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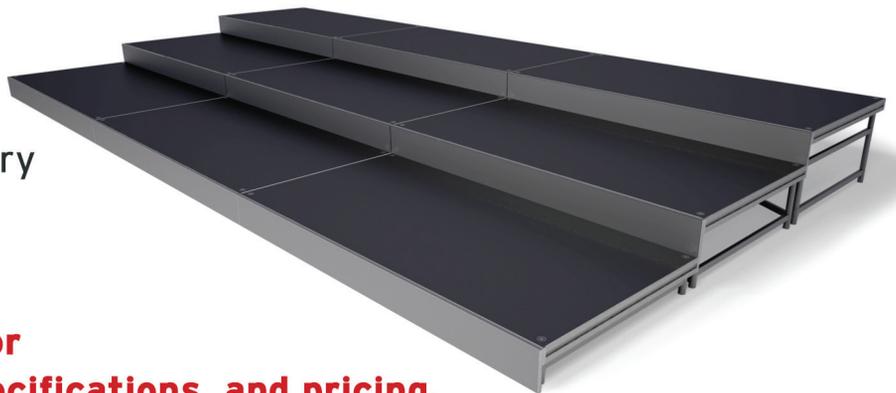


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"Orange Sensations" (2 Times) Wayne County HS (MS)
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"Femmes Fatales" (3 Times) Plainfield HS (IN)
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"Treble Makers" Colonial Forge HS (VA)
"Show Cards" Colerain HS (OH)
"Premier Edition" (2 Times) East Noble HS (IN)
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SHOW CHOIR FUNDRAISING: The Power of Family

by Rachel Clevenger

Show choir is synonymous with family in many ways, in the sense that each show choir member's family provides support that is financial, physical, social, and emotional, but also because each show choir becomes its own family.

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USING MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE TO ORGANIZE SHOW CHOIR FUNDRAISERS

by Paul Brown

There is every type of potential fundraiser concept out there and some that haven't even been thought of yet. The more time you spend on organizing and managing your fundraising—or cleaning up “messes” that are a natural result of a project with several moving parts—the less time your group has to devote to practicing your art and perfecting your performances.



editor's letter

Some of you may have recently come across an article widely shared on Linked In during the last weeks of September. By Richard Blackwell, it had a simple title: "Is Your Daughter Ok? Check again." As the mother of a child who experienced a terrifying health scare during her first year of college, the title caught my eye instantly. I was only two lines in when I realized it had a direct connection to some reading I'd just completed on concussion awareness and how often students sustain concussions but are never properly diagnosed or treated.

Blackwell writes, "'Dad I'm ok.' That's what Alex said to me Tuesday afternoon. Alex has been suffering from Social Anxiety and general depression since receiving a concussion last fall playing soccer, but we felt things were moving in the right direction. Recently she had fallen in love with a longtime friend and there was more of the old Alex happy face around. Suicide had been something that Alex said she considered in the past and we took that very seriously, but she was telling her therapist and us she was past that now and we were believing her." As you have likely surmised by the title, the story has a tragic ending. Alex took her life, and while Blackwell believes there were any number of contributing factors, the concussion was the precipitating event.

In recent research on Traumatic Brain Injury and anxiety as it relates to depression post-injury, experts are working towards a plan to address the high number of post-concussion students reporting anxiety-related disorders: from post-traumatic stress disorder, to phobias or separation anxiety, to generalized anxiety, adjustment, or panic disorders. Many of the same students who sustained concussions experienced loneliness and social withdrawal that affected their perceptions of the quality of their lives. You may be under the same mistaken impression that I was—that student-athletes are the ones we need to keep a close eye on, so perhaps this is a problem we can more easily diagnose and treat. However, the solution was not that simple. Too many students, from the very young to college-aged, suffered from concussions that were never properly diagnosed or treated.

Though show choir may not typically be considered a physically dangerous activity, there are certainly mishaps, slips and falls, and injuries during practice and shows. Even if you are diligent about keeping your students physically safe while they practice and perform, many—if not most—of your show choir students participate in other activities, from sports to regular recreational adventures: these are active, engaged, young people who are constantly on the move.

Our children—whether our biological children, adopted children, or the students who are in our care for a semester or two—seem to have more struggles than what we faced, or these struggles just seem to be intensified and magnified by our culture which seems particularly tumultuous and uncertain.

As we are all painfully aware, the suicide rates for students right now are beyond alarming, and I am embarrassed to admit that my first reaction to learning more about concussion awareness was not one of gratitude for knowledge that could help me spot a problem. Instead, I felt an overwhelming sense of helplessness in the sense that here was yet one more "invisible" injury that our students could be carrying, one more set of symptoms we would have to be on guard against, among a multitude of other concerns that go beyond their academic progress.

However, what I quickly realized is that any knowledge is a potential safeguard against a choice with devastating consequences. While there is fear and uncertainty in the face of any invisible danger, we can learn the symptoms to watch for; we can shore up the defenses with knowledge. While it is emotionally challenging, frightening, and even exhausting, we must do all we can—for every Alex out there who might be saved.



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PUBLISHED BY FLAHERTY MEDIA
PO Box 1903, Pelham, AL 35124
Toll Free: 800-705-5280, press 1
Fax: 855-239-8093

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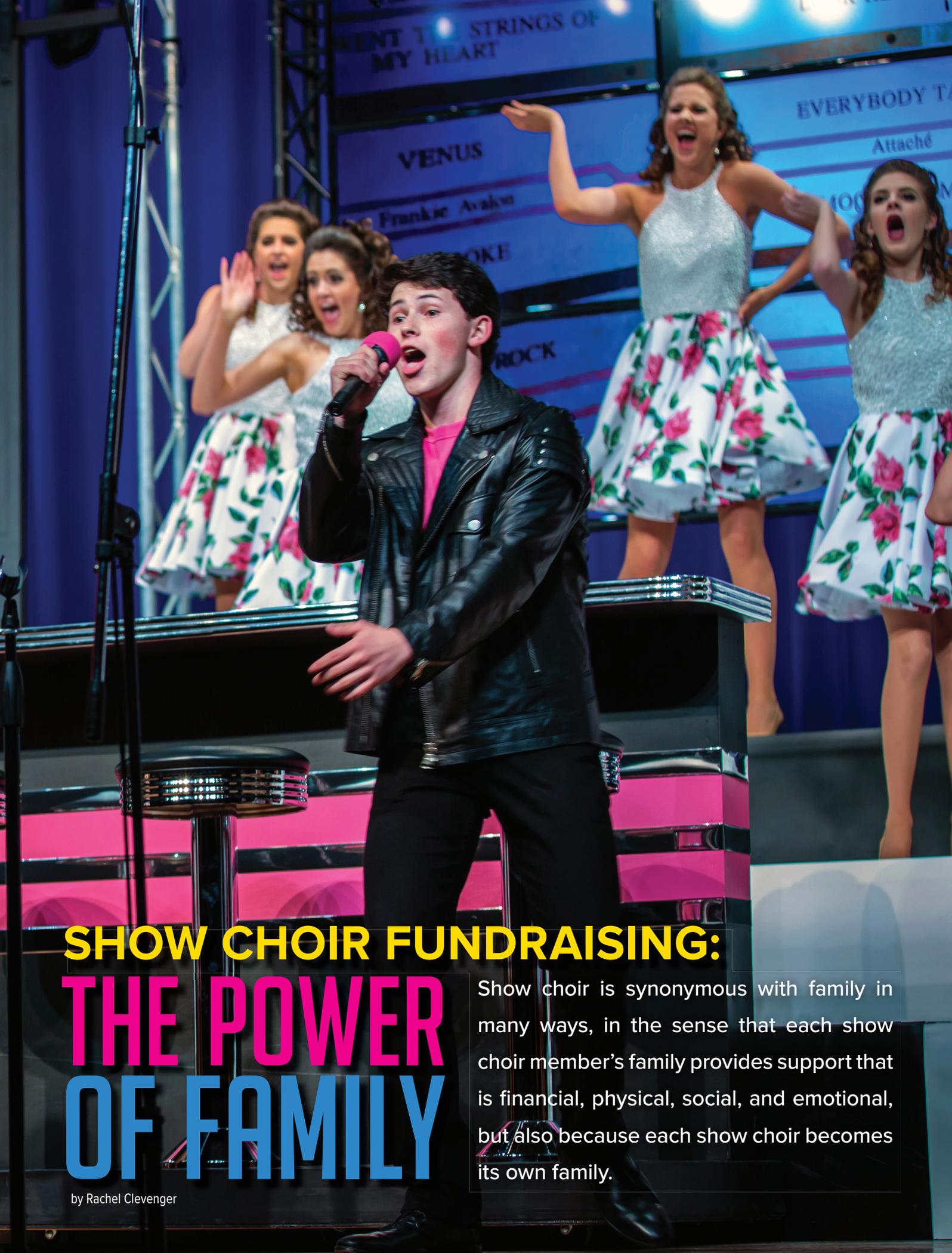
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SHOW CHOIR FUNDRAISING:

THE POWER OF FAMILY

Show choir is synonymous with family in many ways, in the sense that each show choir member's family provides support that is financial, physical, social, and emotional, but also because each show choir becomes its own family.

by Rachel Clevenger



Photo by Tracey Harrison of Clinton High School's Attaché

Beyond that analogy, the broader phrasing for “show choir family” encompasses everyone involved in the show choir community, which includes the fundraising companies who help performers reach their financial goals and keep music programs afloat. It’s not at all surprising, then, that so many of the fundraising companies that support show choir via this magazine are from family-owned businesses that share the same values: loyalty, respect, and connectedness.

Creating Financial Rewards from Positive Emotional Energy

Jeff Ellenberger, with Dutch Mill Bulbs, explains that personal attention to each customer’s needs is what makes a small business special, and what gives small businesses advantages over conglomerates. Ellenberger explains, “Customer loyalty is earned, not taken for granted.” That’s why they run their company in a way that makes each customer feel both important and appreciated. While the overall goal is, of course, helping



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customers meet fundraising goals, the difference is that they treat an order for 25 items with the same level of importance they would treat an order of 2500 items. He adds, "We do our best to impress with attention to detail and specific needs."

Ellenberger explains that the same values driving their family are what drives their company, with loyalty, fairness, and honesty as the keys in both everyday life and in business. He's seen that if people are treated with respect, loyalty develops in a natural way. Ellenberger adds, "Owning a small business is like having a second family. Because you work closely with a small group of employees, day in and day out, there's a personal connection that I'm not sure exists in larger companies."

As the father of three sons who are active in school, Ellenberger has seen these relationships as they are built among boosters. He explains that people working together, whether they are members of a small business or performers in a show choir, develop an emotional connection

"All of us here have children who are involved in some sort of extra-curricular activity. We understand the level of commitment that parents and volunteers have as well as the youth members involved," Geatches explains. They understand the hard work for everyone involved, including setting aside time to practice, to attend competitions, and the required funding to afford participation.

that comes as a result of moving toward a common goal. He adds, "Obviously, positive emotional energy creates financial rewards."

Demonstrating Understanding, Patience, and Respect

Melissa Geatches, with Country Meats, explains that they have direct contact with their customers on a regular basis, treating clients as though they are part of their own

family, a tenet of the company since its inception. Geatches explains, "When we give that personal touch, we see an immediate response in how our customers feel about our company."

Geatches goes on to explain that when you have a company filled with family members, you must demonstrate constant understanding, patience, and respect: those principles carry over to their interactions with

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employees and with their customers, and she believes people can feel the difference in their company. "All of us here have children who are involved in some sort of extra-curricular activity." Geatches adds, "We understand the level of commitment that parents and volunteers have as well as the youth members involved." They also recognize the hard work for everyone involved, including setting aside time to practice, to attend competitions, and the required funding to afford participation. Because of those realizations, they have taken the time to create something that is both profitable and easy.

Working with Integrity and Honesty

Debbie Hohman, the founder of School Spirit Coffee, describes the connection in this way: "I have friends all over the U.S. who I have never met." Because Hohman runs a small, family-owned business, she takes the time to share in her customers' lives. Hohman notes that their personal family values guide the values of their business as well: "integrity, honesty, and caring for others."

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In fact, having been the “professional booster Mom” of every group her daughters were involved in is what inspired Hohman to start her company in the first place.

Hohman also wanted to develop a product where the company does not hire representatives who make profit on the product. Instead, she wanted half of the profit going directly to the fundraisers. She’s seen first-hand the difference it makes when students have fundraising goals to hit if they can keep half the profits, and she knows that this is one way to create the loyal customer base any company wants to earn.

Keeping it Simple

Finally, Charles Grosse—the founder of CGMG Enterprises, LLC—has recently learned about how emotionally satisfying helping others with fundraising can be. Though Grosse had retired very young and was spending time around the house for the last two years, his wife encouraged him to find something to keep himself busy, and he bought the Lucas Battery name and worked



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with a connection he'd developed before retirement to develop a battery that was better than the brand names but could be sold at a fraction of that cost. His wife's tennis partner is the one who suggested that batteries could make a terrific fundraising product, as they are something everyone—from individuals to small business owners—need on a regular basis.

After a week of research, Grosse was ready to begin the fundraising arm of his business, and that has quickly turned into the best part of his job. He notes that helping a choir student from Atlanta raise the money to be part of the Macy's Day Parade in New York City is "a lot more enjoyable" than working with traditional retailers. Just like in his family, the mantra for his business is about "keeping it simple," and he worked to quickly develop a plan that allowed for maximum flexibility so a show choir can market how it wants and when it wants, whether it be a focused event or a year-round webpage.

As the father of two daughters who were heavily involved in dance, Grosse is also

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familiar with the constant costs associated with any creative extra-curricular activity, from costuming to travel. He feels satisfaction on an emotional level when he is able to help a small organization meet a fundraising goal or assist a larger organization that is within an economically disadvantaged area.

Though it's a business, Grosse explains, it's also something that helps the school, the student, and the organization. As such, the people at the center of every fundraising project are always front and center. Grosse concludes, "The way we run our family is the way we run our fundraisers."



Photo by Soule/Duncan of Los Alamitos

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Rachel James Clevenger earned her B.A. and M.Ed. degrees from Mississippi College. After finishing her PhD in Composition and Rhetoric, she taught and served as the University Writing Center Director for Birmingham Southern College and University of Alabama at Birmingham. Currently, she teaches Business Communications at Samford University.

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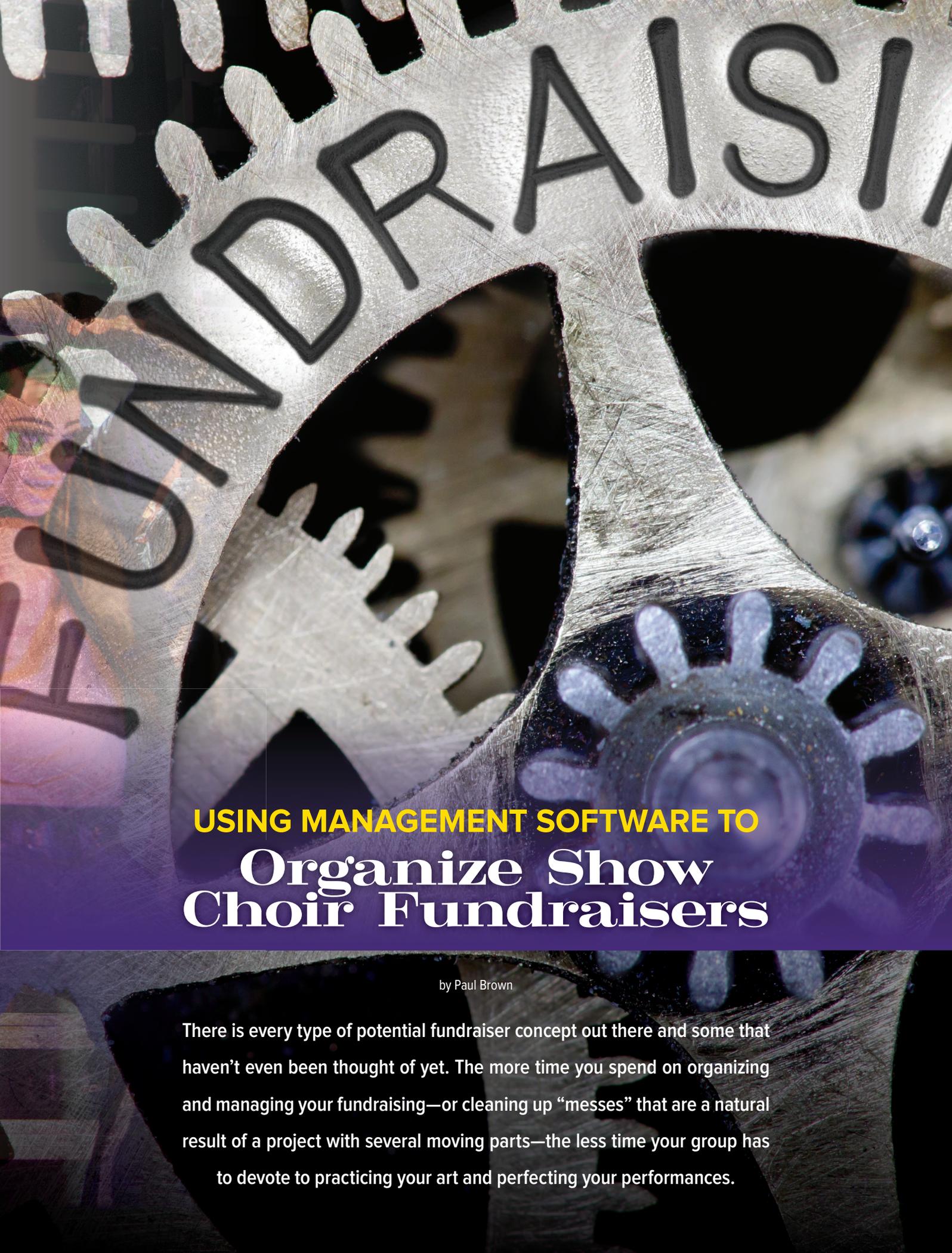
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USING MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE TO
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by Paul Brown

There is every type of potential fundraiser concept out there and some that haven't even been thought of yet. The more time you spend on organizing and managing your fundraising—or cleaning up “messes” that are a natural result of a project with several moving parts—the less time your group has to devote to practicing your art and perfecting your performances.



Fundraisers Can Be Complicated

Each one comes with its own specific mix of product, pricing, delivery method and schedule, profit distribution and timing, and method of presentation (catalog, mobile applications, hand-carried samples, showroom display, website link, etc.) to your potential customers.

In other words, keeping track of what's supposed to happen versus what actually **does** happen is important—especially if your students are taking products out with them to sell, products they are responsible for either selling or turning back in.

Problems with Freeware

The old days of “yellow pad” records have mostly gone away, replaced (at least) by spreadsheet features like Excel or other freeware. This makes it easier to input changes to totals as things get turned in, and to keep a reasonably accurate history of transactions; however, the files are often kept on a personal computer (or personal Dropbox), so there can be a lack of immediate access to record data.

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There can also be a significant amount of formula programming in a spreadsheet, so you've got to find someone with the knowledge of how to do that—and if they're not the same person who is managing the fundraiser, they have to train that person on how to enter data. Some advanced financial software programs are still loaded onto just one machine, limiting access to entering changes or pulling reports.

The other aspect to a management software package to consider is this: Do you try to use various "free" internet resources (that are certainly there and available), or would a "one-stop shop" be easier, ultimately creating better organization and less hassle for your show choir and music program?

Where Cloud-Based Systems Shine

This is where cloud-based systems shine—having 24/7 access to financial / fundraiser records can greatly improve the accuracy of recordkeeping, and lessen the frustration for the person(s) responsible for managing the fundraiser.



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One aspect to a management software package to consider is this: Do you try to use various “free” internet resources (that are certainly there and available), or would a “one-stop shop” be easier, ultimately creating better organization and less hassle for your show choir and music program?

Yes, there is a certain amount of training involved with any software package, and often, the details of fundraiser prices/profit and order submission can be daunting. You should find something that clearly identifies product, money, and profit, and if order submission can be incorporated, so much the better.

Another aspect of fundraising that has changed in recent years is the distribution of profit. The term “cooperative fundraising” is used by the IRS when individuals receive credit for funds raised—and this distribution of profit can adversely affect an organization’s 501(c)(3) status, if done without regard to IRS guidelines. This topic is beyond the scope of this article, but we highly recommend that you research the topic; there are some very good white papers out there.

In a nutshell, fundraiser profits should be distributed equally among all members of an organization—not just to those who fundraise. Thus, when profits are calculated, the software should have an easy way to distribute profit equally among all students.

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Perhaps the most important task of fundraising is tracking deposits to your activity account or bank account. Do you have budget category capability, and simple but precise reporting? Yes, advanced financial software packages have this capability, but you may have to find someone who is an expert in that particular financial software to run it.

Fundraiser financials are basically straightforward—product value in vs. product value out, money in (from students) vs. money out (paying the fundraiser company), and profit credit distribution. However, there are also fundraisers where the student never touches cash or checks. Instead, purchasers can pay online or through a mobile app, placing their orders after looking through a catalog or other selection of offerings, and the payment goes straight to the fundraiser company, who then distributes the profit (and appropriate reports) to the organization when the fundraiser period finishes.

This may be the simplest method of all, but you still want a simple, 24/7 method of entering data, as well as easy financial status information access for your parents/students/members. At the end of the fundraiser, having quick and accurate access to who owes what can help you recover lost product or funds not turned in, which makes investing in the right software from the beginning a small price to pay to avoid those stresses.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Paul Brown is the Director of Development of Dorian Business Systems. Charms is a robust financial package as well. It will help you track fundraisers and disburse profits. Learn more about Charms by visiting www.charmsoffice.com/about.asp, where you can also create a 60-day trial account.

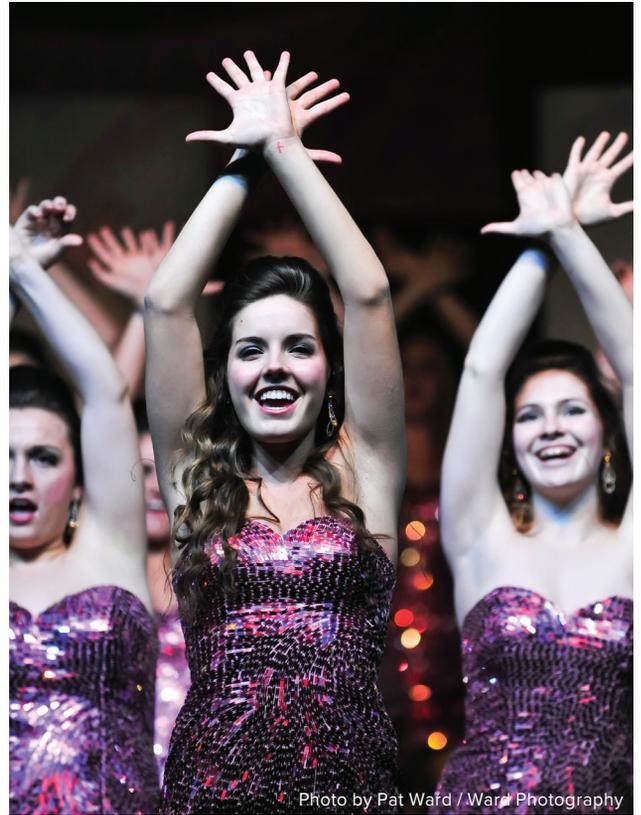


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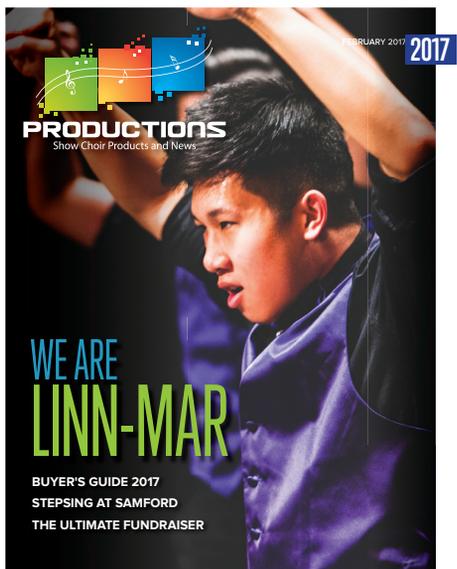
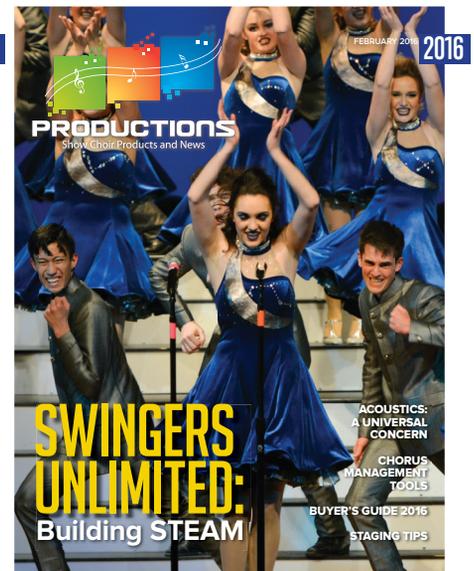
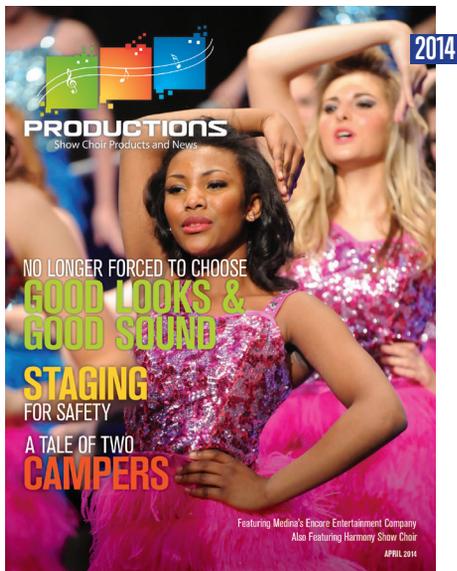
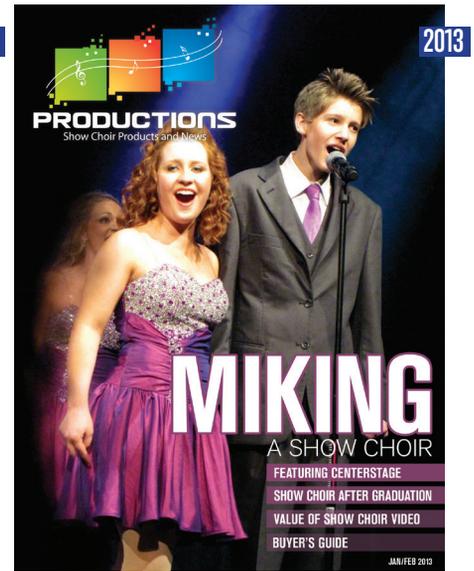
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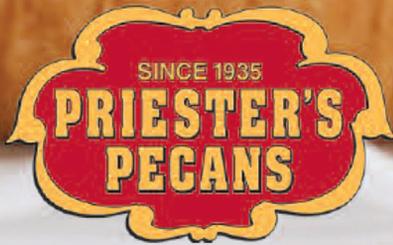
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Best New Director	Megan Tantillo (Millard North HS)
Best New Choreographer	Nicholas Quamme
Best Arranger	Brock Keiper
Best Costumer	Gail McInnis Productions
Spirit of Service	Clover Hill High School (Sandra Thomas, Dir.)
Most Promising New Program	Broken Arrow Tiger Rhythm (Justin Rosser)
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