Developing a Vibrant Chorus

Adapted from

A Workbook by *The Institute for Conservation Leadership*

Designed for a chorus with a small to mid-sized staff and volunteer board
- Jane Ramseyer Miller

Tool Created for workshop with New Wave Singers

ORGANIZATIONAL BENCHMARKS

Identify 8-12 "key leaders" within New Wave Singers to take this anonymous survey. All board and staff should be included along with other members and volunteers who contribute significantly to the chorus.

Survey process:
- First fill out the survey in a written form. Include any thoughts or comments on each of the items as you think about how they relate to your chorus.
- Once the survey is completed, go back and fill in your answers on the electronic spreadsheet.
- E-mail the survey to Jennifer to compile. All responses will be anonymous and confidential.
- Keep your paper copy and notes for our discussion on October 1.

For each benchmark, circle a number from "1" (not or never true) to "5" (always or absolutely true) to describe how well the benchmark describes New Wave Singers.

Then decide how important this particular benchmark is to your organization <u>right now</u>. A "1" might mean it doesn't matter at all, and a "5" might mean that it matters very much.

If a particular benchmark does not apply to your chorus, or if you do not have enough information to gauge it, please mark "NA".

<u>LEADERSHIP CAPACITY</u>: VISION

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter <u>right now</u>? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Mission Clear expression of the organization's reason for existence is in place, is universally held throughout the organization and frequently referenced.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Vision The chorus has a written vision statement, which is up-to-date and is used to guide its choice of strategic direction, as well as program choices and activities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Core Values The chorus has agreed upon a few key values that define the organization and are key to its functioning and decision-making	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY:THE BOARD

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Board Meeting Preparation Board meetings are well planned. The agenda is agreed upon between the executive director and the Board Chair. The agenda and information for decision making is sent in advance of the meeting.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Governance – Roles The Board clearly understands its roles and responsibilities within the organization; members have a written job description and are given an orientation when they join.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Minutes The Board records its decisions and maintains records.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Composition The Board has members - who are committed to the mission and the organization. Meeting attendance is consistently strong - who have skills & experience needed	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Succession & Energy - Board members leave and new members are added regularly. The Board recruits people with needed expertise and diversity. - Board leadership succession is planned.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Working Committees The Board uses committees to make its work more efficient. Committees have clear job descriptions and goals, and a clear method of reporting to the board.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Delegation/AD goals & evaluation Over the past year the Board established annual goals with the AD and the Board evaluated the AD using them.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Financial Oversight The Board Treasurer creates regular (usually monthly) financial reports, which clearly show the organization's financial position, its income and expenses, what activities relate to, and how they compare to its budget. The Board reviews the reports at its meetings.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Board Outreach & Networking Board members understand the mission and programming of the chorus and represent New Wave Singers' goals and programs to the press and the community at large.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY:
MANAGEMENT STAFF (PAID OR VOLUNTEER!)

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Management Staff - Experience Leadership and management "staff" have a broad background and range of experiences in nonprofit management, and have a solid understanding of their leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Staff in the Community Leadership and management staff actively work to establish the organization's role within the community, engaging the community in the work.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Strategic Leadership Leadership and management staff are forward thinking—developing strong strategic direction for the organization and building paths to achieve a secure and meaningful future.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Appreciation of Power Issues Power issues that may exist between board, staff leadership and artistic staff are regularly acknowledged and discussed; policies and procedures exist to address these issues.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

Notes:

PLANNING CAPACITY:
ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right** now? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Strategic Plan The chorus has a current written strategic plan, approved by the Board, with clear and agreed-upon long term goals.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Annual Plan The chorus creates an annual plan with measurable goals and objectives. The annual plan is aimed to achieve the strategic long term goals of the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/EVALUATION

Audience Feedback The organization asks for and receives feedback from its target community about chorus programming, mission and musical quality through surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc., and acts upon that feedback.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Strategic Concert Programs Concert programming and projects are chosen align with the mission and strategic direction.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Partnerships and Alliances Key relationships with a variety of other organizations are developed to extend the reach of the organization's mission.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Presence as a Community Chorus Known within the community and perceived as actively engaged with and responsive to the community.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Audience Development The chorus has identified current and potential audiences that it would like to target, while keeping in context current capacity and that it cannot be all things to all people.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Performance Outreach The chorus performs at a variety of community events that match organizational mission and values.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY:
FUND DEVELOPMENT

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Diversified Funding Sources The organization's fund development sources are diversified enough that its income is predictable and it achieves its full budget. (One measure: No more that 30% of the organization's budget comes from any one source other than dues and individual donations.)	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Tracking Donations The organization tracks each donation in a computerized database, acknowledges it promptly.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Grants Management There is a process in place to manage and monitor grant-seeking, grants management and subsequent reporting in a timely manner.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

FINANCIAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Budgeting/Financial Planning The organization has an annual budget which reflects the organization's goals. The budget is reviewed and approved by the Board.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Internal Controls There are "internal controls" on financial transactions, which prevent people in the organization from misusing funds.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Meet Legal Requirements The organization meets in a timely manner its legal and reporting requirements as required by relevant governmental entities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY:
PR & AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Targeted Marketing The chorus plans specific and ticket incentives to new audiences based on strategic concert topics and collaborations.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Media Coverage The organization send regular press releases, calendar listings, and receives the coverage it needs in the media that reach its target populations. It tracks this coverage.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Member Contacts The chorus consistently seeks new audience contacts through member and board relationships.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Electronic marketing The chorus effectively uses e-mail tools to promote concerts and events.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Telephone and Fax Organization has a reliable phone and message system.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Computer Technology Hardware and software systems up-to-date; staff and board are trained and comfortable with electronic communication systems, and shared document storage.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Management Information Systems Electronic database and management reporting systems are utilized to track financial information, program outcomes, clients, and volunteers as is relevant.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Website The organization has a user-friendly website that is kept up-to-date; has relevant organizational information and links.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY:
HUMAN RESOURCES (PAID & VOLUNTEER)

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Human Resources Planning Realistic plans are developed regarding potential "staff" needs, tied to strategic planning; job descriptions are updated based on changing organizational needs.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Planning for Transitions of Staff Documented and approved plans are in place for emergency/unplanned or planned successions and transitions for key positions.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Staff Expertise The organization's staff has expertise and commitment to carry out its programs.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Adequate Pay The organization offers pay and benefits which are good enough to attract and keep qualified paid staff.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Manageable Workload Staff members have a manageable work load and the organization takes measures to avoid staff burnout.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Training and Staff Development All staff receive training or professional development to help them stay up-to-date and to expand their capabilities.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Work Plans Staff members have annual work plans with clear and challenging goals, linked to the organization's strategic goals. The plans are reviewed at least quarterly.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Regular Evaluations Staff members are regularly evaluated in writing against goals of their work plans.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Office Space Physical space is adequate for the current needs of the organization, infrastructure is maintained and doesn't limit effectiveness.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Adequate Systems The organization provides staff with computer technology, equipment, and resources it needs to be effective.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Rehearsal Space Rehearsal space is acoustically sound, allows singers to hear each other, is a well-lit and welcoming space, piano is tuned, adequate break-out space for sectionals, etc.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY:
INTERNAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right now**? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	Notes or reflections to remember
Volunteer Recruitment The chorus recruits and manages volunteers systematically, with responsibility assigned to specific people. It has a plan, goals and job description(s) for its work with volunteers.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Development of Volunteer Leaders The chorus systematically selects and prepares new leaders from among its members, volunteers, and the general community.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Singer Recruitment & Retention The chorus has an effective plan to recruit new singers to audition to balance sections, and to retain current singers.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Member Involvement Chorus members are actively recruited and involved in brainstorming and planning direction for the organization, and take on a variety of roles in the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Member Communication The organization has a process for member ideas and concerns to be heard; each member idea/concern receives a response from the appropriate staff, committee or board member.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Member Investment Members enjoy being a part of the chorus and are invested in the chorus mission, values and programming.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Member Diversity The organization reflects the diversity of the Baltimore community.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Member Communication Conflicts within the membership are addressed openly and in a healthy manner.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Chorus Communication and Trust The chorus membership has clear communication lines with the board and there is a high level of trust between membership, staff and board.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY:
MUSICAL & PROGRAMMING QUALITY

	Does this describe your organization? 1-not true 5-always true	Does this matter **right** now? 1-doesn't matter 5-matters a lot	*Notes or reflections to remember*
Vibrant Programming Chorus programming consistently combines the power of music with an engaging message.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Diverse Programming Chorus programming celebrates all of humanity in its infinite variations.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Quality of Music Chosen High quality music is featured, music chosen is appropriate for the skill-level of the chorus and shows off the best qualities of the singers and chorus.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Balanced Vocal Sections SATB Sections are balanced with strong, musical leadership in each.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Vocal Training The organization utilizes internal, or recruits outside, vocal/choral experts and creates opportunities for vocal training	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Musical Leadership The organization has strong section leaders in each section who participate regularly in training opportunities. Accompanist ably accompanies rehearsals.	1 2 3 4 5 NA	1 2 3 4 5 NA	
Vocal Quality Singers are screen through audition process for vocal quality. Organization has a plan in place to work with improving voices with vocal challenges.			

Notes: