers and men who simply enjoy raising their voices in song. Available for booking for your next corporate event, wedding or party.

And this is how it appears in the search results:

Voices of Gotham - New York a cappella chorus (singing) - NYC ...
www.voicesofgotham.org/ ▼

Voices of Gotham - **Barbershop Chorus** in New York City. We are an all male a cappella chorus and a chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Comprised of ...
[3 Google reviews](#) · [Write a review](#)

📍 410 W 40th St New York, NY 10018
(347) 688-0059

When you fail to create a page description, the search engine will do its best to create a description for its search results, with predictably poor results.

Here is an example of a Vocal Majority search result:

[Schedule - Vocal Majority](#)
www.vocalmajority.com/fl/performance.asp ▼
member login · the vm store · Home. |. PERFORMANCES | TICKETS | BOOK | ...

As you can see, this is not helpful to the searcher and will result in fewer visits to your website. The page title was "Schedule- Vocal Majority" and they did not provide a description, so Google tried its best from the page content.

Keywords - These are the words, or word phrases the searcher uses to find your website. Here is a list of the most popular national keywords that would be relevant.

- barbershop chorus
- a-cappella chorus
- singing
- barbershop singing
- choir

and these are the keywords from Voices of Gotham's home page:

ny chorus. new york a capella chorus, ny choir, barbershop chorus, voices of gotham, nyc choir

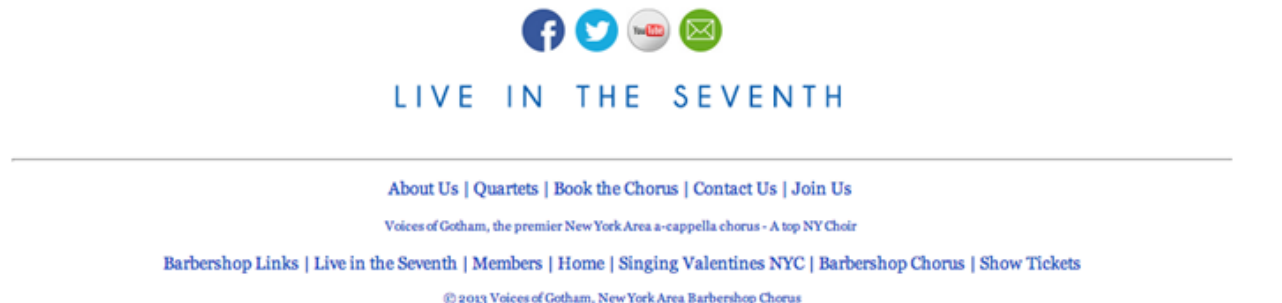
As you can see, their webmaster added some area specific words to those national keywords to make them more relevant to a local searcher, which is their target.

Page Copy - The last element of the home page SEO is the page copy. It should be compelling and natural in the main copy, this is used to SELL your chorus to the searcher. It does not even need to have much copy, it you could achieve most of this with great images. Try NOT to overuse your keywords in your copy, just write naturally for your page viewer, not for the search engine.

We retain the bottom of the page for the SEO stuff. Again, the part of the page most people ignore. Here you will make sure everything is covered. If you are using images for your navigation or something dynamic, you should provide static links for the search engine. You should also end the page with your top keywords.

Below is the bottom of the Voices of Gotham home page (actually on it's on every page). You will notice static links to the main navigation but also links to other pages not in the main navigation. And the very last thing on the page is the top keywords.

Its is **very important** that the title, description, copy, and end of the page match in theme, otherwise you are just confusing the search engine as to what the page is about.



4.5. Off Page SEO

Off page SEO are the elements that are harder to control but are also critically important. At the heart of off page SEO are backlinks. Those are where another site has a link to your site. It is important that these links use your keywords to link to you.

This is what one of the links to Voices of Gotham looks like (this links to their home page):

[Barbershop Harmony Chorus - Acapella Singing](#)

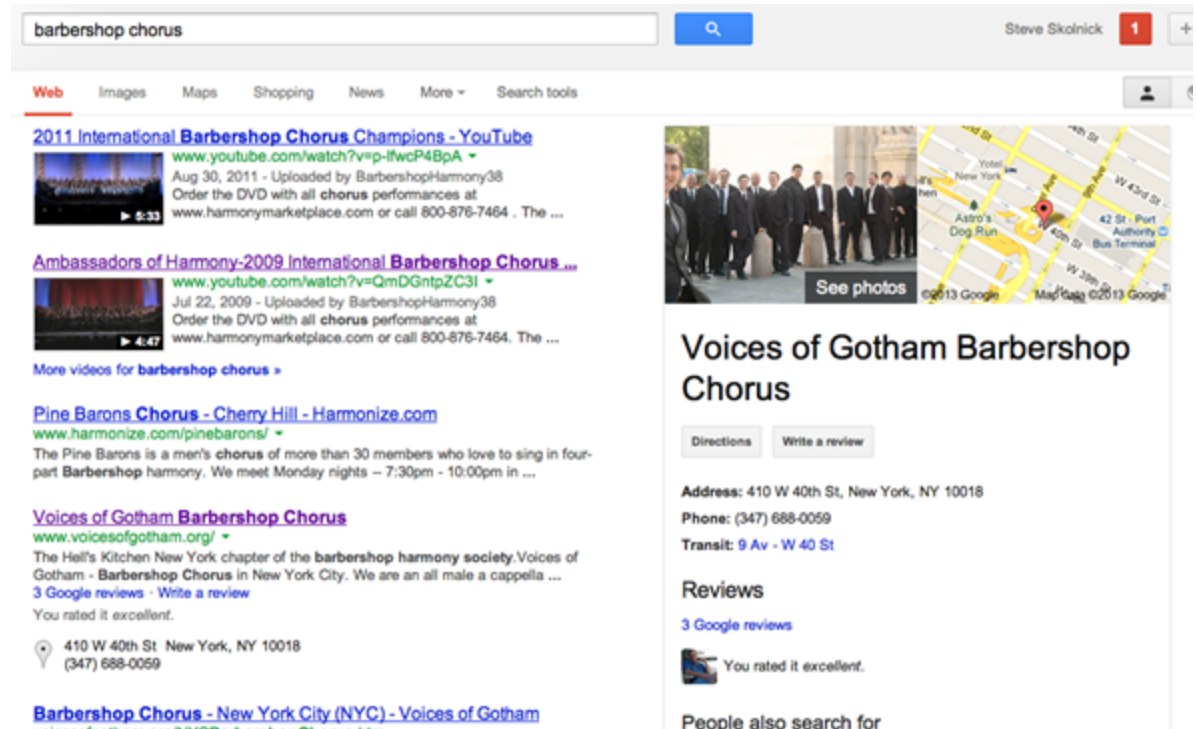
They should not all use the same words, many will just have your chorus name, but as long as they put the word "chorus" at the end it will help. It is best to get links from sites that are related, either other singing organizations, or local stores or clubs. These links tell the search engines both what THAT SITE thinks your site is about (which is good when they match), and how many other sites think your site is about that. A backlink is sort of a vote for your site. Those "votes" tell the search engine both what others think your site is about but also how important your site is. The most "important" your site is for a keyword, the higher you will rank for a search result.

Other off page things to consider are:

4.5.1. Google Places

Google Place and other local listing sites are an important part of your SEO, many times your google places listing will show up first and more prominently than your website.

Here is what we get when searching for “barbershop chorus”:



The large result on the right is the Google places. You also will see similar results on the maps. This also tells the search engine what your site is about, and since there is a verification process to get a google places account, this and the address and phone tell the search engine that you are real.

As a side note, Voices of Gotham's local phone number is provided FREE by Google Voice and transfers to an assigned chorus member. You can learn more about Google Voice here: <http://www.google.com/voice>

We will dive deeper into Google Voice and other options later in this resource.

4.5.2. Reviews

Reviews both on Google, Yelp, and other sites are important. They both serve as ways for searchers to confirm you are who they are looking for, but also serves as another “vote” to prove relevance and importance from the search engine's point of view.

4.5.3. Website Analytics

This is where you see the results of your work. Google provides it for free, your webmaster just needs to put some code on your web page.

Here is a link to find out more about Google analytics and how to sign up.

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

Analytics are important, they show you what pages are working, how many unique visitors, where they are coming from and more.

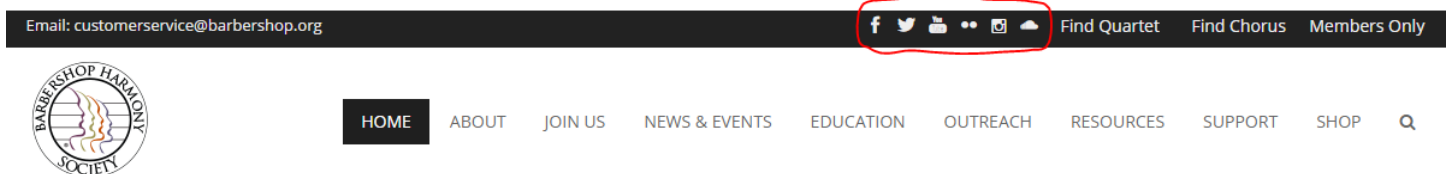
4.6. Social Media

4.6.1. Facebook

Facebook is the monster of social networking, and it's not just teens talking to their friends. There are billions of users of Facebook, and your next new member may be one of them. It's important that you have a Facebook page for your chorus, almost as important as a good website.

There are two types of pages your chorus can have, a Group page and Fan page. There are pros and cons of both. The big pro to a Fan is the ease of someone "liking" your page. They can do it right from your website with the click of Facebook a button.

Here is an example of the bottom of each page from Barbershop Harmony Society's website. Those buttons are widely recognized. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, etc. one click and you are taken to the presence on each channel.



Here is where you go to when you hit the Facebook button, this is the Barbershop Harmony Society's *page*:

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the Barbershop Harmony Society. At the top, there's a blue header with the Facebook logo and login fields. The main cover photo is a vibrant Las Vegas night scene with the text "INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION JULY 2 - 9 | LAS VEGAS", the website "www.barbershop.org/vegas", and the hashtag "#BHSVEGAS". Below the cover photo are buttons for "Like", "Send Message", "Share", and "Contact Us". The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with options like "Home", "About", "Events", "Posts", "Photos", "Videos", "Instagram feed", "Likes", "YouTube", "Shop", "Twitter", "Reviews", and a "Create a Page" button. The main content area displays a post from the Barbershop Harmony Society, dated 16 hours ago, announcing a "COUNTDOWN TO VEGAS! Chorus contestant #15 - Pacific Coast Harmony #BHSVEGAS" with a link to a YouTube video. The post includes a video player and engagement options like "Like", "Comment", and "Share". The right sidebar shows a 4.8-star rating, 26,699 likes, 25,444 followers, and 1,218 visitors. It also includes an "About" section with a map of Nashville, Tennessee, and contact information: "110 7th Ave N, Nashville, Tennessee, TN 37203", phone "(615) 823-3993", website "www.barbershop.org", and "Arts & Entertainment · Nonprofit Organization".

The same rules apply here, your Facebook cover photo needs to be compelling and look like there is something happening!

For your chorus, the picture needs to sell the hobby and your chorus. Look at the pictures you use now, are they selling your chorus?

To be successful with social media requires everyone in the chorus. Just like membership recruiting, it can not just be the VP of Marketing involved. Have all of your members "like" the page, ask other barbershoppers to "like" your chorus page, get members commenting and posting pictures of the chorus or quartet gigs. Many choruses post regularly and even have someone on the marketing team (not the VP of Marketing) whose job is social media, posting to Facebook, Twitter etc.

4.6.2. Twitter

Twitter is similar to Facebook, except they limit your "tweets" (posts) to 140 characters.

Here is a picture of the Barbershop Harmony Society's Twitter feed.



Facebook, Twitter... are just places to connect with your audience and keep the conversation going. You never know where that leads, but most important, it spreads awareness about barbershop to all of their friends, and their friends friends.

If you look, the tweets in their Twitter feed they include a **Hashtag (#)** that is a word, phrase, acronym used to identify messages on a specific topic. In this case, about the 2017 International Convention.

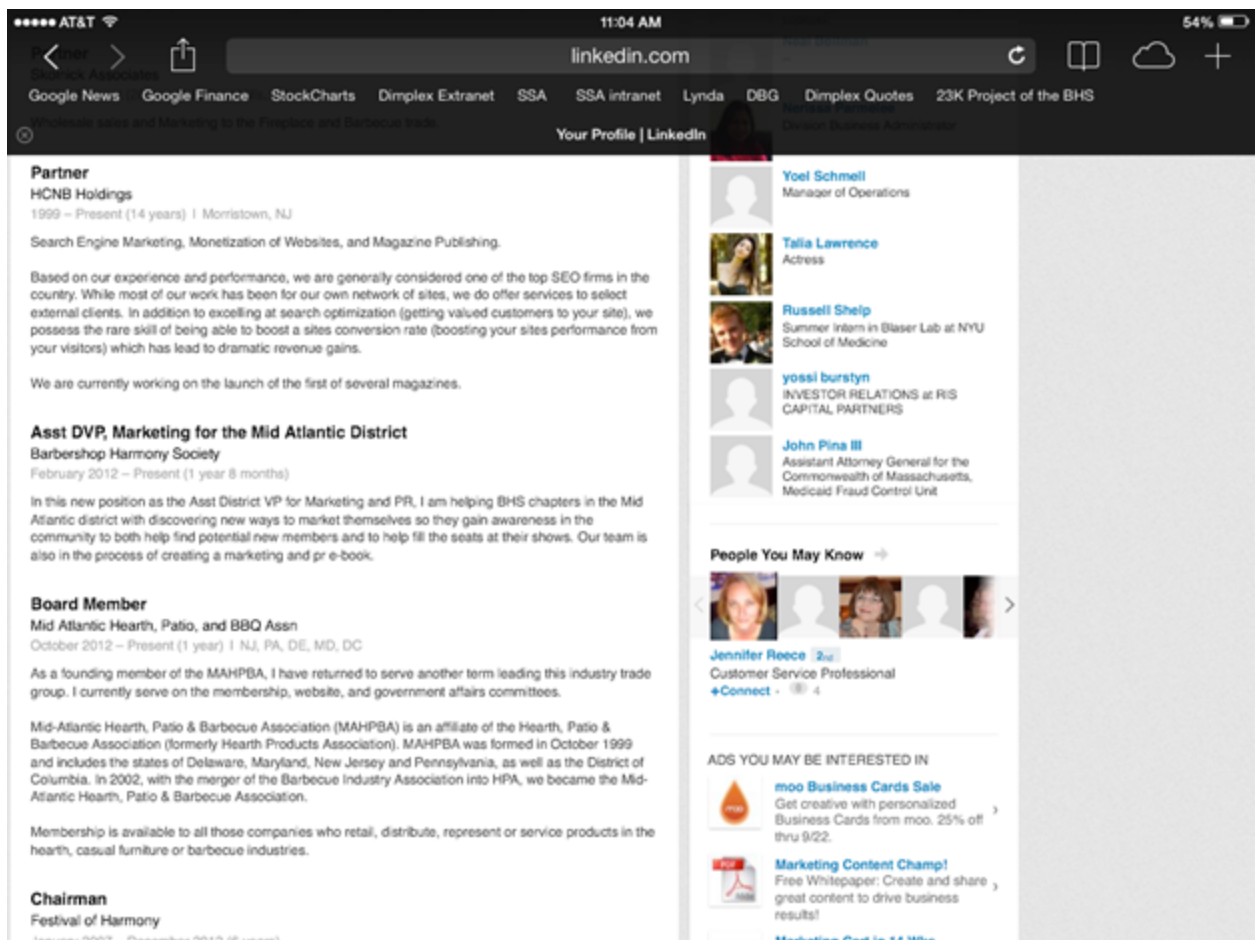
Similarly, if you are talking about a person or another organization and they also have a Twitter page, you can tag them by using an **@ Symbol**. This directly links the Tweet between the other Twitter Page and your page. You can see that BHS did this for the Pacific Coast Harmony chorus.

Also, notice how on the right hand side, Twitter also recommends other pages for viewers to like and follow.

4.6.3. LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social network for professionals. While it's not something the chorus should be directly participating in yet, don't underestimate the power of LinkedIn for spreading awareness of BHS and your chapter. It is one of the easiest ways to tell your (and your chorus members') work friends that you sing. Get your members to add singing it to their LinkedIn profile and their experience. If they are board members add that too.

Here is a screenshot from part of a LinkedIn profile:



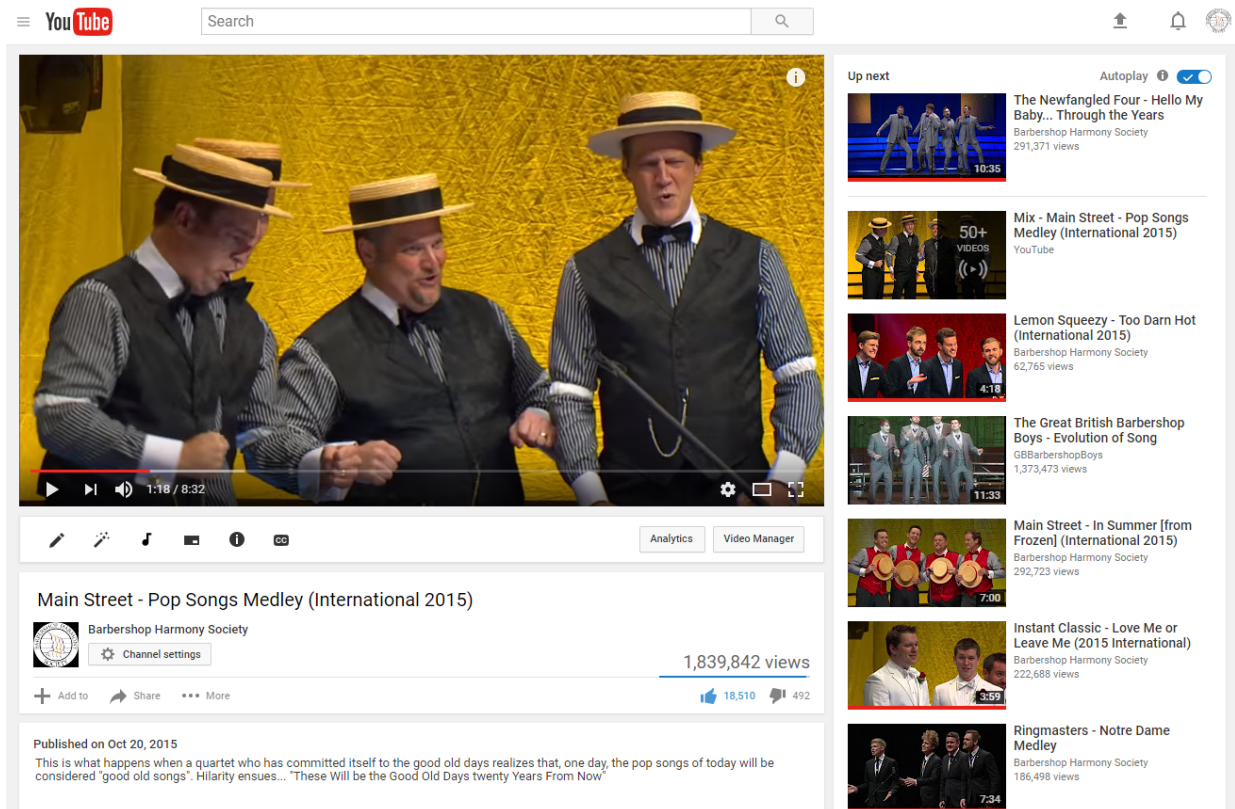
People read each other's profiles regularly, and you never know when a new member, fan to buy tickets for your next show, or hire the chorus for a gig will come from.

4.6.4. YouTube

YouTube allows you to post videos for free. YouTube has over a billion users and over 100 hours of video is loaded to its site, each minute. 6 billion hours of video are watched each month, and some of that is barbershop!

YouTube can be a wonderful place for someone to discover barbershop. Your involvement can be as simple as posting a video of a quartet delivering a singing valentine, to your chorus can have its own channel. Having a channel is also free!

Here is a screenshot of a video posted on the Barbershop Harmony Society YouTube page:



BHS's YouTube channel has over 23,000 subscribers. This video above has over 1.8 MILLION views. That is creating crazy awareness.

Similarly, there are videos NOT posted by a BHS affiliated group or individual who sometimes have MORE views and engagement.

Port City Sound quartet found themselves on a delayed airplane on their way to a BHS Midwinter Convention and happened to sing for the folks on the airplane. A woman used the camera on her phone to record them, posted it on YouTube, and the video went VIRAL.

Viral (*adj.*) - is circulated rapidly and widely from one Internet user to another.

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player with the title "Port City Sound performing during a flight delay!". The video content shows a quartet of men singing on an airplane. The video has 6,491,857 views. Below the video player, the publisher is Kari Mann, with a "Subscribe" button and 279 subscribers. The video was published on Jan 7, 2015. The description reads: "Our flight to New Orleans today was delayed for maintenance AFTER we had boarded (I'm a flight attendant). I started talking to the passengers and realized we had a barbershop quartet in our presence. I asked them to sing and most of the passengers began video taping! It was such a great moment... The mood changed and our passengers were awesome for the whole 5 hours they were on the plane! One of my favorite moments!!! Thank you to Port City Sound for creating a wonderful memory!!! #usairways". The category is "People & Blogs" and the license is "Standard YouTube License".

On the right, the "Up next" section lists several videos:

- THE LION KING Australia: Cast Sings Circle of Life on Flight Home from Brisbane (Disney On Broadway, 33,389,651 views, 2:19)
- Port City Sound - (I'm Afraid) The Masquerade is Over (Barbershop Harmony Society, 27,963 views, 6:36)
- 2017 Midwinter Youth Men's Chorus - Hallelujah [Leonard Cohen cover] (Barbershop Harmony Society, 8,027 views, 3:49)
- The Newfangled Four - Hello My Baby... Through the Years (Barbershop Harmony Society, 291,371 views, 10:35)
- Mix - Port City Sound performing during a flight delay! (YouTube, 50+ VIDEOS, 10:35)
- Sweet Caroline (UsmcCpl0311, 666,461 views, 2:09)
- Old School - As Time Goes By (2011 International) (Barbershop Harmony Society, 18,295 views, 3:46)

Look how many views! Over 6.4 Million! This is creating awareness much greater than our current society membership.

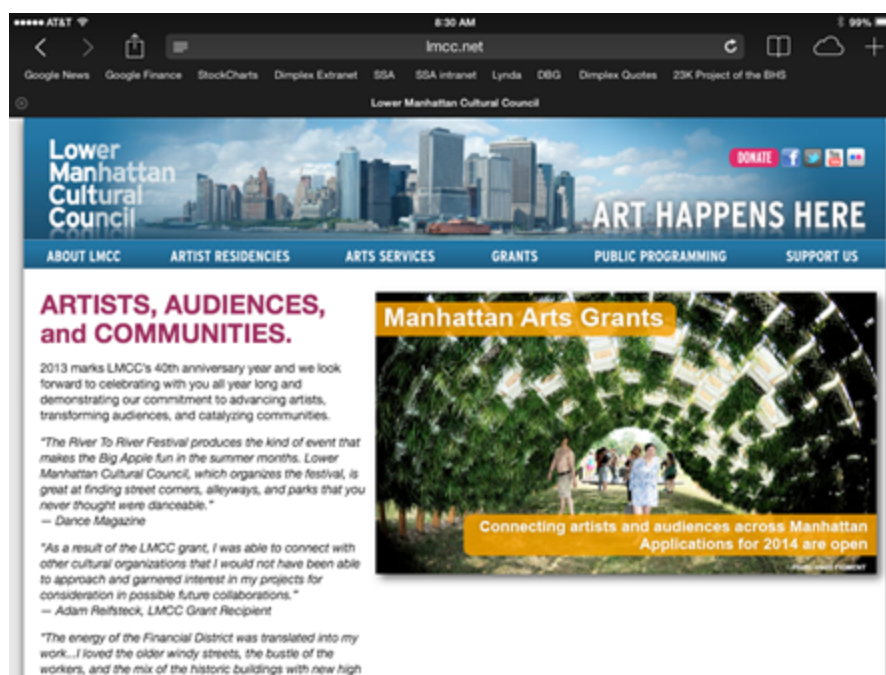
PLEASE NOTE: You do need to be careful when posting as a chorus to have the proper clearances, but it seems to be worth the effort. You can also sing and post some public domain songs to avoid copyright clearance issues.

5. Public Relations for Your Chapter

Where are you currently engaging in communication, outside of just “marketing”? Newspaper, Newswires, Radio, TV, Press Kits, Public Access TV?

5.1. Arts Councils and Related Music Organizations

What better place to do PR than to a group of other musicians. In the NY area in addition to several arts council websites where we can announce shows, guest night, and auditions, we have Vocal Area Network, a website dedicated to getting people who appreciate the arts to meet others who do.



5.2. Gigs and Other Public Appearances

Every time you perform is both a membership and a marketing opportunity, so always try and perform like you were on the contest stage. Gigs are also fun, and a good way to boost your bottom line. Some popular places to find gigs in addition to good PR, website, and social media presence are:

5.2.1. Singing Valentines

Many chapters have a Singing Valentines program, but if you don't I strongly suggest one. This program hits on all cylinders for chapter health. It creates awareness, spreads the joy of barbershop harmony, adds significant revenue to the chapter, and helps members develop their quartetting skills. This is also one of your best opportunities for PR, newspapers and radio stations LOVE to showcase unique things you can do for your Valentine.

5.2.2. Parades

Every place has local parades and most are easy to get into. Some towns do require that the singers are on a float, and some chapters have invested in this and it has paid off. It's definitely something to look into to promote the chorus. You may even get paid.

5.2.3. Local Fairs

Fairs are a great place to create awareness. Take a booth (could be sponsored by your local arts council), and send some quartets wandering around the crowd.

5.2.4. Paid and Free Gigs

Gigs have so many benefits, even free ones. We all love to perform, and what better way than to have someone pay us to perform. Every performance a recruitment opportunity, an opportunity to build your fan base to sell tickets to, and also an important member retention tool. What good is rehearsing every week if you never perform.

5.2.5. Convention and Visitors Bureau

If you are near a large city, conventions are a wonderful place to get high paying gigs. Seek out the members of the convention bureau, send them tickets to your shows, send them a singing valentine. They need to be your evangelist.

5.2.6. Gigmasters

Gigmasters (www.gigmasters.com) is the most popular website for matching talent with those looking to hire talent. Well worth the price, but you need someone actively working with the leads. Pricing ranges from free to \$99 a month, but one gig more than pays for it.

5.2.7. Hotel Associations

Depending how large your area, you may have a association of hotels. Hotels can be a very lucrative place for gigs, especially at Christmas. If you don't have a association, contact the hotel management directly.

5.2.8. Meeting Planners

Get to know your local meeting planners, they generally hire the talent, make their clients happy and you will have a stream of lucrative gigs.

5.2.9. Local Service Clubs

Rotary, Elks and others have regular meetings, offer to sing at one. This is both a potential gold mine for members, but also for gigs.

5.2.10. Chambers of Commerce

Same with the chamber as service clubs, join the chamber, become a active part of your community. This investment will pay off.

5.2.11. Associations of Executives

Again, go and sing for their meeting, these are corporate influencers, if they like what they hear they will find a way to hire you.

5.2.12. Newspaper Guilds

What better place to do a pro bono gig than in front of hundreds of newspaper reporters. These are the guys who decides what gets written about, make friends, get to know your local reporters. Before you know it you'll be getting several articles written about you. Also, when they know and like you, your PR emails won't just go in the trash.

5.2.13. Newcomers Clubs

That new great singer just moved to town and is looking for a place to find new friends. This can pay dividends for years

5.2.14. Colleges and Universities

The music program at a local college is a great place to find young singers. Teach them a tag or 10. They will be hooked on the vocal harmony. Your next director may come from that program. Music teachers who will influence the next several generations may come from that program. You may even get some great singers out of it.

5.2.15. Cable Public Access TV

Cable providers are required by law to provide either free or minimal cost access to customers to those citizens and non-profits that serve a local public interest. There are also educational access channels. You could create a music show, an a cappella show, a music education show. Get creative.

5.3. Show Advertising

Shows generally are a major income stream for the chapter and successful marketing is key to the success.

Flyers, posters, email your fan list, post to Facebook, create a Facebook event for the show and have your members invite their friends, good PR, and one on one. You guys know how to market a show. The key is making all of your communication effective and compelling. They should WANT to come to your show.

Some non-traditional things to consider. How about offering a webcast so those who are too far way can still attend. Or while inviting them to the show, run a donation campaign at the same time. Can't attend the show, make a donation to the chapter, or buy a ticket for a broke college student.

5.4. Mailing Lists


5.4.1. Postal Mail/Service

While it may seem costly to print flyers or postcards and mail them to past patrons, in certain demographics it still works. If this is your only method currently, you should start to transition to digital, and especially social. Be sure to investigate non-profit/tax-exempt/charitable rates of the postal service.

5.4.2. Email Campaigns/Lists

Email is a very effective way to stay in contact with your fans. To promote a show, another event, a fundraising campaign, or just to stay in touch. You can capture emails from your shows, especially if you are doing digital ticketing like using Eventbrite, or even selling tickets on your website and using Paypal. You also can have an opt-in opportunity on your website.

Here is a screenshot of Voices of Gotham's opt-in page.



The screenshot shows a website header for 'voices of gotham LIVE IN THE SEVENTH' with navigation links: about | book | calendar | contact | join | support | quartets. Below the header is a section titled 'support the chorus' with the text 'Please fill in the form below to Subscribe to our mailing list.' The form is a blue box containing fields for 'Email Address:', 'First Name:', and 'Last Name:', followed by a 'Join Now' button. Below the form, it states: 'We will not share, sell, or otherwise abuse your email account. You can expect no more than 10 emails per year from the chorus.' At the bottom are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, and the text 'LIVE IN THE SEVENTH'.

There are many **FREE** email campaign/email list supporters. We recommend looking into:

- MailChimp: www.mailchimp.com

5.4.3. Social Media Campaigns/Fanbase

Facebook is ultimately the easiest and best way to capture your fan base. If they move, or change email address, you still know how to get in contact with them.

Facebook also has a feature called events. You can create a event for your show and invite all of your fans- this should include your members, they should be inviting their friends as well. This also has a viral element, because when a fan says they are attending your show, that's shared with all of their friends, creating even greater awareness. Email and Facebook were the only methods for promoting the 75th anniversary webcast, and it was seen by well over 250,000 people (110,000 connections) so you can see the power.

6. Marketing & PR Leader Relationship with Membership Leader

6.1. Membership Drives and Initiatives

We know you are not the membership guy. But wait, Membership is every member's job and as the Marketing Leader of your chapter, you may be the second most important guy in Membership. The membership leader can't do their job effectively without your help.

Every membership drive or initiative has, at its heart, great marketing.

- Posters in coffee shops, train stations, bus terminals, and any place commuters congregate.
- Local advertising (radio, tv, web, newspaper)
- Yard Signs
- Social Media posts
- Email Campaigns

There are MANY creative ways to address a membership campaign, but one of the most effective membership campaigns that we've seen involved many of the above, but the weirdest driver of success was the yard sign. Such a simple thing, yet so effective. Give it a try!

6.2. The Power in Greeting Guests

We know that is is also a membership thing, but you didn't get to be the Marketing leader of your group because you are shy. There is power in making sure that you greet every guest and make them feel welcome. This is one of the first exposures that your guests will have to the product you're trying to advertise!

This can also inform you in "how they heard" about your chapter or chorus. You can see what's working and not working, develop a plan, prioritize and adapt!

7. The Value of Internal Public Relations

Internal Public Relations is just as important as external public relations. We has public relations people can create just as much enthusiasm within our chapters as we can telling the outside world about our hobby.

Here are Five Suggested Basic Steps to Improve Your Internal Public Relations Efforts

1. **Be a Good Listener-** Be curious and get to know each member within your chapter as not only a fellow barbershopper, but for the accomplishments they have achieved within their community. By taking time to listen, you'll get a better sense of member "Likes" and "Dislikes," and how their expertise can add overall value and take your chapter to new heights.

2. **Share Information-** Letting your members know what you're doing on the outside in terms of "external" PR, can create loads of enthusiasm within. Good information, just like money, needs to circulate. The more it circulates the more its value increases.
3. **Collaborate-** Good PR, like anything else is the result of ongoing collaboration. Therefore, make a conscious effort to consult with other chapter officers to get their views and input. By doing so, you'll build tons of goodwill and get the idea mill churning for future chapter activities, too!
4. **Learn-** Be willing to learn from others around you. See what other chapters and other organizations, perhaps unrelated to barbershopping have done and determine what's worked and hasn't worked for them. By doing so, you'll be in a much better position to chart a course for the future.
5. **Repeat-** The PR business is an endless cycle. Whether it's internal or external public relations, it's important to repeat the process of listening, sharing, collaborating, learning and repeating on an ongoing basis in order to get optimum results.

8. Chorus Contact Information (Business Cards, Phone & Email)

It's so important that it's easy for someone to contact the chorus. Business Cards, websites, email, phone all need to be monitored by some who responds quickly. This contact could just as easily be someone looking to hire the chorus, a potential new member, or someone from the press looking to do an article on the chorus.

8.1. Business Cards

Most chapters and choruses have seen success in having business cards. Similar to your website and social media channels, they should have compelling imagery and a brand that portrays your product, as a chapter or chorus.

Some helpful resources are www.vistaprint.com or www.moo.com.

Every member should have at least three business cards on them at all times!

Don't be afraid to practice using them with your members. BHS Chapters have seen success in some roleplaying with each other, in how to have a conversation about what your chapter and the Barbershop Harmony Society is all about!

8.2. Phone

Why have a chapter/chorus phone number? Instead of utilizing a personal home phone number or cell phone number where it relies on one person to answer. Similarly, if something happens to the phone number that you publish (a personal home or cell phone) and for whatever reason, a Google Voice number can be routed to multiple individuals so that your potential new members, customers, or folks interested in hiring you, have more of a chance of talking to a real person!

There are a few choices that make it easy to have a virtual phone that redirects to a or multiple members. Google offers Google Voice for free, there are also others services like Grasshopper. Check them all out and find the one that fits your needs.

8.3. Email

Similar to a chapter/chorus phone number, it's important to consider having a chapter/chorus email address that people can contact your group at. Consider utilizing something understandable and easy for folks to remember/access.

9. Public Relations, Your Chapter, The Media & You!

Understanding the Old vs. The New Media Can be Helpful in Charting an Effective Promotional Course For Your Chapter

Now more than ever, people instantly want information they can use. What media will prevail in the upcoming years? No one really knows for sure! But one thing is for sure, knowing your audience and how they get their attention will enable you to create the right message and get that message to the right "target" audience. We as public relations officers need to integrate both our "internal" and "external" public relations efforts in order to maximize results.

The problem is that with a growing number of available outlets it becomes increasingly difficult to pinpoint a single resource that is used most often for information gathering activity. What's more, with all of this so-called media convergence coming into play, how do you navigate through all the daily clutter to get your message out! The answer involves developing a story that has relevance, some good timing, cultivating good media contacts and a certain degree of luck.

Let's face it...we've all been frustrated at one time or another because our chapter show or event didn't get the coverage it deserved or worse, got no coverage at all.

Aside from a breaking news story taking precedent and sidelining most other stories, one of the biggest reasons events and/or what we think are interesting stories don't get coverage is because they lack relevance.

Remember, public relations in it's purest sense is all about creating news value or "relevance" to a particular event. If an editor or program director views what you send them as an attempt to get free advertising, your information will likely end up in the proverbial circular file! Therefore, it's up to us as PR people to create an angle to a particular story that will resonate well in a news context.

The truth is...it's no longer enough to simply send a press release by snail mail or email or to make a phone call to say you have a show or an event and you'd like to get some coverage.

First, keep in mind that you're competing with hundreds of other organizations who are vying for the same editorial space or air time that you are every day. Secondly, remember that the average television newscast is only one half hour and the average radio newscast is probably 2-3 minutes. Third, today's media in all forms is driven mostly by current events, so in order to get noticed, it's

important to know the news of the day and find a way to tie your event in. In other words.. Ride the horse in the direction it's going!

Granted...coverage of any event, barbershop or otherwise, is never guaranteed, but, there are ways to increase your chance for exposure.

Some Basic Questions to Ask:

- Are you familiar with all the media outlets in your area?
- Are you familiar with the types of stories and/or program formats that each outlet runs? (i.e. Print, broadcast, online, etc.)
- Do you know the person or persons in each of the media outlets in your area that would be likely to cover your chapter events? (i.e. Typically the entertainment editor or local news editor)
- Would your story be of interest to at least 10% of a station's viewership/listenership or a publication's readership?
- Is it timely??
- Does it include the names of people, especially any celebrities or other prominent people that would be immediately recognized by J.Q. Public (the common man)?
- Does your story have a local angle??

9.1. A Proposed 9 Stage Action Plan

Stage 1- Ask these Questions:

- Who is your Audience?
- What Impression do you want to make on your audience?
- What do you want your audience to do, if anything?? (i.e. buy tickets, book your chorus or quartet for an event, etc.)
- What specific actions must be taken by the public to achieve goals and objectives??

Stage 2 – Know your Chapter and Our Society Inside and Out

- Know your chapter history
- When was your chapter founded??
- Who founded it??
- Why was it founded??
- Who were/are the founding members??
- What is the size of your chapter and what geographic area does it serve or would it like to serve??
- What are some significant accomplishments/contributions?? Do you have any members who have received achievement awards or who may be well know in the community??
- What is your group doing now?? Any current activities??
- What are some future plans/long range goals??

Stage 3 – Lay Out a Plan

- Does your chorus want to be a competition oriented group or is your chapter content to just perform within the community with less emphasis on competition?
- Look at the feasibility of both short and long-range goals. What is realistic and what is not??

- Once having identified goals etc. put a team together and assign specific duties!
- Put a budget together and decide where the funding will come from.
- Brainstorming Sessions are always good and should be encouraged.
- Keep good records so as to make life easier for your successor.

Stage 4 – Chart a clear and direct course

- Know where you are going and how you intend to get there
- Create a goal statement that is general, timeless and is determined by needs.

Stage 5 – Write Objectives

- Write down specific steps to take to accomplish the desired outcome.
- Ask questions like: how much publicity do we need?
- How much time will be needed?
- How much money will be needed?
- Will it be an ongoing activity or will it be a one shot event?

Stage 6- Analyze your target audience

- Demographic information
- Psychographic information

Stage 7- Always try to stay in the Public Eye

- Schedule press releases on a regular basis, with each release focusing on a different aspect of your chapter.

Stage 8 – Meet the Press

- Introduce yourself – either in person, by email, phone or by letter.
- Create a comprehensive media list complete with phone numbers, email addresses and mailing addresses. (i.e. Print, Broadcast, Cable, Social Media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and all other outlets.)
- Take a reporter to lunch...it could pay off in huge dividends!

Stage 9 – Develop a business contact network

- Belong to and be active in community and business organizations.
- Subscribe and submit articles or show notices to newsletters from these organizations (in many instances they're free)
- Church bulletins and e- newsletters are always a good avenue to spread chapter news and recruit new members.

Always have business cards with you from your chapter in order to be prepared for those close encounters of the barbershop harmony kind!

9.2. Tips for Good Media Relations

- **Integrity-** Don't exaggerate. Just tell it like it is!
- **Immediacy-** Don't delay in responding to a reporter's inquiry and when you do, be honest in all responses.
- **Accessibility** – Try your best to accommodate all reasonable media requests. As the age old saying goes, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

- **Deadlines** – Meet all obligations and timelines
- **Familiarity** – Do your homework. Know what types of stories get published, what angles seem to resonate the best with your media and what reporters cover what beat. If you do a little extra research, the chance you will get exposure could dramatically increase.

9.3. Four C's of Promotion

- **Content:** The development of the idea and the way in which that idea can be presented
- **Conduit:** The promotional vehicles through which your creative idea is sent (Radio; TV; Print; Internet, mobile devices, etc.)
- **Consumption:** How The target audience receives their information (i.e.(Radio; TV;Print; Internet, mobile devices, etc.)
- **Convergence:** How all media formats work together to get the information out!

10. Press Kits (Print & Electronic)

A press package is the foundation of any media relations program. It consists of a series of stories, usually placed in a two-sided folder with pockets, that organizes information in a way that is easy for the news media to use. Typically it will include a description of the organization, key facts and figures, biographies of the principals, a history, and two or three stories on current trends and issues. It functions as instant background material when a story arises. Press packages usually include photography.

The opportunity to deliver a press kit instantly is a good reason for your chapter computer guru to add a press and/or media tab onto your website.

By creating this “Press/Media” section a reporter calls who perhaps want a The document, photograph, map or other information, he or she can simply go to your website and access the desired information in a form that can be used immediately and with a minimum of additional work on your part.

When you have more details and facts and figures than can fit in a one-page press release, you need a Fact Sheet. It can be a one pager or several pages long and should include historical perspectives, anecdotes, and data.

It should be well written with short sentences and paragraphs and wide margins. This gives you the best of both: a short press release that quickly gives reporters and editors the essence of your story, and material to do an in-depth article. Include both a Society fact sheet and a chapter Fact Sheet

11. Methods for Distributing Your Message

11.1. 10 Low-Budget Promotional Tips

1. Partner with other organizations, such as sports teams, community theater groups, orchestra's, groups that offer food, shelter (like your local American Red Cross Chapter, Habitat for Humanity, etc.) to sponsor events. Philanthropic efforts always attract media attention.
2. Who is your youngest and/or your oldest chapter member? If your youngest member is really young (i.e. Grammar school or Jr. High for instance) and your oldest member is say, in his 90's or approaching 100 years young, that could be reason enough for the media to take note! (no pun intended!)
3. Are there members within your chapter that represent several generations of barbershop singing (i.e. fathers, sons, grandfathers, etc.)? If so, you likely have a story just waiting to be told.
4. Post "Tips on How To Improve Your Singing," on your chapter website and promote those tips in any and all advertising and public relations that you do.
5. Create a great voicemail message. If your chapter has a dedicated telephone line, leave a unique message that will get people talking. Write a great script with the points you want to make, put some barbershop music in the background and recruit a voice of your choosing within your chapter with lots of energy (or a professional voice if you have a budget) to record it and you're all set.
6. Use Your Email Signature to Your Advantage. Add a quote or maybe add a link to an article about your chapter. You can also use a link within your signature to promote an upcoming show. Whatever you decide to do, remember to include all contact information (land line, cell phone, etc.)
7. Use The Singing Valentine concept all year long! Make quartets available to sing for any occasion and design similar packages around a given event (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's Day, weddings, etc.). It's sure to create tons of great exposure and generate some extra cash for your chapter in the process.
8. When the budget is low or maybe even non existent...consider bartering (i.e. trading) your singing services. Offer a printing shop a free ad, a performance or some show tickets in exchange for printing your program. Barter with a florist or a candy store to fulfill a singing quartet package mentioned above. The list is only limited to your imagination. Whether it's a complete trade (i.e. free) or half cash and half barter, you still come out on top.
9. Schedule chorus and/or quartet visits to schools of every level within your community. There's no better way to showcase our great hobby by performing in public. It's not only entertaining, but you may even spark some interest in setting up a formal Youth in Harmony program or pick up a few new members along the way.
10. Blog. It's a great way to share your thoughts and ideas. Best of all, you can instantly post comments on your chapter website. If you blog, be sure to keep the content fresh.

11.2. Social Media and Email

See the above sections around how to utilize Social Media and Email effectively to distribute a message from your group.

11.3. Press Releases

These are usually the most valuable to the news media, and will help you establish a reputation as a source. These are about developing trends in your industry and contain information that would otherwise be difficult for the media to obtain. ***(see other pages for information on press release best practices)***

11.4. Public Service Announcements (PSA's)

PSAs are among the most common types of publicity for non-profit organizations like the BHS. Since they are short, broadcasters run a lot of them, especially if they have extra time to fill. PSA's are likely to be repeated several times, thus giving your message multiple impact.

(A Helpful Timing Hint: When writing any timed copy, PSA's or otherwise, a good rule of thumb to follow is 3 Words Per Second)

The least expensive kind of PSA is "live" copy, where the announcer reads your material live. You may also submit pre-recorded material, if you have a production budget. Live copy to TV stations should include visual material (i.e. Logo's, chorus/quartet photos, etc.)

Important Note: Different media outlets typically have their own PSA submission guidelines, so it's always a good idea to find out in advance exactly what is required.

11.5. Feature Story Releases

Although a feature story must be newsworthy, in the broad sense of the word, it is also timeless. It can run in today's paper or tomorrow's or next week's. Feature stories are often called "evergreen" for this reason – it's always fresh and will not fade. Unlike a news story, a feature can have a point of view, an "angle", and is often longer than a hard news story on the same subject.

11.6. Wire Services

News agencies, often called wire services, such as PR Wire, are also valuable in getting your message out to a wide geographic area. While these services can deliver your story to many newsrooms and related outlets, based on parameters you set, coverage is often too broad and can be expensive.

Nevertheless, it may be worth investigating. If you choose to go this route, always have a story that deals with a thing your chapter has done in the community. Any kind of human interest story resonates well with reporters/editors.

(Note: Wire services charge fees that are determined by the geographic coverage areas. While these services can be effective, they also can be pricey depending on the geographical area)

11.7. Webcasts/Podcasts

This is rapidly becoming a major publicity tool as people take advantage of the web's multimedia capabilities. Webcasts or Podcasts can be live events or archived and available on demand. They are a cost-effective, instantaneous method to communicate with media all over the world, in a compelling, interactive manner that meets journalists' needs.

Using Webcasts or Podcasts, you can extend the reach of your PR efforts, reduce your budget for spokespeople, ensure your message is communicated consistently across all audiences, better fit into journalists' schedules, and provide more compelling supporting elements.

11.8. Train a Spokesperson

The media usually wants to speak to an authority in the field, not the public relations person. Chapter spokespersons should be immediately available and trained in how to work with the media.

Your role as the public relations person is to facilitate the selection and training of an appropriate and available expert.

Media people typically show up at an event, with little or no understanding about the event (such as a performance, annual show, etc.). So, it is extremely important to always have a press kit available and guide the media to the people who have been trained to give the right message. If you don't "Prep" the media with all the background and other details you want them to know, the resulting coverage may be disappointing.

11.9. Op-Ed Articles

"Op-ed" articles, so named because they typically run opposite the editorial page, are an excellent opportunity to comment on issues of the day and to build name recognition as an expert in the field. They run under the bylines of experts, and give you a chance to state your case in your own words, with minimal editing by a reporter. Once published, they can be effectively used as reprints.

11.10. Newsletters

Another way to keep your strategic messages in front of your target audience is to communicate via a quarterly newsletter. A newsletter is an excellent place to recap the coverage you have received in the media. Not everyone in your target audience will have seen all the coverage your organization has received. When it is reviewed in its entirety the sum becomes greater than its parts. Newsletters can be either mailed or emailed to your contact list. It is important to build and maintain your database to achieve maximum effectiveness.

11.11. Community Calendar Listings

Community calendar listings are similar to PSAs – generally used by nonprofits and community organizations – except they usually promote an event rather than a cause or service. Businesses can sometimes be listed if the event is free or serves the public interest.

12. Press Release Best Practices

Most press news releases are distributed by email, fax, to editors at newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations or through online distribution services, where your news gets syndicated to thousands of news sites worldwide.

12.1. Why a Press Release?

Press releases are used mainly for:

- Announcement launch of New Events (like appearances, parties, prize giveaways, shows, etc.)
- Organization News and Announcements (announcement of new product, new organization leaders, latest changes in strategy)

Important Points to Remember:

- Ask yourself - "Is your newsworthy?"
- Write the news for journalists and media NOT as articles or stories. Such posts will be rejected by media people.
- Make sure you post full contact address with phone without which your news release will lack credibility for journalists
- Keep it short with no more than 4-5 paragraphs in the body of release.
- Don't use promotional or marketing language.
- Pick an Attractive TITLE to catch attention of media persons.

12.2. Parts of a Press Release

- **Title or Headline** - The main title of the news. Always nice headlines easily attract attention of media persons.
- **Date & Place** - contains the release date and originating city of the press release.
Introduction - Highlight the the importance of the news in this paragraph. Usually contains three or four lines.
- **Body** - further explanation, statistics, background, or other details relevant to the news. Give also some quotes from spokespersons.
- **Boilerplate** - generally a short "about" section, providing independent background on the issuing organization or individual.
- **Contact Information** - name, phone number, email address, mailing address, or other contact information for the PR or other media relations contact person. Do not write email here.
- **Ending: ###** indicates the end of press release, basically which refers to XXX (meaning 30 used to denote end in telegraphic codes used in early years.)

12.3. Sample Press Release Formats

SAMPLE #1

[Your Logo Here]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

[Short Title/Headline Here]

(Example: XYZ, Chapter announces new music leadership)

Description: (optional) This is a very short description about the press release. Many online PR distribution sites will ask for this.

[CITY], [STATE],[Date] – [This is the opening paragraph. It should contain about 3-5 lines and considered most important since this catches attention of news readers and journalists. Typically questions for questions of who, what, when, where and why answered here. Keep it short and highlight what's whole release is all about.]

[This paragraph goes into little depth. Give more details of product or any events taking place. This should contain about 2 comments made by spokespersons. For example, Mr. XXX said "xxxx". Quotes are Optional!]

[This paragraph focus on where users can find detailed information about product or events. Give a contact or website site for more information so that more additional information can be found. This paragraph should be concluded within 5-10 lines]

[The conclusive paragraph is known the "boilerplate" and should contain no more than 3-4 lines. A short "about" section, providing independent background on the issuing organization or individual. Here you should explain future aspects, your or aim in meeting the current market or success. In general what you intend to do achieve.]

Contact Information: [Organization Name]; [Address]; [Telephone]; [Website]
(These marks let the reader know that it is the end of the release/article.)

SAMPLE #2

NEWS ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(YOUR HEADLINE GOES HERE (MAKE IT CATCHY TO CAPTURE: ATTENTION OF THE EDITOR, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ETC.)

WHEN: (Day, Date)

WHERE: (City, State)

TICKET PRICE: (IF APPLICABLE)

TICKET AVAILABILITY: (HOW AND WHERE CAN TICKETS BE OBTAINED, IF APPLICABLE)

PRESS/EVENT CONTACT: (NAME;PHONE NUMBER(S); EMAIL OF PERSON FOR PRESS TO CONTACT ONLY!)

DETAILS: *(the below is an example)*

Dozens of top regional quartets and choruses will compete at the 56th annual Mid-Atlantic District Contest of The Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) - formerly, The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA). The event takes place on (Day, Date and Time) at (Location). Barbershop Harmony Society registered quartets and choruses will be judged and scored in separate contests for this years championship title.

Winners will compete in the (Year) International Competition in (City & State plus Dates.) The quartet competition starts (Day, Date, Time, etc.) The chorus competition begins (Day, Date, Time, etc.) A quartet finalist contest followed by a Jamboree featuring current and past champions will begin @ (Day, Date, Time, etc.).

Tickets are available to the public for the quartet finalist contest and Jamboree @ (Ticket Price/each). Bargain Priced all inclusive event "strip" tickets also available at (website

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: (This background information gives context to your event).

The Mid Atlantic District is the largest of of seventeen nationwide of The Barbershop Harmony Society, with nearly 5,000 members representing nearly 100 chapters in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland. The respective winners in each district earn the right to compete with other district and worldwide champions in Philadelphia, PA, the site for The Society's next international convention / competition (Date, City, State, etc.).

Reigning district quartet and chorus champions are "Old School" and "The Alexandria Harmonizers", respectively. The Barbershop Harmony Society (a.k.a. The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA), is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. It was founded in Tulsa Oklahoma in 1938 by tax attorney O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall and is the world's largest men's singing organization with more than 23,000 members throughout the United States and Canada representing more than eight hundred chapters and one thousand registered quartets. International affiliates exist in Great Britain, Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden, South Africa, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere.

SAMPLE #2 (Continued)

For Press related information, promotion and/or interview scheduling for this event, please contact (Name of Contact Person) at (Landline and Cell Numbers.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the contact number for the common man is different from the number(s) you give to the Press, make sure you distinguish which number is which by saying : For Press Contact ONLY and not for general publication.

BHS Contact for Chapter Leadership & Education

For all comments, concerns or further questions about this guide or resources, please feel free to contact the BHS Chapter Leadership & Education Team at chapters@barbershop.org or call 1.800.876.7464. You can also contact the BHS Customer Service Team at customerservice@barbershop.org or by calling 1.800.876.7464.