



Campaign Proposal: The Blenders

PUBR71-312

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Executive Summary

This public relations campaign proposal was created by BlackOut PR to aid the Blenders in achieving their vision of becoming Australia's premier entertainment chorus.

BlackOut PR is a Gold Coast-based public relations firm consisting of four women dedicated to helping organisations such as the Blenders to achieve their goals and boost their ambitions.

The Blenders suffer from a lack of time and resources to fulfil their mission, and the implementation of this campaign will eliminate that problem, while keeping resources and costs to a minimum. Through a main strategy of a special event underpinned by strong media relations, advertising and sponsorship tactics, BlackOut PR offers the Blenders a solid and realistic public relations plan that will raise awareness of the choir group within the local community, increase membership, and secure at least one long-term major sponsor to help finance the group.

The special event will be a music celebration hosted by the Blenders, featuring performances by the Blenders and local choir groups. In light of celebrating music and raising the Blenders' profile in the musical community, this event will coincide with World Choral Day.

BlackOut PR is committed to making this music celebration a success, in hopes of it becoming an annual event for The Blenders in the future.

Research

The Blenders were formed in 1988 and are an all male chorus of the barbershop and acapella genre. Based on the Gold Coast, the Blenders are made up of over 70 active members. Aside from being eight-time national champions in their field, they also maintain an active presence in the community, performing at charity events, hospitals, nursing homes, and on a larger scale - Australia's Got Talent.

This non-for-profit organisation relies heavily on the funding from its members and they have a high regard singing, competing and community involvement.

Their mission pertains to the forward motion of growing membership and touring both nationally and internationally in order to achieve their vision of being recognised as Australia's premier entertainment chorus.

Situational Analysis

Analysing the environment

The Blenders operate in the barbershop and acapella music genre. This genre has gradually spread around the world since the rebirth of barbershop singing in America in 1938 (Soundwaves Chorus, 2012). Within Australia, there are currently a large number of barbershop and acapella choirs who are all loosely connected through the Australian Association of Men's Barbershop Singers (AAMBS). All 'choruses' around Australia are non-profit associations and donate a significant part of their time or yearly income to charity. The tough current economic climate may present a serious threat to this industry. A reduction in disposable income may result in members being unable to pay the necessary memberships or fulfil any travel commitments. Additionally, the current economic climate is not conducive to attracting monetary support from sponsors. This external force has the potential to significantly impact the barbershop community, the Blenders, and their internal and external publics.

The barbershop genre has received little attention from the mainstream media in the last decade. As a result, this genre is relatively unknown and many misconceptions are present. However, with the current social trends and popularity of reality talent shows such as Australia's Got Talent, The Voice and Australian Idol, the wider public are becoming more aware of this genre.

These identified external factors need to be monitored and aptly dealt with to ensure that Barbershop societies will continue to evolve and secure new members over the years.

Analysing the organization (SWOT)

To effectively analyse the current situation of the Blenders organisation as a whole, a SWOT analysis was undertaken.

STRENGTHS:

- Leaders in their field
- Innovative
- Great reputation in their field
- Loyal members
- Strong leadership by senior members
- Ongoing dedication of longstanding members

WEAKNESSES:

- Resource poor
- Lack of funding
- Conflicting objectives of members
- Constant struggle to get recognised in local community and secure regular gigs
- Ongoing difficulty to make an impact with limited resources
- Limited profitability of performances due to cost of travel with many members
- Lack of consistent and recognisable branding

OPPORTUNITIES:

- To raise awareness
- Increase funding
- Build relationships with key publics, Gold Coast City Council, etc. in order to secure regular paid performances
- The barbershop genre remains under-exploited. Therefore, there is an opportunity to bring this type of music into festivals and different events.
- Possibilities for greater exposure via a Facebook page and social media presence

THREATS:

- Danger of repetitiveness for current members
- Company stagnation
- Constantly rising venue hire costs for group practice
- Increasing competition from other entertainers/organisations for sponsors and performance opportunities
- Lack of a strong mainstream media presence

Now that these areas have been identified, the primary issues that the Blenders face can be prioritised in order to design a public relations program to address them.

Analysing stakeholders and publics

An investigation into the publics is required to obtain a complete understanding of the issues that need to be addressed in the public relations campaign.

- Lack of visibility – the genre of music and the Blenders are not very well known, despite their appearance on national TV and great success in the barbershop world.
- There are many misconceptions about this genre of music. As a result, publics may have a relative disinterest.
- Although unknown, those who know of the Blenders highly regard them. The

Blenders have a positive reputation due to their various charity events (e.g. nursing home and hospital appearances).

- Current communication problems exist with the Blenders' internal publics. There are conflicting motives for membership as some join the group for the comradeship, while others join to improve their singing.

Identifying the specific problems/opportunities that need to be addressed

Following a thorough situational analysis of the Blenders and the environment in which they operate, challenges pertaining to their lack of presence in the local community have been prioritised. Thus, the current campaign focuses on increasing this presence in order to grow their membership, strengthen their financial position, secure further performance opportunities and ultimately engage the community as to develop the Blenders' reputation as Australia's premier entertainment chorus.

Publics

Publics include those people who will be involved in the campaign and those people that the campaign is aimed at. For the purposes of this campaign, these can be segmented into internal and external publics.

Internal

- The Blenders
 - o Involved in the campaign production, promotion, execution, and the event: 'The Blenders and Friends Celebrate World Choral Day'.
- The Blenders' family and friends
 - o Involved in the campaign production, promotion, execution, and will be guests to the event.

External

- Choral groups in local QLD area
 - o Choral groups will be of any age and genre of music, but with a focus on those groups specialising in barbershop music.
 - o These will be the main publics that the campaign is aimed at, who will perform at the event.
- Family and friends of choral groups
 - o These are the follow-on publics who will attend the event to support the local choral groups that are performing.
- Opinion leader in the local community
 - o The Gold Coast City Council Mayor, Ron Clarke, will be personally invited by the Blenders to attend the event. He will hold a short speech at the event and engage with the local community. The Mayor will promote and support this event as well as the Blenders in the future. He will be influential in spreading the word about the Blenders in the local community.

- General local community
 - o The focus will be on attracting families to attend the event, especially those with younger children (e.g. toddlers to teens – this aligns with the provision of clowns, bouncing castle and family atmosphere at the event).
 - o This is the second main public that the campaign is aimed at, as increased awareness in the local community is the key objective of the campaign.
- Local community interested in music, culture and entertainment
 - o Males and females aged 5-75 in the QLD areas, who will enjoy what the event has to offer.
 - o These people will learn about the Blenders and hopefully their interest in joining the group will be sparked by attending the event.
- Gold Coast City Council and ANZ
 - o Approval for the event venue will be needed from Gold Coast City Council.
 - o Sponsorship will be secured with Gold Coast City Council and ANZ, to provide support for the event.
- Bond University Student Volunteers/Interns
 - o 8 - 10 Bond student volunteers (most likely communication students) will work with the Blenders throughout the entire campaign process, mainly to create and manage the event communication materials (e.g. create the event invitations, manage the campaign databases, contact GC City Council, ANZ and Volunteering GC, write and send the press releases, etc.). The student intern team will be coordinated and chosen by Blackout PR agency and Paulina Willis, the Bond University Internship Coordinator.
 - o These volunteers will be unpaid, however they will receive intensive hands-on experience with a real organisation as well as a recommendation and certificate of participation from the Blenders, which will be highly valuable for portfolio and resume building.
- Volunteering Gold Coast
 - o Volunteers aged 17-50, male or female, will be needed from this organisation to help with some aspects of the event organisation and promotion, and especially on the actual day of the event. Volunteers with previous event experience would be favourable.
 - o These volunteers will receive a recommendation and certificate of participation for the event (valuable for portfolio/resume building).
 - o The Bond student intern team will contact this organisation to arrange and select the volunteers.
- Community Volunteers
 - o Volunteers aged 17-50, male or female, will be needed from the community to help on the actual day of the event to coordinate the entry and security at the event venue, manage the bouncing castle,

etc.

Goal

As identified in the situational analysis, the lack of community awareness about the Blenders is the primary concern of this organisation and thus the following goal has been developed for the campaign:

1. To develop reputation to be recognised as Australia's premier entertainment chorus

Achievement of this goal will result in an increase in membership, a stronger financial position, further performance opportunities and greater community engagement.

Objectives

The objectives of this campaign break down the identified goal into specific, achievable and measurable outcomes. These have been identified as:

1. Raise awareness of the Blenders in the local community
2. Increase membership by 10%
3. Strengthen financial position by securing at least one major long-term sponsor

Main Message

The main message is the consistent, guiding message communicated to the public throughout the campaign.

Because the Blenders want to tell the public that Barbershop is a music genre that can be appreciated and enjoyed by everyone and that the Blenders will foster this musical appreciation, the main message will be:

"Building a musical community with the Blenders"

Strategies and Tactics

Special Event

The primary strategy of the campaign is that of a special event entitled “The Blenders and Friends Celebrate World Choral Day.” According to Johnston and Zawawi (2009, p.269), “events can create or develop alliances and community spirit and enhance the position of an organisation within a small community or the wider environment.”

This event is a free music celebration to be held at Broadwater Parklands on the Gold Coast on December 9th, 2012 and aims to raise awareness of the Blenders within the local community. The Blenders and the Bond student intern team will enlist the help of the Gold Coast City Council to organise the venue, sound equipment and promotion as part of the Council’s community development initiatives. Additionally, Volunteering Gold Coast and community volunteers will provide staffing for the event in the areas of events preparation and setup.

Choirs from around Queensland will be invited to perform for a small fee of \$10 per choir member and registration will be available through the Blenders website. There will also be food vendors such as pizza stands and sushi bars (who will pay a small fee to sell at the event) and various family friendly entertainment including a jumping castle, balloons, and clowns to attract families in the local community. This special event not only fulfils the goals and objectives of the campaign but is also a great way to attract the attention of the media.

Media Relations

This event strategy will run in alignment with a solid media relation’s strategy. The following local media will be targeted through the tactics of media releases, interviews and feature story pitches.

(i) Media Releases will be sent to the following media:

Print:

The Gold Coast Bulletin (daily Gold Coast newspaper)
 The Sun (free weekly newspaper with strong Gold Coast community focus)
 The Courier Mail (daily Brisbane newspaper)
 mX (free afternoon daily newspaper)
 Sing Out (Australian National Choral Magazine – 4 issues per year)

Broadcast:

Hot Tomato
 ABC Coast FM 91.7

Online:

Australian National Choral Association Website (news and events tab)
 Brisbane Times (Internet based news-site)
 Low Down (Young People and the Arts Australia online magazine – national peak body for organizations and practitioners engaging children and young people in the arts)

(ii) Interviews:

Face-to-face interviews with the broadcast media mentioned above will be

arranged. This will present a great opportunity for the Blenders executives to promote the event, the music genre and the Blenders organisation. This tactic will be discussed further below.

(iii) Feature Story Pitch:

A half page idea for a feature story will be sent to The Sun newspaper. In addition to promoting the event, this pitch will contain information on the background of the Blenders and details of their past performances. Hopefully, this story will increase awareness of the Blenders and hence achieve the campaigns goals.

Advertising

The third strategy of this campaign is advertising. This strategy will raise the public's awareness of the event as well as the Blenders as an organisation. Consequently, this will increase not only the number of choral groups performing at the event but also the support and participation of the publics that the campaign is aimed at. Initially, a new section on the Blender's website will be created for 'The Blenders and Friends Celebrate World Choral Day' event. In this section people can find information about the events details, information about World Choral Day and choirs who are interested to participate can register for the event online.

Social media will be a main form of advertising in this campaign due to their low cost, efficiency, and wide reach to broad audiences. A specialised Facebook profile will be created for the event, which will be used to keep the publics regularly updated and engaged. This Facebook profile will link to campaign-related print and broadcast media as well as connect with the Facebook profiles of other choirs, the Australian National Choral Association (354 likes), and Young People and the Art Australia (818 likes).

Another tactic used for this strategy is radio interviews. These interviews will last for at least 10 minutes and will be incorporated in the program of ABC Coast FM and Hot Tomato. One to two Blenders' members will give the interview and answer questions regarding the Blenders and the event. This represents an opportunity to promote the event and increase the awareness of the Blenders to a broad audience.

Furthermore, posters and flyers will be created and distributed in the local community as well as at community events around the Gold Coast area. The posters and flyers will also be sent via email to each choral group in Queensland who will then distribute them to their members, friends and families as well as display the posters on bulletin boards in their communities.

At the event, the interns and volunteers will be working at a membership stand where people can sign up for Blenders newsletters, membership and can purchase Blenders' CDs for \$5.

Exhibition

Another strategy to increase the Blenders' awareness in the community is through an exhibition. Small groups of Blenders' members will demonstrate their

performance skills at various local events prior to the World Choral Day event. Posters and Flyers will be displayed and distributed at these demonstrations to spread the word and draw more attention to the Blenders and their upcoming event.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship would play a major role in ensuring a cost-manageable and break-even event. The two main sponsors the campaign focuses on are the Gold Coast City Council and the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ Bank). Since permission to rent the venue is given by the Gold Coast City Council, a sponsorship with them will be an opportunity to decrease or even eliminate the rental fee. Through sponsorship with the ANZ Bank, an amount of approximately \$10,000 will be raised. In exchange, the sponsors will be able to have their own stands at the event and advertisements will be displayed at the entrance and main stage. Furthermore, their logos will appear on all posters and flyers that are distributed in the Queensland area. This allows them to advertise for free to a broad audience.



1. October 2012

MEDIA RELEASE

Building a Musical Community with the Blenders

'The Blenders and Friends Celebrate World Choral Day' and invite the young and old to join them at the Broadwater Parklands on December 9, 2012 starting at 12 pm.

Choral groups from all over Queensland will come to the Gold Coast to perform at this special music event.

Barry Mallett, the president of the Blenders, said that this unique event is the first of its kind and is a great opportunity for the community to not only enjoy musical performances but also become part of it.

"We, the Blenders, are a community of singers from teens to seniors who love to perform music from all kinds of genres, from rock and roll to classic, you name it," Mallett said.

"This event is a day full of free music and fun for the young and old and a possibility for anybody who likes to sing and perform to join us," Mallett said.

"For those who would like to actively participate in the event but want to stay off stage, we need all the help we can get, just contact us to volunteer," Mallett said.

The Blenders performed successfully in Australia's Got Talent, the Steve Irwin Day celebration and Battle of the Choirs.

Not only will the event showcase musical talent, but it will also provide various food stands and family activities such as a bouncing castle and face painting.

End

Contact Details: David Reid
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Sample Flyer



The Blenders and Friends

Celebrate World Choral Day

Sunday December 9th, 2012

At Broadwater Parklands

starting at 12pm

family fun and great music!

Sample Facebook Profile

The screenshot shows a Facebook profile for 'The Blenders & Friends Celebrate World Choral Day'. The profile picture is a circular logo with the text 'WORLD CHORAL DAY' and 'DIA MUNDIAL EL CANTO CORAL' around a globe. The cover photo is a banner for 'Blenders Australia's Premier Entertainment Chorus'. The profile name is 'The Blenders & Friends Celebrate World Choral Day' with 2,914 likes and 216 people talking about this. The bio says 'Join the Blenders & Friends on World Choral Day to enjoy music, family fun & great food'. The navigation tabs include 'About', 'Photos', 'FREE Session', 'Vision Home Page', and 'Contact Us'. The 'Highlights' section shows several posts from 'Blenders & Friends Celebrate World Choral Day'. The right sidebar shows a list of friends, including 'Mars Black Out'.

Implementation and Scheduling

The event will be held on Sunday, December 9, 2012, in line with World Choral Day, an international day of recognition of the values of solidarity, peace and understanding, that music provides (International Federation for Choral Music, 2011). It will be aligned with this global day of celebration in order to attract public attention, especially from the local and international musical community.

In terms of scheduling, there will be seven main phases in the campaign:

1. Laying the foundations: April 2012 – May 2012
2. Event participant and promotion preparation: May 2012 – September 2012
3. Last call for entry phase: July 2012 – August 2012
4. Event preparation phase: August 2012 – September 2012
5. Event promotion phase: August 2012 – December 2012
6. Event Launch: December 2012
7. Event evaluation: December 2012 – March 2013

These phases are explained in detail in the Gantt chart on the following page.

In terms of resources, the actions and tasks for each of these phases will mainly be implemented by the team of 8 - 10 student volunteers from Bond University, who will make up the Bond student intern team. This team will consist of communication, journalism and PR students to ensure that their specialised skills are utilised in the best possible way for the Blenders. They will work with the Blenders over the entire course of the campaign and its evaluation. Their main responsibilities will include creating the event invitations, managing the campaign databases, formulating sponsorship proposals, contacting necessary organisations, and creating and managing media content. The Blenders will supervise the interns and approve all content they produce. The intern team will also attend the final event and distribute surveys to guests as part of the evaluation process of the campaign. All responsibilities are elaborated on in the Gantt chart on the following page.

As mentioned earlier, volunteers from Volunteering GC and the local community will be commissioned to help on the actual day of the event to coordinate the entry and security at the event venue, manage the bouncy castle, etc. The Bond intern team may choose to acquire additional human resources from Volunteering GC for the campaign organisation and promotion if they feel that more help is needed.

This implementation focus on volunteer human resources will ensure that costs are minimal and actions are effective and efficient.

Task Name	Start Date	End Date	Assigned To	Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1		
				Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Laying the Foundations															
Communicate campaign goals to the Blenders	04/15/12	04/15/12	David, Barry & Blackout PR		04/15/12										
Open applications for Bond student intern team	04/16/12	04/16/12	Blackout PR & Paulina Willis	04/16/12											
Interview select Bond student applicants	04/30/12	04/30/12	Blackout PR		04/30/12										
Select Bond student intern team	05/01/12	05/01/12	Blackout PR		05/01/12										
Prepare sponsorship proposals for GC City Council and ANZ	05/08/12	05/15/12	Bond Intern Team		05/08/12										
Research local choral groups and create database	05/16/12	05/23/12	Bond Intern Team		05/16/12										
Contact GC City Council to secure event venue, permits, sponsorship	05/16/12	05/18/12	Bond Intern Team		05/16/12										
Contact ANZ to secure sponsorship	05/21/12	05/23/12	Bond Intern Team		05/21/12										
Contact Volunteering GC to ask for volunteers	05/24/12	05/25/12	Bond Intern Team		05/24/12										
Contact Ron Clark to ask for his support	05/24/12	05/25/12	David & Barry		05/24/12										
Event participant and promotion preparation															
Create email invitation to invite local choral groups to participate	05/28/12	05/30/12	Bond Intern Team		05/28/12										
Select local choral groups to invite and send them invites	05/31/12	06/01/12	David, Barry & Bond Intern Team		05/31/12										
Create database to monitor event participants and attendance	05/31/12	07/02/12	Bond Intern Team		05/31/12										
Follow-up on event invitees every 2 weeks	06/04/12	07/02/12			06/04/12										
Prepare media materials including social media, website, press releases	07/02/12	09/03/12	Bond Intern Team						07/02/12						
Event call for entry phase															
Deadline for choral group event participants and entry fees	07/30/12	08/03/12	Bond Intern Team					07/30/12							
Confirm final choral group event participants	08/06/12	08/06/12	Bond Intern Team					08/06/12							
Event preparation phase															
Research and document possible accommodation for participants	08/07/12	08/10/12	Bond Intern Team					08/07/12							
Source staging, equipment and materials for event	08/13/12	08/27/12	Bond Intern Team					08/13/12							
Commission food, beverage and entertainment stalls for event	08/13/12	08/27/12	Bond Intern Team					08/13/12							
Develop the schedule of events	08/27/12	08/31/12	David, Barry & Bond Intern Team					08/27/12							
Formulate event rules, procedures and risk management strategy	09/03/12	09/07/12	David, Barry & Bond Intern Team					09/03/12							
Create event evaluation questionnaire	09/10/12	09/12/12	Bond Intern Team					09/10/12							
Communicate volunteer preparation information	09/17/12	09/19/12	Bond Intern Team					09/17/12							
Event promotion phase															
Regularly feed content in social media channels	08/06/12	12/09/12	Bond Intern Team							08/06/12					
Send out initial press release to announce event	09/10/12	09/10/12	Bond Intern Team					09/10/12							
Create news releases to be sent every 3 weeks	09/11/12	12/09/12	Bond Intern Team							09/11/12					
Create and print posters and flyers advertising event	09/10/12	09/28/12	Bond Intern Team							09/10/12					
Create feature story pitch about the event to send to the Sun Newspaper	09/10/12	09/13/12	David & Barry							09/10/12					

Distribute posters, flyers, promotional emails to community &	10/01/12	11/19/12	All											10/01/12	
Perform exhibitions in local community	10/08/12	11/30/12	The Blenders											10/08/12	
Contact radio stations, ABC Coast FM & Hot Tomato to schedule	10/22/12	11/02/12	Bond Intern Team											10/22/12	
Broadcast interviews with radio stations, ABC Coast FM & Hot Tomato	11/05/12	12/03/12	The Blenders											11/05/12	
Event launch	12/09/12	12/09/12												12/09/12	
Event evaluation	12/10/12	03/08/13	Bond Intern Team & The Blenders												

Evaluation

An evaluation will be completed to measure the success of the campaign and if the goals of the campaign have been achieved. Evaluation is important because it will demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaign, areas for improvement, and whether an appropriate return has been generated for the investment that has been made (Gregory, 2012, p.156).

In order to measure the increase of awareness, different aspects such as media coverage will be evaluated through a process of media monitoring, conducted by the Bond student intern team and other necessary volunteers. The print media coverage will be measured by the number of publications, the content (if it was positive, negative or neutral), the length of the media content that talks about the Blenders or the event, the placement in the print publication as well as the reach of the print publication. The coverage in the broadcast media will be evaluated by measuring the frequency of the broadcast, the content (if positive, negative or neutral), and the length of the broadcast.

Furthermore, the number of event attendees, participating choirs, website visits, and increase in ticket sales of future Blenders events will show the increase in the level of public awareness. Social Media will be evaluated by measuring the number of likes and comments on Facebook.

An extensive survey before and after the event will not be possible due to the limited budget. Nevertheless, at the main entrance of the event there will be a stand with a spin wheel where Bond student interns will encourage people to participate in a survey in exchange for a prize won at the spin wheel. The questionnaire will include their names, where they are from, contact information, and four questions concerning how the individuals heard about the event and if they knew the Blenders before the event. This will provide more details about the level of awareness amongst the local community.

The Bond intern team will use the information collected through this process to evaluate the results and follow up with the event participants to increase membership. Membership as well as sponsorship will simply be evaluated by measuring the increased number of members and sponsorship secured after the event.

Budget

Cost per Item

	Descripti on	Interval
\$256.72	Eighth of a page / black and white	per day
\$1.50	New paper ad / gold coast	per sheet
		per 4
\$180.00	Jumping Castle	hours
\$85.00	Clown / Face Painters / Balloon Animals	per hour
\$165.00	Toilet Unit	per day
		per 4
\$65.00	Spin Wheel	hours

Total Costs

	Descripti on	Multiplier
\$1,283.60	1 week of ad in newspaper (5 days)	5
\$1,500.00	1000 Flyers and Posters	1000
\$540.00	Jumping Castle (12 hours)	3
\$1,020.00	Clowns / Face Painters (12 hrs)	12
\$990.00	6 Toilet Units	6
\$195.00	Spin Wheel	12
\$5,528.60	TOTAL	

References

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