



A Guide to Running Auditions For Your A Cappella Group – Part III

Now you have to decide who you're going to invite to join, and – and this is always more difficult – who you're not going to invite.

Collect the information about each candidate on a document that everyone in your group can see (Google Drive for example). It could be one member's job during the audition to wander around jotting things down. Reference each person's basic info alongside their results of the range, pitch and dynamics tests if you did them, and maybe the name and artist of the song they sang for a solo.

When it comes to the decision, come together as a group somewhere where you can talk uninterrupted. Ideally this will be tagged on after the final audition so that everything is fresh in your minds.

If you're having a 2-stage process, hopefully deciding who gets through the first round won't be too taxing – anyone you want to hear more of should get through, while those with obvious weaknesses should be removed from the pool.

Don't let anyone skip the second stage even if they blow you away in the first round. Just think, that first rehearsal where people compare auditions and someone finds out they're the only one who had to go through call backs... It could be awkward. Make sure that you have told them when/how they'll find out if they got through and **STICK TO THIS DEADLINE**.

Work out how you're going to tell people – phone is good but email is OK too. Offer constructive, honest but supportive feedback to those who don't make the cut and wish them the best of luck. They've spent time auditioning for your group and might be disappointed.

It helps for one person to recap the information on each auditionee and to remind the group of what they were looking for. Then the discussion and voting should commence, preferably chaired by someone sensible. Consider:

- An initial vote on each auditionee, whether you'd like them in the group or not – irrespective of all practical considerations. This will get the ball rolling, and you'll get a picture of what places will be most tightly contested.
- Round the table feedback on each auditionee. You may decide to give a power of veto to everyone – if that girl who your ex-boyfriend cheated on you with has auditioned and performed well, you might be grateful of this one! This can be a bit of

a minefield, and if you do give power of veto, it should only be used as a last resort.

- If you have a few spaces, try to get the least controversial ones decided first so you can give your attention to the more difficult choices.
- As the discussion rolls on, votes on combinations of auditionees can prove fruitful, as opposed to just voting for individuals.
- If you are struggling, you could each rank the shortlist – 5 to 1, with the top person given 5 – and then total up the scores and see how that looks.

This part won't be easy but these things always have a way of working out, so stay with it, and if the discussion starts going in circles, break things up with a vote or a change of tack. Remember this isn't life or death – there's always the next round of auditions – so just decide!

Once you've decided, ring them and let them know. Make sure that you schedule a celebratory welcome event, and plan the next few rehearsals carefully to ensure they are neither too stressful and overwhelming for the new members, nor too boring for the existing ones – keep some new arrangements aside for these rehearsals so as to put everyone on level pegging. Make sure there's a gig in the diary, and before you know it the "new members" won't feel like "new members" at all.