

Summer Show Planning

by Greg Kronlund, AIB



So, it's time for your annual show. If you have a summer show, now is the time to start making your plan of action. Most of this should start as soon as Division Conventions have concluded. But with uncertainty caused by Covid and its nasty variants, **April** is about the right time to begin. So, what do you need to do:

1. Work with Show leadership to decide the first three P's. Product, Price, Place.
2. Discuss the **product** information: name of show, show date(s), show times, venue, special guest performers, quartets, headliners, and all the items that make up the product. What elements are worth promoting?
3. Discuss with show leadership **pricing**. How does the price affect audience participation? Figure out the average seat price for break even and profit to the chapter. (Show costs \$3000.... Venue seats 1000 people = \$3.00 per seat breakeven. Assuming you sell every seat. Assuming attendance will be 50%.... show costs \$3000 Seats sold 500 = \$6.00 for breakeven) One thing to keep in mind is the MOST **expensive** seat in the house is the **empty** seat. **Pricing** is a strong factor in the marketing plan.
4. Discuss with show leadership **place**: the venue, parking, lighting, accessibility, seating, ease of location. This also includes the place to buy tickets: from members, online, chapter website, ticket outlet, mail order, will-call? What place will you occupy in your audience's heart to bring them to your next show?
5. Break out a calendar to set **promotional** benchmarks. (You may want to consider an online [project management](#) tool.) When are posters due, what is the plan to place the posters? When to update Website and Facebook. Local newspaper article?

6. When to start paid advertising? Are there any business tie-ins available? Do you have a plan to get your membership involved in promoting the show with their peers, on their Facebook page, elevator speech preparation?
7. Who will manage the [benchmark calendar](#) to make sure everyone is on task and on time?

This is really a multi-person job, and as a **VP of M/PR** and a leader of your chapter, find helpers. Build your first three P's to guide you on the promotional side. **Work ahead of your event** and enlist trusted members to help cross the finish line.

What Now????

If you built a Marketing Plan for your **Summer Show**, you know the product, the price, and the place. Now you need to work on the media channels that will reach the greatest number of people with your message a minimum of 3 times.



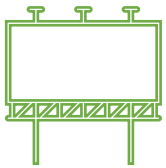
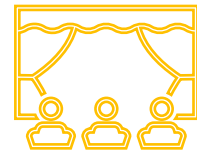
You know your **Product**: Summer Show titled “**In the Good ole Summertime.**” It’s a feel-good show with lots of fun filled songs from **Vaudeville** to the **Surfin’** and **Hot Rod** tunes of the **Beach Boys**. The appeal will be from 59+ years old to grandparents. The average audience will be adults in their late 50’s to “elderly”.

They may bring family members. The typical audience member will not have children under the age of twelve (12) which otherwise would affect disposable income. So, the interested audience, assuming they know about the show, will have the ability to buy tickets. This demographic cell receives information from radio (talk and Oldies), television, some print, and a little bit from internet. This group is often interested in Farmers Markets and outdoor activities. An interesting poster and direct email could work to inform your audience about your show.



You know your **Price**: You've studied your typical pricing structure and decided what price your audience is willing to pay. You have found the "sweet spot" and priced your show accordingly. Have you built in complementary tickets for VIP and trading purposes?

You know your **Placement**: You have your ticket outlets in place, the venue, and the parking situation. (Parking can reduce audience if it's not large enough or doesn't supply a lot of handicapped spaces. Can your location handle *retirement home busses*?) You understand the general issues of the venue, restrooms, lobby area, refreshment area, ventilation, comfortable seating area, and handicapped accessibility. All these concerns contribute to finding a place in the heart of your audience.



This brings you to the point of **Promotion**/advertising. If you have the budget, you can buy advertising, but if you have a limited budget you may need to "**think outside**" the box.

Ideas:

1

Ticket/Poster/Lobby Card Printing: offer your printer the back of the ticket for his logo for a reduced-price printing, or a free upgrade to better paper, or adding color. Offer printer a logo on poster and lobby card(s) in trade.

2

Radio: Your **Show** is a product of value, why not consider a small purchase on local radio. Purchase drive time and ask the station to match your ad schedule with Public Service Announcements. There is a tendency to ask for low rates to buy frequency, but to get the most bang for your buck buy the station's better times. If the station consents to match your schedule with PSA's you've effectively cut your per ad price in half.

Now ask the station if they will give away **8 pairs**** of tickets to your show. If they agree you have added more frequency to your message for free, as they announce the giveaway.

3

Farmers Market: Consider buying or trading a booth at your local farmers market, have quartets singing in your booth and selling tickets to the show. If you attend three markets in a row you have created frequency, you gain visibility and you might sell some tickets along the way.

4

TV: Contact a local TV station for a guest shot on a local program. Find out if your local access station has any shows that would work for a quartet to sing on. The worst they can say is NO, but they just might surprise you. (Send a great quartet or the entire chorus).

5

Sell Ahead: Your summer show is not your only show...so set up a booth in the lobby and sell your next show. Build a Christmas lobby card (around 40 bucks) post it at your summer show and sell tickets.

6

Audience direct: If you have email lists, compose a catchy email invitation with a link to your website show page. Offer an early bird price for people that respond to the email. Set up a way to buy tickets online from your website. If you can't accept money through your website, set up a contact page to hold tickets and call the buyer back and arrange for payment.

7

Extra mileage: see if your printer is willing to trade some of your printing for a free ad in your program. You might be able to trade with your local newspaper an ad for an ad.

8

Promotional T-Shirts.... Talk to your local screen printer about a Chorus T-shirt. Have your logo on the front and offer the printer his logo on the sleeve. Sell the T-shirts at your events and split the proceeds with the printer.

9

If you want **Barbershoppers** to attend, place an ad in the **Timbre** and the **Green Sheet or with BHS**. Make sure your website is up to date with the latest information on the show and other events.

10

Sing where audience and potential new members “**Hang-out,**” because they’re not in your rehearsal space or at your show unless you invite them.

*****Ticket Giveaways:** I have a lot of experience with ticket giveaways and have discovered that single tickets are not effective. If you only give away one ticket, you force the winner to buy another. That usually backfires because it feels like they won just half a prize. When you give them away in pairs you often gain a second couple that needs to buy tickets. In addition, if they claim the tickets, you may gain a loyal fan, if they don’t claim the tickets, you’ve lost nothing. (Except the price of printing which you were going to do anyway. More importantly you gain added coverage as the ticket giveaway must include your name, your show venue, the dates and times.)

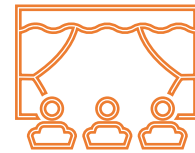
How do We deal with Headliners? Opinion



A typical show usually includes your chorus, possibly a guest chorus, chapter quartets, and a headliner. You're hoping a headlining quartet will bring in audience.

But here's the sad truth, most headlining quartets will only bring in other Barbershoppers that have heard of them.

I personally think "**The Newfangled Four**" is a great quartet, but they are unknown to a non-barbershop audience. Considering the average age of your typical non-barbershop audience they will have even less name recognition. If your isolated from other BHS chapters, it will be more difficult to draw a barbershop audience.



A better way to deal with the headliner is to promote them as an enhancement to your show. They raise the quality of the overall performance and demonstrate great four-part harmony.



Think about offering a headliner meet and greet at the local high schools or local choirs. A backstage meet and greet for community leaders you're cultivating or working with.

Organize a voice workshop for local singers and ask your headliners to take part.

Post headliner videos on your website, Facebook, or other social media. Introduce the quartet to local music teachers and have them sing for the local school choirs.



If you have a relationship with local radio and TV, arrange for an interview or performance.



I know of a chorus that spent over \$2000 for a headline quartet and got five songs in exchange. Make sure your contract allows you to market the quartet and your chapter.

It takes time, people, energy, planning, coordination, and execution to be successful so **give yourself lots of time.**



It is easy to assume that, because you know the quartet, that everyone knows them. That is a false assumption, and you'll need to keep it in mind as you plan your marketing and promotional activities. A headliner can be a big expense so make sure your talent contract conveys all your expectations.



Personally, I'm a firm believer in using district quartets as headliners. They have a better feel for what your chapter is going through, they supply top notch entertainment, and have an interest in promoting your chapter as much as possible. Using a district quartet is a win-win for both groups.

[BACK to Marketing](#)