

## YOUNG DIVA SURVEY

In an effort to understand and better market to young women, headquarters conducted an online survey of our youth members. The results were so interesting that we wanted to share them with you.

A good-sized sample of young women took the survey and 139 were completed. Of that number, most have been members for between 1 and 3 years (46%), and 26 percent for over 3 years. The majority, 56 percent, were over 21 years of age, 83 percent over the age of 17.

Most of these young women (37 percent) heard of Sweet Adelines from relatives, mostly their mothers, 24 percent heard from friends and several a teacher at school or college. 87 percent have recommended Sweet Adelines to their friends, but very few friends joined.

What attracted these young women to SA? Popular answers were the new, different, unique and challenging music; often their mothers took them along reluctantly, but then they got hooked; and others were attracted because they wanted to spend more time with their mothers. "I realized that barbershop is a lot better than the Backstreet Boys," was one comment. Another said, "I moved to Atlanta and had no family close by. It was an immediate family!"

Something new and different. Mothers and family a BIG influence. (Talk to you kids – they ARE listening!)

Why did they choose to join? Most said because their chorus was friendly, welcoming and fun. "Because I wanted to learn to become a better singer, plus it was so much fun!" Another said, "The ladies in our chorus were so friendly and welcoming, making me feel very comfortable. The music was amazing and like nothing else I had ever heard before." Yet another, "I had more fun than anywhere else. Plus, it gave me extra time with my mom, which I was desperate for."

"Sweet Adelines is very, very educationally advanced. I found that I didn't like how a lot of the more traditional singing venues seem to be afraid to learn new things. My chorus, the Buffalo Gateway Chorus in Region 16, is also very competitive and is growing and changing in a good way. We don't have a lot of 'frumps' as Jim Arns says."

"... I missed singing in my high school choir, but I couldn't fulfill the craving by singing with my amateurish church choir. I stayed and made Sweet Adelines a priority in my life because here was a group of older women who treat me like an equal.

Without a doubt, the best part of being a member for these young women is the friendships. "*The women are some of the sweetest I've ever met and I learned more in that year than I have in 10 years of voice lessons.*" Another one said, "It was like being adopted by 20 moms who were wonderful and caring!" Several mentioned the idea of

having a whole chorus of “moms.” “Though I am thousands of miles away from home, I still have many ‘moms’ I can turn to,” adds another.

Coming close behind that came the music, education and competition, or “Showing off on stage,” as one young woman put it. One says, “The constant focus on getting better, and the near-magical way that improvement is almost ensured, providing you work hard.” Another explains about performance, “I don’t need a degree or special training, but I get on stage and perform my heart out and it is appreciated. I love it!”

When it comes to their least favorite thing about being a member, many answered there was nothing they didn’t like. Others said similar things to, “The mature ladies who end every debate with, ‘well, this is the way we’ve always done it.’”

Of course, financial challenges were a big concern, but most of them felt the cost was worth it.

Modern music arrangements were mentioned by a few, “It’d be more interesting if it were possible to arrange some modern stuff.”

Have you recommended Sweet Adelines to your friends? Most, 87 percent, said yes they had, but the open-ended answers suggested that most friends might not be interested because of the music style and costs involved.

How could we make Sweet Adelines more appealing to young women? Several excellent suggestions were made, including placing advertisements in school and college publications; conducting talks and demonstrations and possibly getting YWIIH quartets to perform at schools and colleges; “show off” the young women in a chorus to attract more of the same. “Many young women will come if they know that there is already someone their age involved.” Another explained the concept, “I think that if you could set up quartets... with younger women and send them to college campuses to sing and talk about what they do, that would advertise [and promote] our organization.

Another young woman explained that this generation, “Picks up on things quickly and needs to have constant stimulation... progress needs to be visible if you want to keep young people in the organization.” She continues, “Time is too precious to the 20 year olds of today to spend week after week working on the same two measures.”

“Bill [Sweet Adelines] as a place where serious singers go only to love and improve singing.”

How might we make your membership in Sweet Adelines better? “More contemporary music,” have several versions of the same costume, “The ruffle dress down to the floor with big flowing sleeves isn’t exactly my idea of a great costume!”

A mentor, “Connect me with a ‘seasoned’ member who is willing to teach a new, young member.”

One idea we have been considering, “Perhaps a Web site where the younger girls can get together and chat about our choruses.”

There are many interesting ways to attract younger singers, and keep them interested and enthusiastic about Sweet Adelines International. Look for more survey results in the near future.