Jordan Cambron

July 18, 2016

Swallowing the Frog Recap

Project Management CIT 380

As my sister and I prepared the choir for the recording session I taught her about swallowing the frog. I taught her about working on the worst task first. She mentioned to me that the most important task that we had to complete was laundry, because they were leaving for Italy the next day. So while I taught her about this certain element that stems from Mark Twain “eat your frog”, she found success as she was completing all the necessary tasks in order to go to Italy and then to be able to get the choir ready for that same night. As we were preparing the choir, I focused on certain characteristics that a good choir member should have. I thought back to my time at BYU and realized that I wanted to find individuals who have strength in certain aspects that my sister was looking for in a choir member.

She told me that she usually has about four different things that she focuses on while she looks for choir members. I then asked her to use a grading system to assess the quality of the individuals I recruited for the choir. She gave me feedback on what I can do different and how I can make the very best choir.

Four Main Criteria of Creating a Successful Choir:

1. Intonation and Tone Quality
2. Sight Reading/Flexibility Skills
3. Humble/Teachable Individual
4. Able to Listen/Blend
5. Availability (More unique to our situation)

Intonation/Tone Quality

Pleasant, warm, full, rich sound

Ability to match pitch and keep it for a Capella sections

Sight-reading Skills/Flexibility

Able to make last minute changes to music as directed by conductor

Able to receive music the day of or even at the recording session and learn it on the spot

Ability to Listen/Blend

In addition to nice tone, singer should listen to the ensemble and match their tone with the singers around them, especially where vibrato is concerned

Singers should be able to blend with the ensemble in all ranges of their voice - this means that someone with a shrill or overly bright sound or someone with a heavy or overly dark sound are probably not the best choice (or they need to be flexible enough to match and make the necessary changes)

Humble/Teachable

A person with a poor attitude or the idea that they always know the best way to do something is probably not the best candidate.  Singers need to listen to and follow instructions quickly and pleasantly.  Time is money, and the faster the ensemble works, the better.

Availability

Singers must be available for the time scheduled and know that they may have to stay a little longer if needed.

So after evaluating this she let me know that the people I recruited, my sister told me that in order to meet the maximum requirement that she would want in a choir, I would need to have these qualifications in order maintain the quality of choir. I thought back to the people I brought and as we planned for them, I realized I did a fairly good job in most of the sections, but a few characteristics I could have done differently would have helped maximize the individuals I brought.

Intonation/Tone Quality

She said I did a good job of recruiting Sarah and Michael in this category because they have rich voices. She said that I could have let the recruits know that they would need to be skilled in these certain aspects. She said that I could have had them send a small demo of their voices to remind myself about what they sounded like. I thought this was good feedback. If you want to put together a choir, it is important to make sure that all of the individuals are on the same page in their tone quality.

Sight-reading skills/flexibility.

In this regard and for the time constraints we had, I did a fairly good job at getting those who had ability in sight-reading skills. She also had me consider how flexible individuals could be when it came to singing. Were they able to change if necessary or were they stuck singing just their parts? I thought about this and realized that my recruits were able to adjust well. She said one thing to confirm would be to refresh on their sight-reading skills by having them sing a small audition. Since we were constrained on time however, we weren’t able to get the perfect scenario although the choir turned out really well.

Ability to listen and Blend

Fortunately, my recruits were great at blending. They had both sung choir in high school and weren’t too rusty when it came to that. In order to verify this, I had to really consider if these individuals were going to be able to blend. If they weren’t, they didn’t get invited. Unfortunately for some of the people I was recruiting I had to let go, because we talked about this before. So I ended up not inviting some individuals to the recording session because I knew they were a little overpowering.

Humble/ Teachable

Another important characteristic of a good choir member is to have humility and be a teachable person. I also had to eliminate one of the candidates because I knew he would be a little too out of control and arrogant in regards to singing. He has a nice voice but he is sort of overconfident when it comes to singing. He thinks he knows most everything. She told me that getting to know the personalities of different people beforehand really well can help me recruit a quality choir of humble individuals.

Availability

She said normally she would have the choir ready to go and practice before she records or participates in choirs. In our unique situation, we focused on the most important things and we were able to get enough individuals for the choir.

So in conclusion, she said that she would suggest considering how strong each one of these categories are for the choir members before adding them to a recording. If these requirements are fulfilled, then you should recruit them. She said that you should take individuals who possess these qualities at a higher rate than someone else. So evaluating them based off these requirements would ensure a good quality of choir. These are all based on preference, but with experience in music, you start to understand what is the most important and what sound you are looking for in a choir.