

Suggestions for Growing & Strengthening Your Chapter

Shannon Fore, MBA, Past Dean, AGO Central Florida Chapter

How and Where to Collect Membership Data

- Each event is an opportunity to collect emails, phone numbers, addresses.
- Have a sign-up sheet at each program to collect email addresses to add to your mailing list promoting upcoming events.
- Place this list in your “prospect” group that needs to have different messaging, vs. what you send to your members.
- Assign a membership volunteer or team, to be in charge of developing new membership initiatives.
- Invite these prospect/future members to upcoming events and share the ROI of becoming a Guild member. Make sure they understand that they do not need to be professional organist – or even an organist. *We welcome everyone who loves the organ and who loves music!*

Communication

- Email **Weekly** reminders to members and non-members about each upcoming event. Each email is an opportunity to build on the excitement and value that they will experience by attending this special program.
- Get the names of the editors who handle the Arts and Community sections of local newspapers and weekly publications. Establish a relationship with them and invite them to attend an upcoming program, to ensure that your events are consistently posted in their publications.
- Email each prospect your monthly newsletter and include details for upcoming programs.
- Make sure that you copy the AGO with your monthly newsletter. You can share information about past events with photos, for submission to future issues of TAO: <https://www.agohq.org/submit-material/>.
- Use Vista Print to send post cards as reminders for each event. It is affordable and helps you look professional. Yes, snail-mail is back!
- Create posters, Banners and always include your logo to help build your brand and create consistency with messaging.

Involve and Delegate as Many Volunteers in Planning Your Events

- Identify people to who can serve on the board who are good at marketing and social media.

- Increased participation from chapter members supports inclusivity, collaboration and creativity. The more people that you involve increases the potential for more people to show up!

Social Media

- Make sure that you have identified a board member who is adept with social media
- Have an updated relevant Facebook account
 - Create separate events for EACH of your chapter's program and consistently promote them.
 - Have a Budget for FB marketing to share events and programs.
- Have an updated relevant chapter hosted website.
- Have an updated relevant Twitter account.
- Have an Instagram account.
- Have a YouTube page where you can share videos of past events and promote upcoming events.
- Have *share* and *like* buttons for Twitter, FB, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube

Collaborate with local organizations as much as possible

- Local Piano Chapters are golden opportunities of potential new members and future organists, invite them to participate and play in AGO events – Cross Pollenate calendars and resources
- Any music organization, arts, dance etc
- Any art related chapter is an opportunity for collaboration

Practice Fiscal Responsibility with Programing

- Expensive concert artists may not always provide the best source of income. This is not to say they are not relevant, but rather that these types of special events need to be marketed strategically.
- Create 4 or 5 events that feature local musicians on a complimentary basis, to build up to a major artist's recital.
- As you plan your budget for your year of programming, it is important to build reserves so that you will be able to afford larger and higher quality events for future years.

Keep attendance records

- Keep track of costs of the artist and the attendance turnout to measure ROI.

- Determine historically what events were most successful when planning the following year's programming.
- Use this information to plan next year's events and identify only use those that were profitable/or had the greatest attendance.

Go out into the community and exhibit at:

- Art Festivals
- Craft Festivals
- Music Festivals
 - Pass out flyers
 - Set up a booth or card table with a signup sheet for free CD giveaways in order to collect emails, names and addresses
 - Have musicians singing or CD's playing

Have a Chapter Scholarship Program

- Drive new students with Scholarships, Attract new members and Donations
- Encourage winners to play at chapter events
- Encourage local organizations to sponsor
- This involves Local piano, organ teachers to invite their student into the guild.

Social Meetings / Gatherings

- Chapters grow stronger with social gatherings. Meetings and dinners do not need to be relegated to a church social hall.
- Factor additional time into each program, recital, workshop, etc. that you have planned to allow attendees to network.
- Invite AGO HQ or regional councilors to your events, giving them the opportunity to mingle with members. Their presence demonstrates the value AGO membership.
- Dinner gatherings that include visiting artists are also an opportunity to build friendships and strengthen membership engagement.

Each one of us has a network of friends, family & acquaintances

- Forward your AGO program information to these individuals even if you don't know for sure they are interested in organ. They may be interested in music.
- EACH ONE - REACH ONE
- Remind each member: "be sure you bring at least one friend" to each event.

ONCARD / Or Membership Software

- Go into ONCARD. Research the “Cancelled/Lapsed” memberships and add them to your prospect mailing /email list to invite them to re-join or attend the next program.
- Our chapter had a resource of 173 members basically in purgatory status.
- Email them anyway, regardless of their reason for non-renewal.

Marketing Best Practices

- List your upcoming season of events on the back of ALL programs.
- Don’t assume everyone is a member.
- Have information about the Guild and what we do for the community and why they should be part of our organization. (Chapter marketing piece can be found in the online Membership Toolkit).

Programming

- Diversify, Diversify, Diversify
 - Get Creative with multiple instruments, such as organ + piano, + violin, + harpsichord.
 - Don’t think about your programming being “organ-only” events.
 - Be provocative, daring and promote the anticipation of something new and different.

Use Your Chapter Year Book as a Marketing Tool

- Have a yearly printed chapter year book
 - This is a HUGE source of Advertising revenue for your chapter to fund initiatives.
 - Use it as a Resource.
 - Use it as a Chapter Calendar.
 - Use it as a showcase for organ builders, local music festivals, events, etc.

Practice "An Open Console Policy"

- When appropriate, after the crowd clears and the artist has left, we should encourage providing an open console. Press the keys, pull some stops and play something short. The organ should not be treated as a relic that is not to be touched. Why turn away someone who may be the future of our profession?

AGO Central Florida Chapter's Member Engagement and Recruitment Initiative

Progressive Organ Series

Four locations with close proximity to each other are selected in the downtown Orlando area.

Each location features the ***organ +***

- Location 1: Organ + Choir
- Location 2: Organ + Harp + Flute
- Location 3: Organ + Handbells + Oboe (Yes, it's beautiful)!
- Location 4: Organ + Brass Ensemble

The concert ends with a light dinner or refreshment/mixer so that everyone who has attended has the opportunity to mingle.

How it is marketed:

- ✓ Weekly emails are sent to promote the event and each week a different artist/ensemble is featured.
- ✓ Each church promotes information about the concert that will be taking place in their own church to their congregation.
- ✓ The day of the progressive organ series, a sign-up sheet for future mailings is available at each location.

The chapter has consistently had **350-500** people in attendance for this event. Each person on the mailing list is considered a future member. After the event, the chapter follows up with these future members, to share details of upcoming events and why they should join the guild.

Evangelism of the Organ and of the Arts

Each of us has the capability to be an evangelist, whether we are an artist, a musician, or theologian. Are we "converting" others to become lovers of the organ? Are we as passionate? Are we as caring? Do we want this instrument to be shared and passed down to the generations?

What are you going to do differently to evangelize what you are passionate about?