

League
of American
Orchestras

VOLUNTEERS – Constituency Meeting Block 3

League of American Orchestras 81st National Conference
Hosted by Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
June 1-3, 2026

Strengthening Member Engagement

Sized Marketing Strategies for Volunteer Organizations of Every Scale

Speakers

Co-Chairs Marketing & Communications for the LAO Volunteer Council

Venise Stuart, former President Dallas Symphony Orchestra League (DSOL), Dallas Symphony Orchestra Executive Committee

Kristina Wrenn, former Women's Symphony League of Tyler Presentation Production and DSOL Board Member, Brand and Marketing Strategist

**WHAT MATTERS MOST
IN ANY MARKETING IS
HOW IT TOUCHES THE RECEIVER**

MEMBERSHIP IS NO EXCEPTION

TALKING POINTS

**The FIVE Ps to Recruit, Renew &
Reengage Members to
Deliver Measurable Impact**

- **PASSION FOR THE CAUSE**
- **PERSONAL TOUCH**
- **PRIORITIES**
- **POINTED MESSAGING**
- **PRACTICAL APPROACHES**

Even the most seasoned volunteers and marketers can benefit from a reminder of why we are here in the first place.

We are all here because of PASSION

PASSION for classical music

PASSION for advancing the arts

PASSION for fundraising

PASSION for giving back through volunteering

PASSION for supporting our community

MARKETING HAS A BASIS IN SCIENCE BUT IT IS REALLY TRANSLATING FEELINGS

How can you make a passionate case tied to your organization's goals:
Fundraising, Camaraderie, Growth or Conference Inspiration?

PASSION FOR THE CAUSE

Pushing Beyond the Status Quo

When marketing to increase membership think of your focus.

- What are your membership needs?
 - What could new members add?
- Should you really focus on enhancing the current membership experience instead of new outreach?
 - Can you combine the two?
 - Have you already added a Sustainer Membership Level?
 - Based on your organization's size how many things can you really do?

The answers to these questions are going to be different for a robust 80-year old organization with 500 Members, a strong but mighty group of 30 or the reactivation of a folded guild. Symphony size doesn't always directly translate to volunteer commitment.

PASSION FOR THE CAUSE

Pushing Beyond the Status Quo

Membership numbers are declining (which we all know) because:

- 1) We are saturated with too many choices
- 2) Lives are busier
- 3) Clubs are now offering robust programming
- 4) Proliferation of personal cause related fundraising

YOU CAN ALWAYS MARKET YOUR WAY TO A NEW REALITY AND VISION IF YOU KNOW WHAT DRIVES YOUR ORGANIZATION AND SHARE YOUR PASSION FOR IT!

Those of you in leadership are the walking billboards for your group

PASSION FOR THE CAUSE

Pushing Beyond the Status Quo

When you are overloaded with the overall job of running your organization, making that last fundraising goal, and/or frustrated by another volunteer who has dropped the ball - make sure you keep your passion in the forefront

Life as in volunteering always has ups and downs

But the BEST way to market to new members and keep people engaged is to take a breath and don't complain or explain

WHENEVER YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION OR YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLE IN IT—
DO SO ONLY WITH THE PASSION THAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE TABLE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

PASSION FOR THE CAUSE

Pushing Beyond the Status Quo

PASSION IS PALPABLE

It can be your marketing secret weapon.
Share it!

PASSION FOR THE CAUSE

Pushing Beyond the Status Quo

PERSONAL TOUCH

People Respond to Personal Outreach

In our increasingly digital world, one-on-one matters

MAKE A CALL

SEND A NOTE

SET UP A LUNCH OR A GLASS OF WINE

TAKE NEW PROSPECTS TO CONCERTS, OPEN REHEARSALS, CONCERT NOTES

FOLLOW-UP

ALWAYS MAKE TIME FOR IN PERSON SOCIAL INTERACTION

Share your PASSION one-on-one!

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX...

PERSONAL TOUCH

People Respond to Personal Outreach

BRINGING BACK PERSONAL OUTREACH IS EFFECTIVE ORGANIC MARKETING

Camaraderie matters – How are you fostering it in your organization and committees?

**The Volunteer Council and this conference work because there is a shared
PASSION that is underscored by the personal touch.**

When PASSION becomes PERSONAL it grows

PERSONAL TOUCH

People Respond to Personal Outreach

- **Do you have a process for personal outreach, or do you send blanket messages?**
- **Do you have a calling committee for reminders? If so, do you discuss the script or ask them to follow-up personally a bit if the call is live or just get to the point?**

- **Do you have a process for issues/complaints?**

Your marketing can be derailed immediately by not having an accessible process for when people feel slighted or unappreciated

PERSONAL TOUCH

People Respond to Personal Outreach

- Do you have a VP of marketing role or just a social media coordinator?

You need both no matter how you title them, or someone with professional experience in both so you can focus on strategy – social media has become noise – so much content is created it cannot all be digested

Do they have music knowledge and marketing experience?

- Does your organization give them reign to participate fully?
 - To make changes to the culture and the approach?
 - Do they work closely with a VP of membership?
Collaborating in these roles is critical

How often do you meet in person? Do you have networking events?

PERSONAL TOUCH

People Respond to Personal Outreach

Incoming leadership usually adds new members from their friend base.

- Are you as an organization prepared to welcome those people and retain them?
 - Are you working with the president to place these new members in roles?
 - Will there be follow-up for new roles the following year?

Leadership isn't a vacuum it needs collaboration from all members to be sustained

- Do you have new member mentors?

Do you know what your brand value is?

TO YOUR MEMBERS

TO THE COMMUNITY

TO THE SYMPHONY YOU SUPPORT

Is your logo and branding consistent and recognizable?

How does it function?

How does it make people feel?

PRIORITIES

What drives your Brand Value and Marketing

When marketing to increase membership what are your priorities?

PASSION + PERSONAL TOUCH

- Internal Communications?
- External communications?
 - Social Media?
 - Analytics?

No matter your size you should have a comprehensive plan based on your priorities and the information should be tracked via spreadsheet or software

WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOES NOT

PRIORITIES

What drives your Brand Value and Marketing

After figuring out the answers to the focus questions we discussed at the beginning in slide 2 under PASSION.

For Example – What are your membership needs?

You can track your focus to your priorities in Brand Value and Marketing

If the focus is Member Outreach:

Tie that back to your Brand Promise/Mission with PASSION and PERSONAL TOUCH

If the focus is Enhancing Current Member Experience:

Renew the PASSION and PERSONAL TOUCH within your membership

PRIORITIES

What drives your Brand Value and Marketing

What NETWORKS can you LEVERAGE to reinforce your Brand Value and Marketing

- COMMUNITY
 - BOARD
 - AUDIENCE
 - ORCHESTRA

How do these groups align with and crystalize your membership priorities?

Would adding programming from those groups increase membership?

Could personal relationships with Symphony Maestros, Musicians and Leadership enhance your member experience? If so, highlighting that in your internal, external and social media will drive your brand value and marketing

PRIORITIES

What drives your Brand Value and Marketing

Some years will be BANNER YEARS some just need to be SUSTAINABLE

Understanding:
Your Membership Focus

Your Brand Value to your Members

-and-

Your Priorities based on size and goals

Will translate to messaging, marketing and Recruiting, Renewing & Reengaging Members
to Deliver Measurable Impact

PRIORITIES

What drives your Brand Value and Marketing

POINTED MESSAGING

Consistency and Words Matters

CONSISTENCY MATTERS

WORDS MATTER

Use this to your advantage!

REPETITION REINFORCES BRANDING

How often are you communicating with your members?

Making new outreach?

What works for your organization?

Could you replace a newsletter with a monthly letter from the President with info and photos?

With personal interest stories like the living Gazette that won a Gold Award?

POINTED MESSAGING

Consistency and Words Matters

EVALUATE:

Your Organization's Logos

Your Organization's Current Theme

Your Organization's Messaging

Your Organization's Tone (Feelings matter!)

Are they recognizable? Can you attribute passion and personal touch to them?

These items drive membership in subtle, but profound ways!

POINTED MESSAGING

Consistency and Words Matters

Historical Perspective Bears Repeating

TRADITIONS AND GENERATIONAL SUPPORT STRENGTHEN YOUR BRANDING

Other people with passion can do the work for you!

Are you honoring members at 25 and 50 years of membership?

**Are you recognizing 2nd and 3rd generation support in your league
and associated junior groups?**

Who started your organization and when? What was their passion that lit the spark?

POINTED MESSAGING

Consistency and Words Matters

CHANGE IS GOOD *but not without a plan*

Changes should be clearly articulated and communicated.

Membership Changes?

Adding new programming?

Poll your membership and look towards current trends to increase involvement

CONNECT YOUR MEMBERS WITH THE MUSIC

Mahjong Classes, Games Day Fundraiser, Wine Tastings, Needlepoint at Open Rehearsals

POINTED MESSAGING

Consistency and Words Matters

Communicate Effectively with Membership

Plan your Communications and have a schedule

SUCCINCT

INFORMATIONAL

TIED BACK TO OVERALL BRAND

Create Member Communications in a way that can be excerpted to your website & social media

MARKETING TO MEMBERSHIP
means
Understanding your Mission and Bylaws

What are your requirements for Members?

Are you properly communicating the expectations?

THERE IS SO MUCH COMPETITION FOR PEOPLE'S TIME – USE IT WISELY

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

Adaptable & Actionable Tools

IS IT TIME FOR YOUR BOARD TO RE-ENGAGE

If your marketing efforts seem to not be working
and your membership is not engaged

Coordinate with Governance and your Board
to question if you are up to date with what
YOUR MEMBERSHIP NEEDS

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

Adaptable & Actionable Tools

You NEVER KNOW who KNOWS WHO

Cultivating one new member can expand exponentially when you find something and someone in common

If we need to meet volunteers where they are, marketing to membership needs that attention as well:

1 – Understand what might be driving someone's lack of participation

2 – Have conversations led with kindness

3 - Listen to what people are saying or aren't saying

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

Adaptable & Actionable Tools

BURNOUT SOMETIMES HAPPENS BEFORE MEMBERS REACH YOU

Young professionals have had to push through
high school and college
to high powered jobs

Without a taught tradition of volunteerism how do you
market your organization to account for this:
one and done projects
evening events
couples events

Do you have a Young Professionals group that can spark the passion before
joining the support League or Guild

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

Adaptable & Actionable Tools

THE ARTS ARE A CAUSE

**MAKE SURE
YOUR MARKETING
MAKES THAT CLEAR**

PRACTICAL APPROACHES

Adaptable & Actionable Tools

Questions?

Wrap-up

**The FIVE Ps to Recruit, Renew &
Reengage Members to
Deliver Measurable Impact**