

Lead a Sectional Like a Boss

By Nikki Blackmer

Lead of Frenzy

2017 Sweet Adeline's Quartet Champions and Queens of Harmony

Basics...

1. Initial Assessment
 - a. Notes
 - b. Words
 - c. Breaths
2. Section Unity – Sound (caveats: 1, each singer should sing with their FULL, performance voice. Do not pull back your voice to blend. 2, if you need to give some suggestions to any singer regarding their sound before they try to blend in– you should!)
 - a. Start with voice you want the section to emulate
 - b. Start with vowel work
 - c. Have them sing one note on a vowel, have another strong singer match them. You will hear match as two voices sounding just like 1 voice. This is also sometimes called blend.
 - d. Have them match the breath space on inhale. Ah or lh
 - e. Add another singer, have them blend in, with tone and breath space

- f. Now have trio go to one on Do, two going up 1-2-3-2-1
- g. Make sure match is maintained through moving notes
- h. Add more voices: match sound, match breath space.
- i. Unison and Moving Notes
- j. Continue until all singers are added
- k. Now, have section use different words from the song that have pure vowels in them: “Hot” “Met” “We” “So” “Soon”
- l. Maintaining match is the priority. Ask singers to memorize what they’re doing to match the others. “Take a photo” of inside your voice, and inside your voice so you can duplicate it again
- m. Lastly, have the section maintain match while singing the song. This will be troubling at first, but with time this will get better.

More Advanced...

3. Word Sounds

- a. Vowels
- b. Diphthongs – two distinctly different vowels that turn in the same space. What time do they turn? 50/50? 70/30?
- c. Singable Consonants – in a tall placement to maintain resonance
- d. Planned Textures and dynamics remembered and executed with a reason (crossing into artistry)
- e. All vowels live in the same mouth shape. Vowel tunnel
- f. Explore how your section sound relates to other sections and the chorus sound as a whole

4. Breath

- a. Flicky flicky breaths at end of phrases
- b. No hick breaths
- c. No false growths at end for “forward motion”

5. Posture

- a. Often a beginning thing, but as skills increase our sense of body awareness should also increase
- b. Lifted posture at ALL times
- c. Incorporating all physical movement into good posture

6. Choreography

- a. Must be incorporated into the sound
- b. Moves must connect to each other to make sound connect
- c. Recognize where the movement is “helping” the sound
- d. Performed at highest level of engagement while maintaining posture, breath and section unity

7. Artistry – the final A Level Frontier

- a. All technical elements come together and are maintained while the performer is free to engage in the physical and emotional telling of the story.

To learn more or get more information, contact Nikki Blackmer at ajoyfulsinger@gmail.com or nikkiblackmer.com

