



### Acappella Road: What's in a Name?

Getting two people to choose a name they actually like for their child is a challenge. Getting 40 people to find a name for a chorus they like can be even harder in many ways unless you remember a few key principles.

Unfortunately, because we didn't think of them right off the bat, renaming our chorus from Western Hospitality Singers to Acappella Road became the first and biggest hurdles we had in our efforts to develop a new and fresher identity. (Calgary Foothills is still our official name.)

Our first assumption was that we needed to find a name that everyone would like, almost as if we were naming a new child. So we had everyone brainstorm names and collated them into a Google Form and had members choose up to seven names they liked and up to seven names they didn't like from the list. (Our thinking was that with up to 280 votes for and 280 votes against in names a handful of names from our hundred-ish suggestions would trickle to the top.

Not so.

Fortunately, by this time we had hired two University Marketing Students to help with our rebranding. After showing them the data from our first survey, a new strategy was developed with some fundamental differences.

First, we realized we asked the wrong question. Rather than asking "Which of these names do you like for the chorus," we should have asked, "If you were starting a NEW chorus, which name do you think best captures the identity of this new chorus?"

This helped remove some of the personal attachments we might have to our current name—if we were to ask you to choose a new name for yourself, you would probably have a hard time finding a perfect name because the one you have feels comfortable and familiar. This makes the change hurdle higher. It also helped focus attention to the purpose of our chorus name: to give people an idea of what we do, a hint at our character, and to make people curious enough to want to check out our website. It also prevented us from thinking the name we might come up with had to be 'THE' one that would make us go "WOW!"

Second, the marketing students and a few others went through the list, which by now was well over 100, and eliminated any names that did not match our brand identity goals. This left us with 20 names.

Third, this subgroup did a google survey to about 100 'non-barbershop' contacts. The survey started with a one-paragraph synopsis of who we were, what we did, and what kind of identity we had. Then it asked the question, "If you were starting a NEW chorus, which name do you think best captures the identity of this new chorus?" The results were analysed as a group as well as by gender, age, and musical experience.

Five names were consistently at the top, with Acappella Road being the recommended option. These were presented to the larger marketing committee who were also asked the revised question and who, after some deliberation, unanimously agreed with the recommendation and presented this recommendation to our board. They agreed and, ultimately, this was presented to our members for feedback as part of our rebranding efforts.

If you have specific questions or would like to know more about our renaming process, feel free to contact Greg Verhappen, VP Marketing, at [gverhappen@shaw.ca](mailto:gverhappen@shaw.ca).