

Evergreen Online College

Sample Event Night Guide

Member/Chapter Development Officer Course

March 2019



This guide is provided as a component of the Evergreen District Online College course for the Member/Chapter Development Officers course.

This is a model only. You can and should adapt these ideas to your own specific circumstances. No promises can be made about how effective this material will be for your chapter – but a good plan is half the battle. Have fun!

First Get Commitment

1: You will need every member's total commitment to make it work. If anyone is passive or apathetic, you will run into trouble. This is because uncommitted members could drag others down, and if things go badly, they may lay blame rather than focus on learning and trying again.

If you were already great at this, you probably wouldn't be reading this content – so let's assume it's new and you need all the help you can get. That includes your members. All of them. If can't get that commitment – you may wish to try something else.

2: Get your Music teams' full endorsement. They will give up a full rehearsal and big chunks of pre-event rehearsals.

3: Get your Director onside. He/she will have to lead the musical part of the event.

Do not proceed further until you have all this. Your whole chapter needs to be onboard and willing to help.

Ready?

Your process has four steps:

- **Prepare**
- **Plan**
- **Execute**
- **Learn**

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Prepare

Set aside an hour at a rehearsal and answer these questions (you may need to do this several times):

About yourself

- Who are you?
- Why are you here?
- What do you do?
- Who do you do it for?
- Why should anyone care?

About your customer (potential member)

- What/who is your customer?
- How old is he/she?
- Does he/she sing already?
- Why would they want to sing with us?
- Where do they work, live, play?

About your event purpose (pick ONLY one)

- Is it an outreach event?
- Is it a membership drive event?
- Is it an Open House community event?
- Is it a musical learning event?
- What are the benefits for attendees?

Usually, these questions will trigger a lot of conversation - and even debate. While the purpose of these questions is to help you target your ad campaign and develop a guest events, the process of digging in and understanding why you exist as an organization, and what you have to offer, is valuable all on its own.

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Plan

With the information above in hand you can start planning.

Craft a good advertising campaign. Here is the core message. Shape it any way you like, but the main content is:

EVENT NAME! (What/Who is your customer?) WELCOME!

DATE – LOCATION! Come out for (DURATION) and have some fun doing (ACTIVITIES)

Come to our <<EVENT Description>>

We are (who are we?), and we (do what?) for (whom?). We are here to (what do we do?) for (who do we do it for?). We want to meet you!

Come join us for (EVENT purpose) to (BENEFIT).

Your website address - your phone number – a contact email

Or:

WHERE DO YOU DO YOUR SINGING?

Do you love to sing? So do we! We are Your Local Chorus, and we sing for the love of it – and to raise funds for our community outreach programs. We support three high school music programs in our community by raising funds, singing in benefit concerts throughout the year. We would like to meet you.

Come join us on March 21, 20XX at The Local Community Hall, from 7:30pm to 8:30 pm. We will welcome you, show off our singing style, offer some refreshments and generally show off for you. If you like to sing, like we do, you will want to drop in!

No fee, no obligation, just an evening of fun singing. Contact us at ABCD@ourchapter.com or call 555-1212.

YOUR LOCAL CHORUS! Sing for life!

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ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

It is not enough to rely on your members inviting their friends. Let's face it, most of us have already asked most of them! Don't rely solely on any one channel.

Where do we advertise? Anywhere our customers (WORK/LIVE/PLAY). You will have to strategize here, and set a budget that will allow you good exposure. Creativity matters.

Here are some ideas:

- Local community papers
- Event pages of local large newspapers
- Posters in shop windows where our customers work/live/play
- Posters on telephone poles
- Flyers on car windows at the mall (with permission of course)
 - OR hand out flyers at the mall
- Posters in Music stores
- Posters at the Gas station
- City bus? Taxi? Billboard? Hang banner off a freeway flyover?
- Churches. Synagogues. Temples.
- Music venues (karaoke clubs is especially good)
- Barbershops and hairdressers (so obvious)

The thing here is penetration – you want to nearly saturate your community with information.

Do you know anyone in the media? Radio? They might like to make a public service announcement. However, traditional media is not directed by what YOU need – they are directed by selling radio and newspaper ads, and TV time. It's worth a shot, but don't hang your hopes on it.

VOICE CAMPAIGN

In spite of the earlier warning against it, asking folks to come can be part of the plan – just not the only part. Alongside an ad campaign, voice campaigns can be effective. It works like this.

Have each member write down 10 locations they regularly go, where they might find customers. Shopping, buying gas, paying bills, walking the dog, playing tennis – anywhere they run into ANY potential customer.

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Gather all the lists. Someone needs to visit these places and ask to put up a poster –and at that same time INVITE EVERYONE they meet. Give them a flyer. Smile. Have fun! Do it as a team if you are shy. Every member must commit to at least one outing of this nature. (If a member is generally grumpy, maybe excuse that person.)

Get business cards printed to match your poster content, with space for the member to print their name and phone number on the back. Each member must give away 20 a week, every week....to anyone they run into who matches your description of potential customers.

SOCIAL MEDIA campaign

This is necessary. If you don't know how, learn how. New customers ALL know how to do this and they make extensive use of social media. So, STOP SAYING "I don't do the internet" – because what you are really saying is "I don't do new members". Get over yourself, get some help and start a social ad campaign.

Resources:

- Meetup.com
- Kijiji Events
- Facebook (pay them!)
- Google Ads (pay them!)
- Instagram
- Your own website (get one! Make it great! Have a registration page!)
- Youtube
- What else?

A note about registration – people tend to keep their commitments. While you would never turn anyone away if they are not registered, some method of registering can let you know who is interested, and can create a sense of commitment to attend. Consider an online registration page as part of your advertising campaign. A good free one is at www.123formbuilder.com

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Execute

Below is a sample schedule, working backwards from the proposed date.

8 weeks – date, location, ad copy confirmed

7 weeks – budget set, materials ordered. Start Social media campaign (six weeks)

6 weeks - start voice campaign (non-stop six weeks, all the way to ZERO HOUR).

Now is the time to get the event activities planned out.

- Schedule of activities – what’s happening? Who is in charge?
- Activities – what do we want to do for x hours? (EG: Every person shakes hands and exchanges names with every guest.)
- Non-Activities – what do we NOT want to do? (bad singing in the corners comes to mind, as does ignoring guests so you can visit with your chums)
- Singing – what songs? What order? Your Director should build a mini-show to showcase your fun hobby. It isn’t a contest; these are your guests, not judges. Have fun.
- Roles – who is doing what? Name names and get them assigned.
- Look of Members – all dress alike. White shirt black pants and a name badge? Green shirt? Hats? Remember, this is to make the customers comfortable in knowing who is a guest and who is a member. EVERY MEMBER must be identifiable to a guest, to the best of your ability.
- Venue prep – risers? Decorations? Sound system? Chairs out or not?
- Speeches? Who? How long (BRIEF!!)
- Catering – what snacks? Who is getting them? Healthy? Doughnuts? It should match your customers preferences, not yours.
- Buddy program – every member shakes every guests hand even if only one person shows up. No guest should ever sit alone, and no guest should ever be ignored.
- Do not pressure anyone to sing. Do not pressure them to get on the risers. Do not pressure them to read music. Consider doing the whole thing without handing out music.
- And of course – sing for your guests. It’s a mini-show. Show off your product, which is you, your culture and your voices. So, Director – what songs? Sets of 2? Sets of 3? Polecats? Repertoire? Guest quartet? (this is a good idea if the chorus is weak)

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5 weeks – start advertising campaign (four weeks long, so start now)

4 weeks – assign tasks for the event – who is buying the snacks? Who is a greeter? Who is getting the name tags? HAVE A SIGN IN GUEST BOOK!

3 weeks – check on everyone assigned a task last week. Do they know what it is? Remind them.

2 weeks – spend time at rehearsal talking about your event plan. This is important – you need to share the plan often enough that your members are excited to be involved, and they need to know the plan in order to support it – but at a bare minimum you have to share the event plan two weeks out.

If you have media contacts, alert them that next week you need a shout out.

- Schedule of activities
- Roles – who is doing what?
- Look of Members -dress code
- Venue prep
- Speeches
- Catering
- Buddy program
- Do not pressure anyone to sing.
 - Do not pressure them to get on the risers.
 - Do not pressure them to read music.
 - Just sing, be friendly, and have fun, Let the product sell itself.
- Song list and performance
- What else did you plan?

1 week – do week 2 again. The whole thing. AND

- Revisit every poster location to make sure it is still up. Smile, hand out cards, be enthusiastic.
- If you have radio or media contacts, this is the week they should give a shout out.
- Telephone or email anyone who said they were interested and remind them. Ask if they need a ride.

ZERO HOUR! Open the doors and see who shows up. Have fun!

No matter how many people show up (or don't), have your party and stick to the program, every inch of it. If attendance is lower than expected, you can figure out why later. If attendance is so high you can't manage – then announce another event for the following week!

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Learn

EVENT PLUS 1 week

Hold a debrief. What worked? What didn't? Were you able to measure what advertising was effective? How many names did you get in your guest book? Who will you invite to join?

Who liked to do what? Who hated to do what? If it worked, but we hated it – how can we learn to love it?

How do we make every night a guest night? How do we build a compellingly fun evening? Could we conduct an ongoing advert or voice campaign?

Was the event wrong? Did we do a Guest Night, when an OPEN HOUSE would have been better? Should we consider "Learn To Sing"? What other ideas came up during this process?

What do we need to do to have enough capacity to sustain these efforts for years?

CELEBRATE! You just held a growth event! Shake hands and congratulate each other.

Have fun! We would love to hear how this goes! Please consider sending a report to us at education@evgdistrict.com. With your permission, we could put something in the Timber!