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## What is Resilience?

Being resilient is a **culture**. It is asking the “what ifs” - it is forecasting the possibilities and looking at them – it is not accidental.

Resilience is the ability to

1. Change/Adapt
2. Perform/Provide
3. Return Stronger

We all know those choruses that seem to thrive no matter what happens to their members or their community.

We wonder, what do they have and can we get some of that “special sauce”?

The answer is, Yes! It isn’t one particular “thing” it is a set of purposeful skills and relationships developed over time that build your chorus into a resilient Chorus.

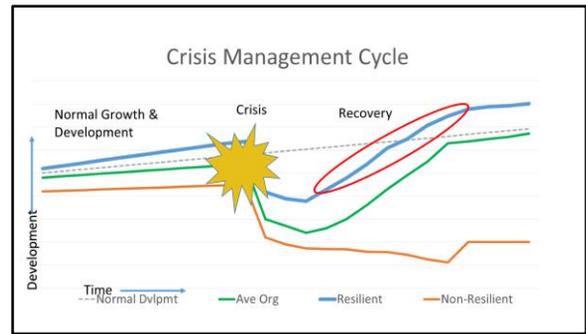
**RESILIENCY** is not something a few individuals in your chorus can “have” – the group needs to be able to understand and value this “bounce back” capability.

**A chorus is a community-owned non-profit business** and should be a “well oiled machine” that can withstand adversity. The musical side is what draws most of us in, but to achieve chorus longevity, we must have structure and stability.

Some Key Concepts:

1. The ability to match your product and services to reflect opportunity is a key Aspect of Organizational Resilience.
2. Maintaining a culture adaptable to change depends upon retaining and attracting the right skill sets.
3. Member engagement motivated by leadership teams is a key factor in delivering the kind of learning culture essential to adaptability.
4. Disenfranchised youth is nothing new...what is new is the scale and pace at which movements today can spread globally....it is clear that as Generation Z begins to replace Millennials...organizations need to adapt how they engage and communicate with a generation raised with always-on digital technologies such as social media.
5. Connecting with/attracting Millennials who are “digital natives and radically inclusive” is difficult – this is especially pronounced in organizations that are more than 50 years old. One reason may be the relative lack of impact attached to Community Engagement. The ability to attract the next generation of talent is related to adapting to technological advances and the organization’s ability to be a viable/valued part of the larger Community they serve.
6. The most resilient companies are those that are more diverse. They have a diverse board and a diverse workforce. It provides a larger pool of perspectives that can respond to and solve unexpected problems.

Crises don't just hit small choruses and aren't linked to just areas prone to natural disasters. Many would say that your Chorus doesn't have crisis risks and wouldn't need to really do too much to be resilient. Others might say that there is no need to focus on this issue because we "managed through this pandemic, we can do anything!" I ask – why did you manage? What did you do well and how can you ensure that as time goes by you keep those proficiencies? Did a single or small group of people make you a success? What happens if they leave? What happens if the next crisis isn't a pandemic (a death, a director leaving, losing rehearsal space)? Or...why aren't you doing too well right now?



A few things to consider: The majority of Crises are Smoldering (they creep along as a low-level issue, causing a sort of cancer to the organization until one day, boom! It is a crisis) In other words – a crisis usually starts as an "issue" then, when not addressed or left to smolder through mismanagement, becomes a real problem....and then a crisis....Think of the unhappy member that starts a campaign on Facebook that seems harmless but causes other members to become unhappy and shun the member....there are so many examples.....

Building resiliency is critical to do before a crisis to enable to handle the hard times. *Normal Growth and Development Phase:* Over time the general organization through rule changes, improvements, changes in leadership, and "keeping up with common practices" grows or develops at a relatively consistent rate. The average organization spends some time keeping up with most of the tenants of resiliency but generally does not do so consistently. The resilient organization **methodically prepares and forecasts routinely**, they are disciplined and, in general, grow or develop at a rate that is higher than the average. The non-resilient organization does not pay attention to planning or the tenants of resiliency. They grow and develop haphazardly depending on leadership and circumstances.

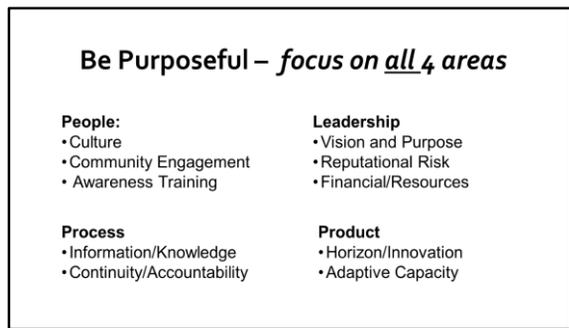
*During a Crisis Phase:* All organizations are affected by the crisis and take a initial downturn. The severity of the impact on the organization is dependent on their ability to implement the plans they have in place and adapt quickly. Since a resilient organization has done some of this forecasting already and has leadership that understands the road to recovery using their plans, they experience less of an impact (relatively) and recover quickly. Often this resilient organization identifies opportunities to improve and comes out even stronger. The average organization gets impacted and stays impacted longer, their recovery is slower, and they may not reach their previous development stage for a long period of time. The non-resilient organization will get severely impacted, likely break off/stop activity, and eventually be permanently devastated by the crisis.

Adapted from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/disaster-risk-management-cycle-drmc>

The British Standards Institution.  
BSI/UK/1665/OR/1119/EN/GRP

The model developed by the British Standards Institute was based on several international standards and breaks down the elements of Organizational Resiliency into basic elements.

Four main categories are formed to evaluate an organization. I've streamlined this into 10 elements to focus on for your chorus. We typically only focus on a few of these areas – to be resilient, you need to be skilled and “do” all 10 of these....



#### People:

- **Culture:** (the sharing of values and behaviors, generating trust and engagement throughout the group) Ideal State: There are forums to discuss and help other members, the chorus environment is viewed as a safe place by the group and the chorus acts like a team.
- **Community Engagement:** (the commitment to relationships inside AND outside of the organization) Ideal State: The Chorus hosts events, participates in leadership role as part of the Community on issues, and is considered to be a valued community resource on Community issues.
- **Awareness Training and Testing:** (the understanding of the resilience of the organization by the members) Ideal State The majority of Chorus members participate in training and education opportunities at all levels

#### Process

- **Information and Knowledge:** (the management and use of the organizations' information assets) Ideal State The information is kept up-to-date in modern format/marketing and meets all external/internal needs with accurate materials
- **Business Continuity/Governance and Accountability:** (the quality of the business continuity framework, policies and procedures) (having clearly defined governance policies with leaders demonstrating accountability to all members and, if appropriate, outside organizations/community) Ideal State The Chorus has written thresholds/indicators for when to call for meetings and direct actions related to the Chorus/members as well as any Community activities/partnerships

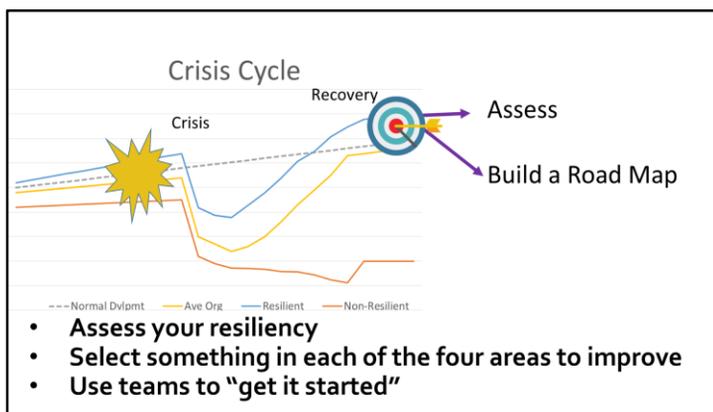
#### Product *(This is your Chorus' Musical Product set – education/performance and your additional Non-Profit Product set – leadership/community support)*

- **Horizon Scanning/Innovation:** (systematic review to identify change, threats, risks and opportunity & formal process of systematically examining information to identify potential threats, risk, emerging issues and opportunities) Ideal State: The Chorus routinely initiates new partnerships/gets involved in new projects to experiment with emerging trends/methods
- **Adaptive Capacity:** (current ability to identify and adapt to uncertainty or change) Ideal State: The Chorus routinely builds taskforces or other teams to bring about positive change to the Chorus across both music and non-profit/community initiatives.

#### Leadership *(We all know this encompasses more than just the team/board of your Chorus but the tone is set and overseen by those in Leadership roles).*

- **Vision and Purpose:** (to what extent the organization's vision, purpose and values are clearly defined, communicated, and culturally engrained in the group) Ideal State: The majority of Chorus members can give examples of how the Vision/Mission statements relate to current Chorus initiatives
- **Reputational Risk:** (the way an organization is perceived by others) Ideal State: The Community has a strong positive perception for the Chorus (as proven through invitations/support, and statements) and an advocate (or several) routinely reinforce the Chorus reputation within the Community
- **Financial/Resource Management:** (the level and quality of financial controls in place & the effective use of resources and technology) Ideal State: The Chorus has multiple back ups (both people and equipment/locations) to enable them to meet all Chorus operations that are routinely used to ensure they are adequate/appropriate?

RECOVERY IS NOT  
TO “WHAT WE WERE” it is  
to “A NEW REJUEVINATED  
CHORUS”



We are going to go through a regrowth, relearning, rebuilding phase to get to our new chorus....including the concepts of Resiliency into this recovery effort will enable you to be a stronger group in your future. It will take leadership and energy.

Musically, your Director and music staff likely know what is needed to get back to singing together as a strong barbershop Chorus.

Administratively, your Team/Board may be thinking of just keeping what has gone before and continuing as if nothing has happened. A stronger chorus can be developed during this time.

What are we really talking about? **Building a strategic plan and Goal-setting NOW!** The virtual environment is an excellent format for this work. Without goals, you’ll get “somewhere” but will it be where you wanted to go? Use the Resiliency survey with your Chorus to determine how they perceive each of these areas (do not just have the team or board members do the survey – ask the membership!) Breaking this into a few nights and a quick breakout section is a great way to have the conversation and collect your chorus membership’s feelings on each issue. Then look at the results and make a plan to improve something in each of the 4 areas within the next year. Stick with it!!! Review your progress!

Since our Chapters are made up of teams/boards with distinct roles, it might be easier to get this going by using a checklist of the most common gaps (from my experience) that also gain the best forward motion in building resilience when you take them on...

- Update/modernize Mission and Vision Statements to reflect current membership – get a discussion going and really work with members to develop this along with any marketing materials
- Review policy guides and ensure they have enough detail to allow a person to “pick up and run with a task” – this doesn’t mean dictate how everything should be done down to the last period – the next person is going to have skills and a different view on the “how” but the “why/where/and when” questions need to be detailed to ensure success with respect to deadlines and information requirements.
- Outline current back ups for files, systems, and locations in place for critical operations such as book-keeping, rehearsal spaces, and communications – if there is a gap, develop a back up (same information but different location - reflect this in the Chorus policy)
- Conduct a Talent survey of your membership – or update your existing one- keep this current!
- Have a goal-setting session with your Chorus members and update your long range plan

# A Resilient Chorus! (aka be like a Weeble!)

Want to know more? Or want to get the assessment discussed in this presentation?

Email:  
[membership@region10sai.org](mailto:membership@region10sai.org)



Just like the 1971 Hasbro toy that wobbled but it can't fall down, your chorus can do several things right now to help recover from our current crisis but also build a better way to move forward in your future.

RESILENCY is your organization's ability to bounce back – you might not have thought about it until very recently, or you might have wondered about how to help your Chorus after a crisis. In general, the idea of being resilient is a culture. It is asking the “what ifs” it is forecasting the possibilities and looking at them – it does not always have a tone of pessimism, rather it builds a culture of team and “what can we do?” is a situation.

It is the difference between a Chorus waiting for a solution, a Chorus making progress despite the situation, or a Chorus that sees the situation as an opportunity and comes through this even stronger.