

That was then... This is now...

There have been so many changes in life and society over the last twenty or thirty years - never mind the almost 60 years that Sweet Adelines has existed!

How do those changes affect us today? Do we need to rethink some of the things we are doing to better cater to the current generation? Could it be time to revisit some of the things we do, and question if they are the most effective strategies to apply today? These approaches worked perfectly decades ago, but are they still working as effectively today?

That was then...

As we all know, twenty or thirty years ago our society was quite different than it is today. Gender roles were clearly defined: Men worked and women stayed home with the children. Men worked at the same job for twenty, thirty years or more. Women did the cleaning, cooking, washing, shopping, ran the household and took care of the children (Phew!). Men came home at the end of the day to their newspaper, dinner on the table, and pajama-clad children who were bathed and ready for bed.

The pace of life was a little less frantic. It was not possible to drive, eat and speak on the phone all at the same time. People did one thing at a time (which would seem a whole lot less stressful to me!). Moral and ethical standards were more valued back then, and religious worship was better attended.

Divorce was almost unheard of, and marriages lasted for lifetimes. Whether they liked it or not, people stuck with it. Quitting was not an option.

This is now...

Although we may long for some of those long-lost ways of living, we have to accept that our society is very different today. We are living in a get-it-now society. People want what they want, and they want it NOW. Patience is a virtue our present society does not possess.

Today we communicate by instant email, instead of waiting days for someone to receive our letter. We visit Web sites to learn more about a company, rather than poring over pages of literature. Practically everyone carries cell phones, so we never get away from the phones. Multi-tasking is a part of everyday life.

The majority of women work full time jobs, cook meals, clean house, do shopping, keep household accounts, care for their children AND look after their husbands! We truly are Super Women!

Things have changed much more for women than for men. Men have a much more linear lifeline. They leave college and go to work, they continue to work, work some more and then retire. Women's lives are impacted more dramatically by marriage and children. Men can enjoy pastimes, hobbies and sports alongside their careers. Women often lack the time, energy and the inclination, during their child-raising years to even consider a rewarding interest for themselves.

We eat fast, drive fast, work hard and play hard. This is today's society.

So, how does all of this impact our Sweet Adelines' life? Is there anything we should be doing differently?

Photographs and Images

In our advertising, we need to use photographs and images of all age groups and ethnic persuasions. This indicates our openness toward younger and more mature women, as well as women of color. The main thing to consider when using images, is the women should be having FUN. We need smiling, happy faces that women will relate to.

The Baby Boomer generation relates to images of people aging beautifully and gracefully, they feel much younger than their age. They also associate with images of younger people, since they feel so young themselves. They are well educated, and still enjoy learning. Baby Boomers make up our primary demographic, with a population of 82.8 million in the USA. These are the women we need to concentrate our marketing strategies toward.

Fellowship at Rehearsals

Traditionally, the Sweet Adelines rehearsals have been held once or twice a week in the evenings. The sessions will last anywhere from two to four hours. There is visiting before the rehearsal, on the risers, and afterwards. Women are looking for friendship and a social experience, as well as the singing.

The younger women in our choruses, however, have little patience for visiting much before rehearsal, and talking on the risers drives them crazy because it slows the process down. So, one thing we could try is minimizing the socializing at the beginning of rehearsals, cutting out the chatter on the risers, and keeping fellowship until afterwards. That way, the younger women can choose to stay and socialize if they wish, or leave straight away if they have children or other pressures calling them.

Time Of Rehearsals

If I've been working all day, rushed to collect my baby from daycare, got home, seen to the dogs, made dinner, fed and bathed the baby, greeted my husband, put the baby to bed and washed the dishes... I hardly have the energy or the desire to clean myself up and go out again. I'm ready for bed!

What about the option of having one or two lunchtime rehearsals instead of the evening sessions? The rehearsal would have to be short, sharp and snappy. No time for chattering. And those who do wish to visit can do so afterwards.

Another option might be to have the rehearsal at the weekend. Most mothers can get someone to watch their children at the weekend. Survey your members and see if different times and days might work for them.

Childcare

Consider hiring a babysitter. Even if it means your members with children have to contribute a couple of dollars towards the cost, it would still make things much easier for busy moms.

Summary

My hope is that this article will challenge us to re-examine the way things have always been done, and see if there might be other options that suit today's society better.