

Foreword

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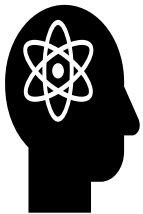


The interesting thing about becoming a new **VP of M/PR**, is that, by the time you have begun the job you are already behind. Because elections occur in **October**, and most board members begin in **January**, you have already lost over two months of pre-planning. Planning and being proactive about the task are paramount for the position. The thing to realize is that planning can happen anytime, but sooner is always better than later. Here are five thoughts you can start with anytime. My suggestion is to make a pledge to get it done.

The Planning Season

Barbershoppers should be in the planning stages **right now** for the upcoming **2-years**. Hopefully, last November you built your plans for *Singing Valentines*. If you haven't, welcome to the club. I can't count the number of times a member has come to me on February 1st and asked, "Are we doing Valentines this year"? This is a basic flaw with many of our chapters **NOT PLANNING AHEAD**. Dig out a calendar and start building a plan, **NOW!** Building a plan now for **NEXT** Valentines season will save aggravation overall. (Hint: start executing your Valentines plans in November- 3 months ahead of Feb. 14th).

As VP of M/PR you need to consider things regular members do not. The M/PR Vice president needs to lead chapter members into thinking about and helping with the overall messaging of the organization. External marketing is everyone's business. VP of M/PR must also think critically and reject two basic statements: "*we've always done it this way*" and "*we've never done it that way*." Here's a place to begin, start thinking about these four items:



- Your Chapter's Features and Benefits
- The dimensions of your current marketing – You can't think "outside the current box" until you know its dimensions.
- How is digital part of my ground game?
- Natural tie ins.... do you have them?

Features and Benefits

The reason to spend time identifying your features and benefits is to help understand your differentiation. All products have features and benefits and the more you understand your chorus, or chorus events the better you can articulate what sets you apart from your competition. This is useful in identifying copy points for advertising. It can also assist in building a chorus vocabulary, so all members identify the same differentiation.

Features and benefits:

1. **A feature is what something has**
2. **A benefit is what something does for the customer.**

This is an equation: feature = benefit or benefit = feature.

When you look at your chapter chorus can you identify its features and the accompanying benefits? For an example let's start with an event:

Singing Valentines	
Feature:	Benefit:
A unique, one-of-a-kind gift	She/He will Remember forever.
Two songs, a rose, and a card delivered by four tuxedoed vocalists	An inexpensive way to create a lasting memory.
Singing Valentines come to you	So, you don't have to spend time searching in a retail store
Each Valentine comes with a single rose, but additional roses are available	Additional roses are only \$2.00 each
We offer a two-hour window and on-time deliveries	Allowing you the flexibility, to be on hand to see the surprise
We deliver to homes, offices, shopping centers, retirement homes, anywhere in the metro area	You have the flexibility to surprise your special someone anywhere....

Your features and benefits: Developed by a small group brainstorming ideas or an individual, it helps your chapter to determine the best **features** and **benefits** to use in your advertising. What sets you apart? What makes your program unique? This same information helps you differentiate your Chorus, your events, your annual show, and your Christmas show to mention a few. Each component of your chapter has a distinct set of **features** and **benefits**. Having your members participate will have them more vested in the project... and will help them understand how unique each event is. It will get them using the **same vocabulary** when they talk about your upcoming events.

Think Outside the Box

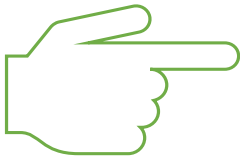
A warn-out cliché to be sure, but it is amazing how quickly a barbershop group can fall into group think. Call it what you will, you need to learn to broaden your thought process. As a marketer you need to stop thinking like a barbershopper and start thinking like your potential customer.

Thought starters



1. Reject the phrase: “**we’ve always done it this way.**”
2. Reject the phrase: “**we’ve never done it that way.**”
3. When confronted with these thoughts ask “**WHY???**”

A few years ago, I mentioned an idea for marketing an event. A board member said, “We tried that 7 years ago and it didn’t work.” I asked why, and he said, “there was no follow through.” That told me that he knew the solution to the problem all along, but simply decided that it would fail again. We tried the idea and discovered that with proper follow through we sold more tickets.



4. Identify the goal and the obstacles. Narrow your thoughts to stay on task.
5. You can’t “think outside the box” until you know the dimensions of your current box, better yet forget there is a box and start from nothing.
6. Looking for an innovative idea ask a child.
7. Move yourself out of your chapter environment to a neutral place. Brainstorm with a friend or chapter leadership.
8. Draw a picture to help identify the pieces required to reach the goal.
9. Consider your worst-case scenario: Fear holds back creativity; it makes you stick to the paths that you know the best. Consider the worst-case scenario and plan for it, you may discover that the worst-case scenario isn't bad enough to interrupt your success. (Track your success to learn what worked and what can improve. Document as much as you can.)
10. Eliminate negativity, don’t let it hold you back. Tell yourself that the solution is only an idea away. No idea is wrong, but some are better.

Digital Ground Game

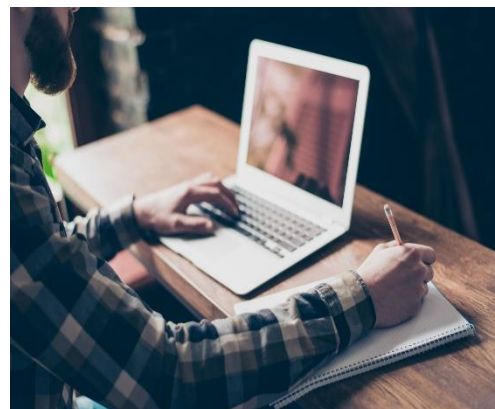
It's impossible to not make digital part of your chapters ground game. But digital comes with numerous traps. First there are so many to choose from, each offering different opportunities to “push” your message. Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Reddit, LinkedIn, YouTube, Meetup, and of course Facebook, to mention ten. When considering media for your chapter think about:



1. Is your core audience using these platforms?
2. Will this platform reach a new audience?
3. Do your current platforms align with the BHS Code of Ethics?
4. Will the platform display your chapter in the best light?
5. Can you increase your number of followers/likes on this platform?
6. Do you have the workforce to regularly update your messaging?
7. Can you sustain and or increase your presence on the platform?

In one of my previous lives, I managed the chapter Website, Facebook, and YouTube channels. A member came to me and asked if we should do Twitter? I said if you'll manage it, I'll set it up. We didn't add Twitter. I devoted one evening a week updating Facebook, two evenings a month updating the chapter website, and two evenings a month on YouTube projects. It was all I could handle. Eventually I found an assistant to manage YouTube updates.

It's important to realize that web viewers are fickle, and don't have patience. The phrase, “been there, done that” typifies the general user. Content drives the internet, and if you can't update frequently, interest in your site will rapidly dwindle. It is better to select one or two sites, that you can devote time to, and work to increase your followers/likes and grow your audience. Post interesting articles and pictures of your chapter in action as often as you can.



Start by mastering your chapter website...Covid has slowed everything and will continue into the near future, so this is an excellent time for building, updating, and improving your current internet platforms.



Your chapter website should be as user friendly as possible, with pages devoted to a single subject. For instance, your ticket purchase page should remain the same for ease of use. But update your show page with each new show and event. Your home page should send people clicking throughout the website to see what's new. Your chapter website should be like an old friend with the latest information to share. Your social media platforms can be a little more daring.

Natural Tie-In: A Story

Once upon a time there was a Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations in Tri Cities, Washington, that also sold radio advertising.

One day, in October, this **VP of M/PR** was working with an advertising client on an upcoming store event. The store event was a Christmas Open house on a Friday night and the following Saturday. As the client shared the planned activities for their Open house the sales rep asked, do you ever have music at the event. The client told the sales rep/**VP of M/PR** they played Christmas records through the PA.

The following day the **VP of M/PR** had a brainstorm.

The next week he suggested that his barbershop chorus or chapter quartets could provide live music. The client thought this was an interesting idea and wanted a proposal.



The client was a florist, so the proposal was to trade \$300.00 worth of singing in December for \$300.00 of roses in February. Every rose the Chapter traded was one less rose to buy, making the value of every Singing Valentine a couple of dollars more. Accidentally this was a natural tie-in.

Your Chapter may have natural tie-ins that you overlook. Now's the time to poll your membership for unexpected opportunities in your community.



BTW –The Chapter supplied three quartets for the Christmas Open House. The quartets shared the 11-hour event. As the audience turned over every hour, they had no trouble repeating songs.

Singing Valentine's that year grossed \$2500.00 for the chapter.

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