

2018
Strategic Conversations
League of American Orchestras Volunteer Council
MINUTES – CALL #2
Volunteer Presidents & Presidents-Elect
Wednesday, October 17, 2018
12 p.m.- 1 p.m. (Pacific) / 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. (Central) / 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. (Eastern)

Tiffany Ammerman, President, Volunteer Council, greeted the six Participants as they joined the call with her, Terry White, President-Elect, Volunteer Council, Sharon Hatchett, Secretary, Volunteer Council (Facilitators); and Derek Weagle, the League of American Orchestras Liaison to the Volunteer Council.

FACILITATORS:

- Tiffany Ammerman, Marshall Symphony League (Texas)
- Terry White, Amarillo Symphony Guild (Texas)
- Sharon Hatchett, Southside Friends of the Chicago Sinfonietta (Illinois)

Tiffany began the discussion by reviewing the schedule for the three remaining one-hour calls (November 7, 14, and 28) and the confidential nature of the calls.

Tiffany then asked the two new participants on the call to provide information on themselves, their volunteer organizations, Orchestras, successes, challenges, and Hoped-for outcomes/takeaways that each of them hoped to gain from the conversations.

New Participant 1

Successes:

- Fundraising events and school programs.
- Scholarship luncheon
 - Their showhouse has been successful for many years and last year made \$63,000.

New Participant 2

Successes:

- Annual pledge of \$25,000 to the Orchestra.
- Fundraising, including in support of their scholarship fund.

Challenges:

- Getting members active again. Many say they have done the work already. Needs to find a way to get members motivated to become active again. Members support fundraising events but not volunteering of their time.
- Raising enough money to honor their pledge to the Orchestra and also having funds for the program supporting children.

HOPED-FOR OUTCOMES

Tiffany asked each of the Participants on the call to share their hopes because it shapes the agenda for the next three meetings.

New Participant 2 is seeking guidance on attracting millennials. Not successful with them but have been able to attract those in their 40s.

Tiffany identified the topics for discussion on this call per requests in the first Strategic Conversation: One and Done, and attracting new members, including via use of social media, etc.

ONE AND DONE

Tiffany commented on the successful use of One and Done in Tyler Texas and shared information provided in an email by Cindy Kidwell, a Volunteer Council member.

- One and done began as a committee in St Louis that the Tyler TX organization tweaked for their needs and has been successful.
- She advised the Participants that the One and Done information can also be found on the League's Gold Book website.
- Derek confirmed that the new website is up and running that includes this information.
- If anyone on the call needs help with the website, they were encouraged to reach out to Tiffany, Terry or Sharon

Purpose of One and Done is its use for those who wish to offer support on limited basis. Under the Tyler TX model, there is a One and Done chairman who reaches out to their One and Done committee members to assign projects to those seeking to volunteer on a limited basis. Have about 30 members on the One and Done committee and the first member of the committee who responds to a One and Done project request has the project assigned to them. The Vice President of Membership helps Determine the number of members who will be placed on the One and Done Committee, normally about 30 members.

Allow Orchestra office to also seek their support. Some have also supported the Ball fundraiser.

- Mothers and others with time constraints find helpful. We grew up at a time where we were open to volunteerism.

- The current generation is not as available. Sign up and have less than a week to fulfill role.

New Participant 2 noted that they do not have One and Done but do help by selling raffle tickets or helping people to find their table seating. A form of de facto One and Done.

Participant 3 commented that one of the requirements of her volunteer organization is to be a subscriber with the symphony. She likes the One and Done concept but sees the subscription obligation a deterrent to rolling out One and Done. Per Tiffany, her organization also requires a subscription.

New Participant 2 commented that her organization has a similar requirement (viewed as a donation) and must purchase a minimum of two performances.

Participant 4 noted her organization does not require a subscription because some move away and are there only for a couple of events. She finds the One and Done interesting and her Board is interested in exploring it as a way to get younger folks involved. Not sure would have a One and Done committee but does consider it as something they can tailor to their group.

Participant 5 noted that her organization does not require subscription/ticket purchases; that her organization also does not do One and Done but likes the idea, as some of her members either fall off or burn out. Sees One and Done as a great way for members to stay, to either keep members connected or even to get their feet wet. She also sees as a great way to engage members who are too shy, or not ready to commit, and plans to use the concept next year.

Tiffany noted they have an “out of town” membership for those not in the area.

Participant 6 commented that her organization requires dues payment but does not have a subscription requirement. She likes the “one and done” and took the concept back to her Board a week ago who were enthusiastic about the idea and see it as a great way to attract new members. Plan to publish in newsletter as they have about 300 members. Views as a wonderful idea for their organization.

Participant 5 concurred, noting that her organization also has a large membership but literally no requirements for joining. Wonders how that drives involvement since none are focused on the issue of member engagement since there are no requirements placed on them.

Participant 3 commented that her organization also has associates who lend their support to the organization but have no interest in being a full subscriber. At this time, the organization is looking at its By-Laws and considering the issue of requiring its members to become subscribers. Concerned with how to promote One and Done given possible push back from the organization.

Tiffany suggested coming up with another form of membership that requires paying more but do less. Tiffany commented on having similar issues of not posing requirements on members. She noted need for manpower to support the symphony and their use of a point system. Not something that she recommends. Feels that members need to participate at some point, even being on or leading a committee. She then indicated that Cindy Kidwell had advised that some members do not like “meetings” so they have decided to instead have “gatherings” at a wine shop (for example) so they could attract young people to the wine shop because it was a “gathering” to connect and do a wine tasting. She suggested to the group the value of putting fun things into a meeting may help to attract others.

New Participant 2 asked how do you make that kind of change without creating obstacles for folks. Older members per Tiffany can be reluctant but suggests engaging the older folks as “hosts’ for the gathering, as this has been successful as these members have taken to the idea more.

ENGAGING MILLENNIALS

Participant 5 asked for information on millennials. What motivates them? Knows they want to change the world but do not like meetings and want instant gratification. What attracts them? Keeps them? Motivates them to be contributing members? Tiffany agrees their focus is on “what’s in it for me”? even though they would not agree this is their motivation. Millennials want instant results. It is an adjustment for those of us not used to their mindset. Tiffany noted an example – gimmicky idea attracts them. E.g. come to gathering...as their will also be a drawing to win a purse...

New Participant 1 noted desire to attract Millennials to learn about the symphony...perhaps they could be asked to attend one event, do something that evening, and use as a means for pulling them in. Tiffany noted value of educational programs to Millennials...example, ask a young person to invite their child to a program and have them perform to show young people how the programs can help their own children. **Participant 5** spoke about motivational/educational programs for young adults and their kids.

Participant 3 noted that while not under the auspices of her organization, there is a younger Associates Board comprised of young professionals who do their own fundraiser event, networking, etc. The Associate Board’s primary event is referred to as Prelude. They have own autonomy, and hold meetings that she is invited to. They also do “gatherings” in hip places that works for them.

Participant 4 chimed in that they too have a younger group and sees their value as they may be “us” one day.

Participant 3 noted that one thing under consideration by her organization for their major fundraising event is to do a step and repeat that young people like to do that allows them to take own pictures. So...why not have a set up for the young people to attend the event while

doing what they like to do. Also have a young guest soloist in early 30s as a draw that may encourage younger people to attend.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ATTRACT YOUNGER MEMBERS

Tiffany moved then to social media and the importance of its use to connect to young people. She noted the existence of an older group and younger group. Has suggested assigning younger people with older people to learn from each other and build relationships and perhaps bring in new ideas into an organization that has always done things one way.

Tiffany asked attendees about their use of social media/website. **Participant 4** noted their use of social media and a supporter who actively posts pictures on their website. **Participant 3** asked for website info: log into friendsofthespco.org website.

Tiffany asked if organizations have information on their websites on how to become a member. Per **Participant 5**, her organization has a low-tech website. Not much traffic is there but can find data there and info on becoming a member. Mainly a tool for members. Not to attract new members. Based on the discussion, most of the organizations are attracting members by word of mouth.

When holding events...Tiffany asked the participants if they are posting events on website? General consensus was that they do so. There was also mention of using a newspaper and use of their website to refer people to the news story.

Participant 5 noted use of Instagram now in addition to FB which was set up a couple of years ago. Instagram is used to highlight members in order to drive people to that site; and make it a point to not cover the same information on FB.

Tiffany noted that if you let young people know their photo is being published on the website, it is a great way to find pics, noting that their photographer will let folks know their pics will be on their website, which then drives traffic to the site as people love to see their own pics.

Tiffany mentioned having a big birthday party and had an event with about 300 people and because the guests knew how to get pics from her website, they were able to post those pics on their own websites. Definitely draws people.

Tiffany asked if anyone on the call had info to add on social media or on attracting new/younger members. No one spoke up.

CONTINUE PRIORITIZING TOPICS & DISCUSSION OF TOPICS (Article V of Agenda)

Tiffany went on to prioritize the topics left on the agenda that can be covered on this call.

She wanted those on the call to comment on Section V of the Agenda that prioritizes topics and the discussion.

The topic that the Participants focused on was “Pros and Cons of Volunteer Groups being under their own 501(c)(3)”

Participant 4 noted interest in prior call to cover pros/cons of volunteer groups having own 501c3. The feedback from her organization...no downside. Have to pay annual fees for 501c3. No sales tax. Tax exempt.

Participant 6 commented that she had asked the 501c3 question on the last call. Tiffany noted there was more to this than financial, including how it affects the symphony. She feels this topic requires greater discussion, including consideration of the other topics under Section V of the agenda.

Tiffany also mentioned plans for the Nashville Conference, including time for more networking among conference attendees.

Participant 3 commented on the value of the calls and how helpful the discussions are.

Participant 4 concurred with respect to the value of the discussions.

Tiffany encouraged the Participants on the call to reach out to the Facilitators and Derek with any questions they may have.