

**10 “Simple” Steps
to Creating a
Membership Recruitment
Plan That Will Meet
Your Chorus’ Needs**

Preface

So what is this packet anyway? The be-all and end-all to all your membership recruitment problems?

Hardly!

I've created this handout in an attempt to give you a framework or thought process to assist you in setting up membership recruitment plans and campaigns within your own chapter. I don't claim to have all the answers, but I do have plenty of ideas, as well as numerous resources available (see the "Resources" section beginning on page 16), and some questions and tips to get you started in finding the right membership recruitment plan for your chorus.

So why create such a packet? The answer is simple—you asked for it! The one thing that I have heard from many chapters across our region is that their chapter has either grown tired of having the same kind of membership drive over and over, or that the chapter is growing weary of re-inventing the wheel in the hopes of finding that "perfect" membership drive. So rather than pretending that I know what's best for you and telling you what to do and how to do it, I will try to give you the tools to find the membership recruitment efforts that will best fit your chorus.

This packet is designed so that you can create a well-organized plan that is tailored to your own chorus and will allow you to take the "best of" your previous membership efforts and infuse them with new or different ideas you haven't tried before. For some choruses, this would simply mean further customizing the Ready, Set...Grow campaign they're already using. For others, it means expanding on the one-night-only guest night they've been using for years and years. For still others, it can help you to start all over from Square One. The key is that *it's up to you*. After all, no one else knows your chorus better than *your* chorus!

Please feel free to use these materials as a whole system or simply as a source of brainstorming or ideas in the one specific area of membership that you feel your chapter is lacking. You also have my express permission to make copies of this handout for your fellow chorus members as you see fit.

Please let me know if you have additional ideas, suggestions or changes of things you would like to see in this handout, and I will be happy to update it for the future. The information in this packet is also available on our regional web site at www.region22.org.

Happy recruiting!

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P. S.: I and other regional leaders are also available to pay a visit to your chorus. Whether it would be to come to one of your rehearsals or simply to meet with your board, management team, or membership committee on membership matters, the region is ready and willing to provide any assistance you would like.

What Do You Want?

1. Set your goals for membership.

Before you recruit your first member or advertise your next membership drive, it's wise to know what you want to get out of your membership efforts. After all, if you have clear, specific goals regarding what you want your end result to be, it will be much easier to evaluate how effective your efforts were at the end of the membership drive.

These goals should be set by the membership committee and/or the chorus board of directors/management team, factoring in the thoughts and inputs of the chorus as a whole. You may want to do a quick survey of the chorus to get a quick feel for what they'd like to see happen in the chorus as far as membership is concerned. The membership goals that you set should complement the musical, performance, and other goals of the chorus.

Following are some questions and thoughts to help you set these membership goals:

The end result

- What are the overall goals of the chorus (musical and otherwise) for the next year/two years/three years?
- How do these goals translate to membership recruitment and/or the need for adding new members to your chorus?
- How many new members would you ideally like to add to your chapter in the next year?

Doing the math

- Do your figures take into account the possibility that a few current members may have to leave for whatever reason in the mean time?
- If not, do you want to aim for picking up additional new members to compensate for the members who may fall by the wayside?
- Your end goal revolves around the number of new members you want to have actually join—so how many people do you want to initially show up at the first week of your membership drive? (*In general, plan on less than half of the guests who show up at the first guest night actually joining. You may get a better response than that—but wouldn't that be a pleasant surprise?*)

Demographics

- Is there a specific kind of new member that you want to find? If so, what kind of person is she? What is her age or profession?
- What kinds of interests/attitudes does she have?
- What would motivate her to be a Sweet Adeline—Competing? Socializing? Improving? Performing?
- How is she similar or different from the members you already have?

Learn from the Past

2. Evaluate your previous membership drives.

Ever heard the saying that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it? That would also apply to membership recruitment drives. Before you do too much planning for the future, start by taking a realistic look at where you're coming from.

Create a think tank

Sit down with your membership committee and/or a group of interested members and make a list of your membership recruitment efforts from the past. Be sure to include newer members as well as more experienced members in this discussion—new members bring a fresh perspective to the table, while on the other hand, members who have been around a while have seen the history of chorus and have a better overall idea of what's been done and what has worked better than other things.

Once you have your think tank assembled, start asking some questions of each other such as the following ones:

1. Where have we concentrated our membership efforts in the past?
2. How have we advertised our efforts as well as followed up on them?
3. What have we done as far as membership recruitment that hasn't worked? Why do you think it didn't work?
4. What can we do to learn from the weaknesses of previous drives to avoid making the same errors again?
5. What have we done that has worked well for us? Why do you think that worked?
6. Is there anything from previous membership drives we know we want to include or avoid in the future?

Be realistic and honest

As you go through this step, be mindful that this is the time to be painfully honest with yourselves. This isn't the time to make excuses or cry in your beer, but the time to learn from your mistakes, build on your successes, and move on. Try to be as objective as possible in coming up with answers to the above questions so that you'll have the most productive suggestions in mind as you plan for your next recruitment campaign.

Dream a Little

3. Brainstorm about what you could do.

This is the time to get those creative juices flowing. You know what your goals are and you have an idea of what kinds of things you might want to do, but now it's time to put your inhibitions aside and think without limitations.

Get your “think tank” people from Step #2 together and designate a “secretary” to write down all your ideas. Start coming up with ideas on how you could advertise your membership drive as well as what kinds of guest/orientation activities you could have and how you might follow up on your efforts to keep ‘em coming back. The key is NOT to analyze your ideas or worry about the constraints of time and money, but to come up with ideas of anything and everything you could possibly do to help your chorus get new members.

Below are some ideas to help get you started if you're sitting there with a blank sheet of paper. Add as many ideas and possibilities as you can possibly think of. Have fun!

Marketing Ideas: Where can you find the guests you're looking for?

- Working in an office?
- Shopping at the local supermarket/department store/Wal-Mart?
- In a church on Sunday morning?
- At a local restaurant? Fast food or sit-down?
- In a music store?
- At home?
- Participating in some other community organization?
- Singing in a church choir or community choir?
- Where else?

Public Relations Ideas: How can we get the attention of the guests we want?

- paid ads or other articles (from press releases and other contacts) in local newspapers/radio/TV
- leave flyers on windshields in large parking lots
- purchase “table tents” for one or more local restaurants
- post flyers or other signs on bulletin boards/windows in local stores
- leave business cards/brochures in public places
- send a quartet to the grocery store and have them sing for the customers/stuff grocery bags with fliers
- send personalized invitations to the home of any potential member whose name/address you can find (get mailing list of local SPEBSQSA chapter; get names from as many members as possible—offer to look up addresses in the phone book/on the Internet if necessary)
- include out-right invitations or rehearsal information at shows and other public performances – have brochures/flyers/business cards on hand.
- set up a web site advertisement and have other local music-oriented sites and/or community bulletin boards link to the membership page on your web site.

Education/Orientation: What can we do once we get her in the door?

- Perform a couple show songs or competition songs for the guests
- Designate a couple official “greeters” to meet guests at the door as well as carry on conversations with them before and after rehearsal
- Assign her a big sister/riser buddy/chorus connector
- Give her brochures and/or other materials about your chorus and Sweet Adelines
- Provide an up-to-date guest music folder
- Give her a learning tape for her part
- Have one or more “break-out” classes with chorus leaders to orient them on various topics (section leaders, Chorus President/Board/Treasurer, choreography chair, costume/makeup chairs, etc.)
- Serve them refreshments/have a half-hour “reception” with them after rehearsal
- Get her up on the risers for warming up or learning a new song with the chorus
- Set up a system for follow up (see Question #8)
- Introduce each guest or have her introduce herself
- Have your other recently new members share their “testimonials” with the guests and/or other members
- Make sure every member wears her nametag.

Put it in Writing

4. Create a written plan of your membership efforts

By now, you probably have a lot of dreams and ideas and thoughts regarding what you can do to recruit members from Step #3, and now you're thinking to yourself—how can we possibly do all of this given the time, money, and womanpower we have available? That's the next step to tackle—taking all of your good intentions and goals and ideas and translating them into a plan that will work for your chorus in recruiting members.

Organize your thoughts and ideas

You'll want to start by evaluating the results of your brainstorming. Rather than eliminating options, you might want to start simply by selecting the options with the most potential and ranking them. It's important to prioritize rather than simply eliminate options up front—after all, you might want to use some of the ideas you came up with in future years, even if you don't get to it this year. After you've "prioritized" your ideas, then it's time to start thinking about time, money, & womanpower and incorporating it with the thoughts you came up with in evaluations of previous membership drives. Keep in mind your notes of what you said you definitely wanted to include or avoid from Step #2.

If there are a couple of "new" ideas on your list that you're eager to try, but you're unsure of what would be involved in incorporating that idea, you might want to check with another chorus or group who's used that idea before and get some feedback from them on what to take into consideration. Don't be afraid to try new things or to update and tweak old ideas—these ideas will often come up with the best results!

Create a written, organized plan

Once you've decided which ideas you're going to focus on for the coming year, it's time to try and put everything together in a clear, concise plan that includes a schedule for when you intend to do what. You want to make sure you're prepared for the road ahead and that by the time your guests walk in the door, you're ready for them.

Use the following sample timeline to help you figure out what to include in your plan and how to possibly space out the various activities that will be part of your membership drive.

8 weeks before first guest night

find/contact all the member volunteers that will help you carry out your plan. Give them a copy of the plan and let each person know what her responsibilities will be.

6 weeks before your first guest night

Get together with the Public Relations/Advertising Committee to set up all the promotional aspects of the membership drive (e.g.: plan press releases & ads; write copy for flyers and posters; make sure you have plenty of chorus business cards/postcards/brochures on hand. Write letters that will go to your mailing list or list of former guests/members inviting them to the chorus).

4 weeks before your first guest night

Start the promotional aspect of the membership drive. (e.g.: start the ads and press releases. Give fliers and business cards to members for distribution. Get the names and addresses of chorus contacts to send them invitation letters.) Focus on getting the chorus "pumped up" for the membership drive.

3 weeks before your first guest night

Take a physical inventory of your membership materials. Do you need to re-order brochures from International? Get more chorus learning tapes or guest music folders? Is there enough pages in your guest book? Do you have enough nametags? Make sure all of these materials are ready—after all, you might have a couple guests showing up a couple weeks early!

2 weeks before your first guest night

Sit down with the director and make sure the rehearsals for each guest night are planned out with a good balance between working with the chorus and working with the guests. (If you're doing a Ready Set Grow program or Community Chorus program with a series of five or six guest nights in a row, you'll want to do this even further in advance).

1 week before your first guest night

Have a training session with your “greeters” and/or “big sisters” so they know exactly what to do and when to do it and how to approach guests and answer their questions.

Remind the chorus that the guest night starts the following week—encourage them to follow up with guests they've invited and remind them to come early and wear their nametag and chorus T-shirt, etc.

First guest night

Have all the materials and people you planned ready and on hand to receive the guests. Go with the rehearsal plan you set up with the director and keep the night moving smoothly. No matter how many people show up, treat them like queens!

Week after first guest night

Implement follow-up system for you and/or their big sister to contact all guests and invite them back.

Second guest night

Give the guest even more information about the chorus. Perhaps give her a learning tape. Implement the rehearsal plan/guest orientation as planned.

Week after second guest night

Follow up with each guest again—perhaps with a different person or using a different medium than you did the first week—include those who came back for a second week as well as those who didn't.

...and so on and so forth until you've completed the number of weeks until the membership drive is over and/or the audition process has started. Once you've reached the audition, then it's time to put your new member orientation plans into action (see Step #8) and get your membership retention activities going (see Step #9). Last but not least, set up a wrap-up session with your committee to evaluate how the membership drive went. Start evaluating this year's effort for next year while it's still fresh in your mind.

Gather the Herd

5. Assemble a team & make sure everyone is on board

Now that you know what you're going to do and when you're going to do it, it's time to talk to the people who you'll need to work with to make sure it gets done.

Membership Committee

If you haven't already done so, assemble your membership committee of four or five people who will help you get the legwork of the membership drive done. These people are the ones who will help you greet guests when they come in the door and who help you make sure all your membership materials are accurate and up-to-date and who will help plant the seed of excitement in the chorus about the membership drive. They may or may not be part of the "think tank" group you worked with in Step 2 and Step 3.

Leadership Approval

You'll also want to touch base with your Director, President, Treasurer, and/or Board/Management Team. Especially if you're trying some new things that will take extra time and money than what you've previously spent, you'll want to get the blessing or approval of the powers-that-be before going any further. If the people who make the decisions and hold the purse-strings in your chorus don't approve of what you're doing, you probably won't get very far! Be prepared to present to them not only what you're going to do, but why you're going to do it and why it's necessary and worthy of their financial and moral support.

Other Chorus Leaders

Once that's done, you'll want to touch base with other key members to make sure they're on the same page as you and your committee. This includes your section leaders, Public Relations committee, and anyone else who will work with the guests as they become new members—people like the choreography chair, costume/makeup chair, show chair, and competition chair. Tell them exactly what they'll need to do and when they'll need to do it and make sure they know that you'll be following up with them later on to help out and make sure it gets done.

“Molly Member”

Last but not least, you'll want to tell the chorus as a whole about the upcoming membership drive. Once your “key” chorus leaders know about the membership plans you're putting into place, it's important for the rest of the chorus to also know about the drive and be involved with finding the guests who will (hopefully) come to the guest nights. They probably won't be interested to know every last element of the plan you've put together (...unless they're baritones, maybe...), but you want them to know what the goal of the membership drive is (from Step #1). Let them know that it's *their* responsibility to go out and be excellent ambassadors of the chorus and make contacts with potential members so that the chorus' goals can be met.

As you can see, although the job of the membership chair is a big one, the responsibility for recruiting members is not just yours—it's everyone's—and perhaps your biggest challenge will be to make sure that you have other people ready and willing to help you implement the membership plan you worked so hard to assemble! In other words—don't try to do it alone; get others to help you along the way, and you'll likely be able to accomplish a lot more and get a better result from your membership drive in the end. Even though delegating these tasks can be a difficult thing, it's imperative that your recruitment efforts are more than a 1-woman show. Teamwork is a key ingredient to your success!

Just Do It!

6. Go out there and recruit those guests

Public Relations Help

This is the step where the public relations and advertising phase of the membership drive really kicks in. The support and leadership of your Public Relations chair and/or committee is crucial. She will likely need to be very involved in this process, and without her support, all those people in your community won't know that you're there and won't come to visit you and won't get "hooked" on this hobby! By this point, you should have all of your promotional materials (press releases, advertisements, fliers, brochures, business cards, letters to potential guests, etc.) in place. Now's the time to hit the streets with these materials and really get your chorus pumped up for finding new members.

Be as professional yet personable as possible

When you're going to distribute fliers or you're contacting the media about your membership drive, be prepared to put your very best foot forward. How the public (or the people who reach the public) perceive you is very important. If they're not impressed by your presentation and/or the way you carry yourself, you'll likely find yourself at a disadvantage. You may want to find your best "schmooser" or most "connected" person in the chorus to be very involved in such things.

Members as Ambassadors

Remember, promoting the chorus and finding potential members is a responsibility that every member should have a part in. Every member needs to act as a representative of her chorus and be "on the lookout". Don't hesitate to have one or more special "training" sessions with tips and/or sample skits at this time so members know exactly what they need to do and can then go about the business of recruiting with the proper skills and a positive attitude about the chorus. If nothing else, arm your members with business cards, postcards, and/or flyers about the chorus so that they can hand them out or drop them off in places where potential members may be found.

Performances

While you're in this phase, you'll also want to have some public performances if you can work them into your schedule. The more the chorus is together away from the rehearsal hall and in front of an audience in the community, the more exposure you'll get, and the more potential members you'll find. This will also help bond the chorus together and build up your "team spirit" so that your chorus' confidence is at its highest and you're ready and rearing to go when potential members walk into your rehearsal for the first time.

Reel ‘Em In

7. Inform and educate your guests

Okay, now the exciting part starts. The guests have come in the door! Now what are you going to do to tell them about Sweet Adelines and convince them that this chorus is worth their valuable time? Whether you're having a one-night-only intensive guest night or putting in place a six-week-long Ready Set...Grow program, there are three key elements that you'll want to make sure you provide as your guests get to know who you are. A balanced "attack" of these three things outlined below will be instrumental in the success of your membership drive.

Music

You'll want to sing for your guests as well as have them sing with you. Even if you're having a Ready Set Grow program where the guests learn all the techniques and such away from the chorus, you still want them to see and be part of the chorus as a whole in its music. After all, research suggests that although we may stay in Sweet Adelines for the friendships we've formed, we join for the music, and the music is what unifies us together. No matter what else you have planned for your guest night or nights, make sure that actual music and singing permeates the whole night.

Information

If you want your guests to come back again, you have to tell them at least a little bit about who you are and what Sweet Adelines is. Each chorus approaches this process a little bit differently as far as what information to distribute when, but the important thing is that you have one or more people available to answer guests' questions before and after each rehearsal, as well as during the week following rehearsal. In addition to a contact person, you'll want to have some kind of written material to send home with the guests. You probably won't want to overwhelm them with all the specifics and details in the first couple of weeks (unless they request all the details up-front, of course), but at least give them the basics of the chorus. That way, they have something to "study" while they mull over whether or not they might want to make this chorus a part of their lives.

In addition to the "business" of the chorus, it's important to emphasize in your personal contacts with guests as well as in your written materials that this hobby provides opportunities not just for music and friendship, but also for education, achievement, leadership, travel, and most of all, FUN!

Friendliness

It's pretty safe to say that if your guests don't feel welcome or accepted at your chorus, they won't return. It's important that each guest not only gets a greeting from the membership chair and assigned riser buddy, but as many people as possible! Especially in a large chorus, a guest needs to feel as though the chorus truly cares about her and values her potential membership in the chorus and she's more than just another "number" on the chorus roster. You'll want to have as many people introducing themselves and striking up a conversation with guests as possible—while at the same time keeping a positive attitude about the chorus and what your chorus has to offer. It's also important to guard against being too pushy or bombarding the guests with too much information.

You'll also want to be sure that this friendliness doesn't just "go away" after the first week or two. Once we've made a good impression on the guest the first week, it's up to us to make just as good of an impression on them in the ensuing weeks, until the guest has auditioned *and* beyond.

Life As a Rookie

8. Orient your new members

They've joined the chorus. Whew! But statistically, Sweet Adelines loses the majority of its members in their first 5 years of membership. The moral of the story? After any big membership drive, you need to follow up with your new members by implementing a new member orientation program or practices. Isn't the ultimate goal of any membership program to have your "new" members become "experienced" members who help to recruit the *next* crop of new members?

The first year of membership in Sweet Adelines can be the most exciting, magical, one of their Sweet Adeline life. However, it's also the one where the new member doesn't always know what's going on and may find herself struggling to keep up with the rest of chorus and may feel as though she's not really part of the group. Even if you've given your new members all sorts of information about the chorus and the organization while she was a guest, it's still a good idea to have a system in place to re-teach them the ins and outs of the chorus, reassure them that they're a great addition to the chorus, and just make sure that they feel like part of the group.

Here are some ideas for new member orientation:

- Keep the new member's assigned big sister "on the job" for the next several months so that the new member always has someone they can go to to ask questions or at least find out who they need to go to for more information
- Have a special ceremony or other recognition for new members at each "milestone" in their new membership—receiving their membership card from International, receiving their costume, getting their chorus nametag, etc.
- Have a "class" with the director, competition chair, and costume/makeup chair for the new members two months or so before competition to tell them a little bit about what will happen there and what they'll need to purchase or otherwise prepare for.
- Have new members get together with their section leader before their first required "taping" so they know what to expect and so their mind can be put at any fears of taping lessened.
- Recognize new members at chorus events in the first year—especially at their first competition as a rookie, and perhaps also at their first show and at their first chorus installation dinner.
- Specifically invite new members to quartet promotion events in the chorus, especially if they have expressed an interest in quartetting
- Involve new members in fundraising events, afterglows, and other social events where they'll have the opportunity to further "bond" with the chorus and make new friends in the chorus.
- Make a point to invite new members to attend the next regional music event with any other members of the chorus so that they can also get exposed to the "bigger picture" of Sweet Adelines early on.

- Invite new members to join chorus members who go out to a restaurant or bar after rehearsal in order to get to know them a little better.
- Offer to help the new member to set up a carpool to and from rehearsal so that she can have one or more Sweet Adelines to talk to on the way to and from rehearsal.
- Have a 3-month or 6-month “follow-up session” with the membership chair/committee to see if there are any questions they now have and to get their feedback on what they feel may have been missed or overlooked in their orientation so that you can learn from their experiences for future guests and new members
- Set up some sort of musical follow-up with the new member’s section leader or one of the directors so that they can get some one-on-one feedback regarding all the areas they’ve improved and also the areas that need some work. In other words, schedule a PVI at some time in the first year.

Keep 'em Happy

9. Put a membership retention plan in place.

Okay, they've been around for a while now—maybe a year or more. Or maybe they've been a member for 10 years or even longer. The hard work's over, right? Wrong! Now you've got to keep them satisfied with their life as a chorus member. You've got to meet their needs and give them reasons to stay and be proud of their membership in the chorus.

Assemble a retention team

Just as with planning your membership recruitment efforts, you'll want to start by finding the people in your chorus who are passionate about membership retention. This may or may not include the chapter's membership recruitment chair, but should include the director, as he or she is a crucial ingredient in any membership retention plan.

So once these retention people are together, what do you do? To start out, you must be honest with yourselves. Put yourself in the shoes of the outgoing member—why would a member leave your chorus? Sometimes the answers may be easy to identify, but more often it's a difficult task.

If you're losing a lot of members, there's probably a good reason why—and it's not just that the members don't have the time or money anymore. More likely, it's that there's some underlying reason why the member isn't having fun or her needs aren't being met. To help you identify these factors that may cause members to leave, you may want to do a survey of members when they leave or perhaps talk with members who were particularly close to the outgoing member to get a better feel for what the reasons might be that she left.

Once you've identified some of the possible reasons why members may leave the chorus, focus on the reasons you came up with which your chorus can do something about. Obviously, you can't prevent members from moving or becoming ill, but there are other reasons that people leave that you can do something about. Brainstorm on what you can do to help prevent those more controllable things.

Put together some concrete plans for new or improved activities, events, or practices, and then "assign" members of your team to put these things in place. Here's some thoughts and factors you might want to include or take into consideration as part of your plan.

Listening to members' opinions and concerns

Even if a member's opinions or concerns aren't shared by the rest of the chorus, still hear her out and pay her the respect of considering what she has to say. Any time you start ignoring the thoughts, suggestions, or comments of your members you're likely to cause her to start feeling like she doesn't really fit in with the rest of the chorus. It sounds simple in theory, but this can sometimes be very difficult. Instilling a sense in your chorus that every single member is an important contributor to the chorus can help not only your retention rate, but your sense of team spirit.

Recognizing each other

People like to get credit for doing good things. Creating opportunities and methods for giving members a pat on the back can be a great contributor to the health of any chorus, as well as to the ego of the individual member. This could range from handing out awards to members for the little things that they do for the chapter to simply allowing time during rehearsal for members to share any good news in their lives with other members.

Socializing with each other

It's no secret, Sweet Adelines like to party! Most chapters don't have any problem coming up with fun activities like afterglows, retreats, picnics and other events to help the chorus "bond" together. The obstacle is usually

making sure that the whole chorus is involved in such activities and finding the time to devote to such social activities while still working hard on that little thing called music.

Keeping a positive, yet realistic outlook

Maintaining a positive attitude as a chorus can do wonders for the spirits and self-esteem of any chorus. It's important to focus on what's right in your chorus and look to the future rather than harping on previous mistakes or miscomings. However, it's also important to be realistic in the goals you set. After all, if you get your hopes up too high—it will only be more difficult to face reality when and if you fall short of your goal. In other words, set goals for your chorus that challenge you to do more than what you've done before, while still being manageable to achieve.

Let the music bring you together

The one reason we're all here is the music. Although many of us stay in this organization for the friendship, it's still the music that brings us together. Especially after a hard night of rehearsing, be sure to end the night with singing a song of togetherness like "How We Sang Today" where the chorus can join hands as they sing. It really does help all of us leave rehearsal feeling invigorated and appreciative of our membership in this great hobby.

Communication!

Keeping the lines of communication open and providing members with the information that they need can also be a huge factor in retention. Some great ways to increase the amount and effectiveness of your chorus' communications include: weekly "hot sheets", newsletters/bulletins, web sites, member handbooks; and making sure all members have a chorus roster, a list of who's responsible for what in the chorus, and a copy of the phone or e-mail tree for important announcements during the week.

Don't Let Up—Follow Up!

10. Follow up again... and again and again

If you remember nothing else from this plan, remember to *follow up*! Remember that although the first impression you make may mean a lot, consistency means even more—to guests as well as current members.

Follow-up is important in each one of the following to help give you the best chance for success:

Membership Committee

Throughout this whole process, you'll want to meet with your membership committee periodically to help keep each other on track and make sure that the plan you've put together is being implemented. If it's not, find out why and work hard to get back on track. After all, you want to make sure everything is in place by the time the guests walk in the door so that you can make the best impression possible.

Director

You may have already gone over a tentative rehearsal schedule with the director for the guest nights you have in place, but follow up with him or her again before the rehearsal to make sure their plans have not changed dramatically or to see if there's anything either of you would like to add or change to the current rehearsal plan.

Chorus Leaders

Even after you've met with the Public Relations Chair or section leaders or any chorus leader to discuss her part in the membership drive, follow up with them a week or so before they're supposed to complete their "task" to make sure everything is running smoothly and to help them put out any "fires" that may come up or recruit any extra volunteers from the chorus that they may need to get their job done.

Individual Members

You've asked members to promote the membership drive through fliers and personal contacts. But have they done so? You might want to have a show of hands in the last couple weeks prior to the first guest night to see how many people actually have distributed fliers or invited guests or submitted the names of guests. Prodding them again, and having them see that other people have done these things may prompt them to action.

Guests

Of course, following up with the guest is crucial. Between the first and second or second and third rehearsal and so on, send out postcards, letters, send e-mails, make phone calls, or anything else that will allow you to establish contact with that guest again and let her know how much her presence was appreciated and that the chorus would like her to return.

New members

Per Step #8, make sure you keep in periodic contact with your new members to make sure you're not missing anything in providing them the information they need and that everything is going well for them in the chorus.

The plan itself

When the membership recruitment program is over, follow up with the goals and the details of your plan and identify any snags that you hit as well as the things that worked really well. You may even want to make a post-membership drive report for the Board so that they can see the fruits of your efforts and know that their budget money was well-spent and should be allocated to membership recruitment efforts again in future years. This should also help you immensely in preparing for your next membership drive.

Resources

Below, you will find a list of additional “resources” of where you can find information for additional ideas, methods, or plans on each of the steps which have been outlined in this packet. The title of the article or information is included, as well as the manual or source from which it comes, and the page number where the information can be found, if necessary.

You may also be interested to know that sometime next year, International will be presenting a new book of membership materials called “Members Count!” to complement this current membership recruitment and retention program promoted by International. My sources tell me that this book will have some “best of” ideas from the Ready Set..Grow manual as well as new ideas and plans and an emphasis on membership retention. Keep your eyes peeled—this is sure to be a great resource as well!

Important Note: If you are interested in receiving a copy of any of the information below and cannot find it in your chapter’s membership materials, please contact Marketing/Membership Coordinator Laurel Peterson, and she will send you a copy. Especially for the materials from SPEBSQSA, please do not contact SPEBSQSA headquarters for a copy of these materials. I have been granted permission to pass along the pearls of wisdom from their membership efforts, but would prefer *not* to take up their time with requests that do not come from their own members. Thanks for your cooperation!

1. Set your goals for membership.

- “Small Has Its Own Rewards” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 6-13

2. Evaluate your previous membership drives.

- “Where Are We Today?” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 1-2 to 1-3
- “Guest Survey” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-7
- “Past Rookie Survey” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-8

3. Brainstorm about what you could do.

- “Success Stories from Choruses” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 7-1 to 7-4
 - *Chapter Membership Questionnaire* Handout; Region 22 Membership Files
- see also the resources in Steps 5, 6, 7, and 8 for ideas to get your brainstorming started--*

4. Create a written plan of your membership efforts

- “Lesson Overview and Orientation Schedule” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-33
- “Planning for Success” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 5-3 to 5-7
- “Countdown to Success” SPEBSQSA *Menu for Success*
- “Class of ‘97” SPEBSQSA *Menu for Success*
- “Great Times to Recruit” SPEBSQSA *Menu for Success*

5. Assemble a team & make sure everyone is on board

- “Getting Set” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 2-1 to 2-7
- “Involving the Chorus Members in the Membership Program” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 5-1
- “Developing a Support System: People & Organizations” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 2-1 to 2-3
- “Delegating Tasks” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 2-8
- “Gaining Chorus Support” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 4-1 to 4-2
- “Gaining Chorus Participation” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 4-3 to 4-4
- “Tape Script” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 4-13 to 4-15
- “Personal Recruiting” SPEBSQSA *Menu for Success*

6. Go out there and recruit those guests

- “Ways to Lure New Members” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 1-4 to 1-6
- “Sample Letter of Invitation” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-48
- “Sample Letter to Former Chorus Members” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-49
- “Getting the Word Out” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 5-8 to 5-13
- “Sample News Release” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 5-15 to 5-18
- “*Like to Sing?* Flyer” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 7-7
- “Pre-Printed Notes” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 7-8
- “Publicizing Our Ready Set Grow Efforts” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 7-9 to 7-14
- “Developing a Support System: People & Organizations” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 2-1 to 2-3
- “News Release” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 3-1 to 3-6
- “Advertising Copy & Layout” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 3-8 to 3-9
- “Creating Displays” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 3-10 to 3-11
- “Public Service Announcements” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 3-12 to 3-13
- “Newsletters, Fliers & Brochures” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 3-14
- “How to Create a Word-of-Mouth Marketing Campaign” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 4-8 to 4-12
- “Women’s Chorus Needs 100 Singers” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 6-5
- “Turn Your Radio On” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 6-9
- *Press Releases* Handout; Region 22 Membership Files
- *Membership Recruitment* Handout; Region 22 Membership Files
- *Chapter Membership Questionnaire* Handout, Question #2; Region 22 Membership Files
- “Recruiting Message within Keep America Singing” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Storefront Displays” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Choir Director Letter” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Great Times to Recruit” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Play an Away Game” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Auditions for Admissions” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Personal Recruiting” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Speak at a Community Event” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Using your chapter mailing list for Recruiting” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Wanna Sing?” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Who Do You Know?” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*

7. Inform and educate your guests

- “First Impressions” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 2-8 to 2-10
- “Why Greeter Training?” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-3
- “Guest Packets” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-4
- “When Members Talk with Guests” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-5
- “The Class/Vocal Lesson Plan” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-6 to 3-13
- “Lesson Overview and Orientation Schedule” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-33
- “The Two-Night Plan” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-34 to 3-38
- “The Performance Opportunity Plan” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-42 to 3-60
- “Guest Night” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-51
- “Sample Introductory Letter” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-1
- “Sample Welcome Letter” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-2 to 6-4
- “Sweet Adeline Publications” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 2-4 to 2-6
- *Brochures/Information Sheets* Handout; Region 22 Membership Files
- *Membership Recruitment* Handout; Region 22 Membership Files
- *Chapter Membership Questionnaire* Handout, Question #3; Region 22 Membership Files
- “Auditions for Admissions” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “Class of ‘97” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*
- “What’s In It for Me?” *SPEBSQSA Menu for Success*

8. Orient your new members

- “Rookie Integration Ideas” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-12 to 3-13
- “Booster Classes” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-41
- “A Note About Barbershopping” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-53 to 3-55
- “Past Rookie Survey” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-8
- “Sample Cost Information Sheet” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-9
- “All About Costuming and Makeup” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-10 to 6-11
- “Sweet Adeline Publications” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 2-4 to 2-6
- “Something Every Marketer Knows” Selling Sweet Adelines Manual; p. 6-3

9. Put a membership retention plan in place.

- “Membership Retention” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 4-1 to 4-10
- “Focus for Fun” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-12 to 6-14
- “Rehearsal Planning – Variety Is the Spice of Life” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-15
- “Positive Rehearsal Environment” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-16
- “The Importance of Personal Marketing” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 7-18 to 7-19
- *Membership Retention* Handout; Region 22 Membership Files
- *Chapter Membership Questionnaire* Handout, Question #5; Region 22 Membership Files

10. Follow up again... and again and again

- “Sample Postcard” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 3-56
- “Guest Survey” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-7
- “Past Rookie Survey” Ready Set Grow Manual; p. 6-8
- “Former Member Letter” SPEBSQSA *Menu for Success*
- *Chapter Membership Questionnaire* Handout, Question #4; Region 22 Membership Files