

expensive show flyers, including placing ads in local newspapers, senior publications, PBS and Public Radio program guides, church bulletins, other chapter show programs, and of course right here in *Westunes*. Those still cost money, but you'll get much better exposure for a lot less than printing and mailing show flyers.

So let's take a look at some no-cost ways to get the word out, or as I like to call it, "THE FREE STUFF".

Website

Do you have a website? By that, I don't mean a Facebook page, but rather an actual website that has your branding. If not, then it's time to consider getting one. Of course they're not free, but once you have one you can provide all sorts of information about your chorus, your quartets, your shows, and even sell tickets —**all at no additional cost**. Include your website URL (link address) in all of your advertising; make it the central target to bring people in, to not only learn about your show, but also about your chorus, quartets, when and where you meet, and any other information you want to publish.

Creating a website is easier than you think, and nowadays there are variety of tools available so you don't need to know anything about programming. We'll explore more about that in a later issue, but for now suffice it to say that every chapter should have a website, and if you are are still mystified by all of this technology and how to get started, I encourage you to contact me so we can set up some time to chat and talk about things in plain English.

Social Media

According to Nielsen, Internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of website. For our purposes, the benefits of participating in social media have gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation, attracting members, and increasing monetary income.

There is an old saying, "word of mouth is the best form of advertising", that certainly applies with respect to social media. News travels through a network of friends and contacts through a process of liking and sharing, effectively being a personal endorsement, and can then be shared by their friends, friends of friends, and so forth. Also similar to word of mouth is that these social media I'm about to describe are all free services



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Marketing wisely on a shoe-string budget

*This is the second in a series of articles I plan to publish this year in *Westunes* that are specifically talking to the marketing guys in our chapters. I do not profess to be marketing professional by any means, but my intention is to share with you the things I have learned after doing this for many years, and hopefully some of you will benefit from it.*

Last time we looked at some alternatives to those

that can be used effectively to go far beyond anything that you or your members could do on your own.

Facebook

To say that Facebook (facebook.com) is nothing short of a phenomenon is an understatement. With over 2.2 billion monthly users as of January 2018, it's a social media and social networking site that simply can't be overlooked. While it is not a replacement for a website, it's a great vehicle for marketing for the simple fact that people are more apt to be on Facebook and see something about your chorus in their newsfeed than they are to visit your website on a daily basis.

If you don't already have a Facebook account, you'll need to create one at facebook.com to get started. If you don't care to have a personal Facebook account, just provide the minimal information to set up the account, and adjust the privacy settings to maintain relative anonymity.

Next you'll want to create a "Page" for your chorus or quartet. Here you can provide all sorts of information, post photos and videos*, create events, and more. Be sure to include a link to your website on the main page and each event!

You can get a few other guys to help you manage your Facebook by making them editors. Go to your page and click Settings, then choose Page Roles to get to the place where you can add them.

Now that you have a Facebook page, the last step is to get people to "Like" your page. When people like, i.e., follow your page they will see things you post in their timeline, and if they like what you post, their friends will see it too. In marketing terms, that's known as "getting your foot in the door". Your chapter members will play an important role in getting the ball rolling. Many of them are already on Facebook; give them the link to your page, and ask them to invite their friends to "like" your page.

Twitter

Twitter (twitter.com) is an online news and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". A tweet is a short message that you post on Twitter, and is received by those who follow you, but is also public and can be searchable by anyone, even if they aren't a follower. Originally limited to 140 characters, they were doubled to 280

characters late in 2017. While that may seem short, the tweet itself can be a headline with a link to more information.

People who receive your tweet can "re-tweet" it, and their followers will then see it. Those people can also re-tweet, and a popular tweet can grow exponentially, which is referred to as "going viral".

Every user on Twitter has an account name that starts with @. For example, the Far Western District's name is @FarWesternDist. When you want to "tag" (mention) someone in a message, simply include their "@" name in the message, and they'll get a notification. This is called an @mention. A practical example of this would be to @mention your headline quartet (assuming they have a Twitter account).

Another trick is to use what is known as a "hashtag". You create a hashtag simply by placing a pound (#) character in front of a word or compound word with no spaces, for example, #BarbershopHarmony. Hashtags provide context, which will get picked up when a user is searching for a topic in Twitter. Be careful not to over-hashtag your tweets – one or two is probably enough.

Wishing @Westminstergold all the best at #BHSOrlando

A tweet can also include a photo, a GIF (animation), or a poll. Your twitter account can also be set up to integrate with your Facebook page and your Instagram account. This is particularly nice feature, because it will automatically "tweet" anything you post to your Facebook page with a link back to your Facebook post as well as any pictures you post to Instagram.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn (linkedin.com) is a professional networking service, mainly used for employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their CVs. The feature that is most interesting for our purposes is that users can "connect" with each other, either by having a direct relationship or by introduction via mutual connections. This "gated-access" approach is intended to build trust among its members.

Although not suited for promoting shows, LinkedIn has definite potential for attracting new members. Your chapter should consider setting up a business profile on LinkedIn, and encourage your members who use the service to associate themselves with your chapter.

That way, their connections will learn about your chapter through the grapevine.

Pinterest

Pinterest (pinterest.com) is a social network designed to visually discover information on the web, mainly using pictures, but also with GIFs (animations) and videos. Users create “boards” having a variety of topics, and “pin” photos to the board. Other users see the pins in their feed for topics that interest them. They can follow the board or the user who created the pin, or re-pin the photo to a board of their own; in either case, the photo links back to the original poster.

Pinterest allows companies to create pages (business.pinterest.com), which is a great way for your chorus or quartet to generate “pinterest” in your group. Create a variety of boards to promote your group, and most importantly to show how much fun your members are having!

Instagram

Instagram (instagram.com) is a photo and video sharing network with over 800 million users as of September 2017. You’ll need to install a free app on your smartphone in order to use the service. The app allows you to upload photos and videos, which can optionally be edited with various filters, and organized with tags and location information.

Similar to Pinterest, Instagram is a great way to show your group in action and having fun. It also integrates extremely well with Facebook as well as other social media sites.

YouTube

YouTube (youtube.com) is a video* sharing website that allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to favorites, report, and comment, and like other social networking sites, subscribe to other users. As of 2017 there are more than 400 hours of content uploaded to YouTube each hour, and one billion hours of content are watched in YouTube every day.

All users can upload content up to 15 minutes each in duration. With a good track record they may later be offered the ability to upload content up to 12 hours in length, as well as live streams with proper verification.

Although video* can always be viewed on the YouTube website, it is also possible for you to embed it on your

own website so it can be viewed there, and it also interfaces well with most other social media sites.

Caution regarding videos

You may have noticed that I placed an asterisk (*) after the word “video” throughout this article. There is a popular myth that a video clip can contain up to 30 seconds of music without fear of copyright infringement and is considered “fair use”. Be advised that there is no such rule, and the Society advises to get permission before posting any such video on the web. That being said, videos on the Society’s YouTube channel ARE licensed, and can be used as a link from your web page, but videos you produce yourself must be licensed. When in doubt, ask for permission!

Wikipedia and the Barbershop Wiki Project

Wikipedia (Wikipedia.org) is a web-based encyclopedia hosted by the Wikipedia Foundation that is free for all to contribute detailed information, history and references. The Society, most districts, and many chapters have created pages on Wikipedia. Your chapter can, too!

The Barbershop Wiki Project (barbershopwiki.com) boasts to be the most comprehensive barbershop encyclopedia in the world, and is a collaborative site where anyone can edit nearly every page. It uses the same engine as Wikipedia, so after you have contributed a page on one site you can easily copy it to the other.

Rating networks: Foursquare, Swarm, and Yelp!

Foursquare (foursquare.com) is a local search and discovery service website and mobile app which provides a personalized local search experience for its users.

Swarm is a companion mobile app to Foursquare that allows a user to “check in” at various locations and share it with their friends.

Yelp (yelp.com) and the Yelp mobile app publish crowd-sourced reviews about local businesses.

In keeping with social networking, ratings are shared with friends. There may be some value in setting up a profile for your chapter, if for no other reason than to have yet another source for information on when and where you meet. If you do, also encourage your members to “check in” regularly, as the added traffic will help to boost search engine priority.

Email List

Unless you chartered yesterday, you hopefully already have a list of email addresses for your patrons. If not, then start building your list at your next show. There are a number of easy ways to do this: a comment card inserted in your show program; a sign-up sheet at your ticket counter; a form printed on the back of your show tickets, and of course a sign-up form on your website. All you need to collect is first and last name, and an email address.

There are a number of email list services available, but the one I like to recommend is MailChimp (mailchimp.com) for the simple reason that they offer it as a FREE service for mailing lists up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month, which is more than sufficient for most chapters. What's more, they have a variety of templates that are very easy to use, and you can include photos, videos*, and a button to link to your website (or ticket sales site) in addition to the text, and send out a great looking email to your patrons in no time at all!

Another nice feature of MailChimp is that you can link it to your Facebook Page and Twitter accounts, and it automatically posts to those media with a link to your email message. Additionally you can add a subscribe button to your Facebook page to get your followers to add themselves to your mailing list.

Press Releases

While you can -- and should -- consider placing ads in your local paper (and *Westunes*), you should also send press releases to all news media in a wide radius. Google will help you find their websites, where you can find the names and email addresses to send them. They will be hit and miss, but when they hit it will result in a nice article, and some free advertising. Jerry McElfresh provided us with an excellent document on Press Release format which you will find on the FWD website at **Education > Leadership Academy Presentations > VP Marketing**.

Local Radio and Television

It's easy to overlook radio and television because the common perception is that they are way too expensive for our meager budget -- and that is correct if you only think in terms of buying advertising. But many local stations like to feature "light" news in their morning

programs, and will often jump at the chance to have a barbershop quartet come on and sing a song or two. This is a great and fun way to get exposure for your group, and some free last-minute promotion for your show or singing valentines.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Here's an opportunity to mix marketing with community service, and have fun at the same time. You don't need to live in a town that has a major league team; they sing the National Anthem at city league and little league games, too! I've had the pleasure to do this on a number of occasions, and every time we get a tremendous response, and comments like, "Thank you for singing it the way it was supposed to be sung". Be sure all of your men have plenty of business cards to hand out afterwards.

Wrapping things up

While this list is by no means conclusive, we've covered a lot of ground, and hopefully given you a bunch of ideas that will get you great results. The best part is that you can do all of this for free. And when I say "you" I mean it in the plural sense. Get a bunch of guys involved with this, and you'll all have fun.

Next time, let's look at some basics you'll need to know to set up a website.

To be continued ...