



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

'STELLAR' SUPPORT OUTRANKS ALL THE REST

With the San Francisco Gay Men's
Chorus and Dan England





ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

SAN FRANCISCO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

For 40 years, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus has served as an international standard bearer for a powerful mix of extraordinary musical excellence and mission-driven activism. Founded in 1978, SFGMC was the first choral organization to courageously proclaim its orientation in its name and is credited with helping start the LGBTQ choral movement that now spans the entire globe, galvanizing and changing the course of LGBT history.



DAN ENGLAND

Dan England has sung with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus since September 2012. He is a Baritone Section Leader, serves on the technology task force, and is a member of the recruiting team. Prior to SFGMC, Dan sang for 10 years with the Silicon Valley Gay Men's Chorus and served in marketing and the board of directors as President. During the GALA 2000 festival, his parents came to hear Dan sing and also met Dr. Tim Seelig whom they introduced to their son. Tim and Dan got married in December 2015. Tim serves as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus.





TRYING OTHER CHORUS MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Since his time with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, Dan England has tried not one, not two, but *three* different chorus management solutions. Each time a new chorus management solution was implemented, the chorus eventually encountered unexpected challenges and needed to continuously reevaluate until finding their third and final solution, Chorus Connection.

"The chorus was born on Choir Management Software #1. Our biggest issue was that there was only a single person at the company running the application which meant that response time for any kind of issue was very slow," England says. "There was also a real hesitancy to make any product changes for us as our organization grew in time and scope... and we needed new solutions." England continues, "We needed a more modern, adaptable application and, frankly, a service that provided better customer service."

So, San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus went back to the drawing board to find another solution. "After some research, we decided to move to Choir Management Software #2," says England. "It met a few goals: there was more than one person working at the company, they were able to operate a better calendar system, and they had better means of managing the chorus database. But after we implemented it and when we started working in the system, we quickly discovered new issues. The interface was overly busy, it wasn't optimized for mobile at all, customer service was atrocious, the music download feature was problematic resulting in quite a few calls from our singers, and we were never able to get our member payment system up and running with them... it just didn't work!"

"We found that this particular company threw an entire database at you so that any changes required took an extraordinary amount of knowledge on the interface. And, we were unable to hide 90% things that we would never need access to," England continues. "We were only with Choir Management Software #2 for one year before we had to reevaluate again."



CHALLENGES WITH OTHER CHORUS MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

**SLOW
RESPONSE
TIMES**

**NOT WILLING
TO IMPROVE
PRODUCT**



**OVERLY
COMPLICATED
INTERFACE**

**NOT
MOBILE
FRIENDLY**





WORKING WITH CHORUS CONNECTION

THE CHORUS CONNECTION DIFFERENCE

"STELLAR"
SUPPORT

RESPONSIVE TO
FEEDBACK

EASE
OF
USE

MOBILE
FRIENDLY





AKA BRIAN!

"STELLAR" SUPPORT »————→

San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus experienced not one but two companies that lacked good customer support. They needed a company that would work *with* them to solve the chorus's challenges.

"Implementation to Chorus Connection was very smooth and with a, then, 35-year-old chorus and 300 singers, we had a significant amount of data to migrate over," says England. "Chorus Connection has always had a strong SLA for resolving issues. We've had our issues resolved within 24-48 hours almost all of the time."

When managing a community chorus, you never know what's going to come up. Having excellent customer support is incredibly important in emergencies. England shares the following story with us:

"I can think of one time where Chorus Connection's service was unbeatable. We had a terrible situation where the person who managed our payments inside of Chorus Connection suddenly died while we were performing on stage. We were so distraught. It was the worst thing that had ever happened to the chorus," he says. "After the incident, we needed help to figure out how to manage payments and teach new people to use the system. Chorus Connection really stepped in and helped us make it work in our time of need. I would give Chorus Connection's support 10/10."



EASE OF USE



"Unlike Choir Management Software #2, Chorus Connection has a simple, streamlined interface for the administrators. You can tell that Chorus Connection knows their audience and that they understand the needs of administrators," says England. "Plus, it's mobile-friendly which is important for our singers on-the-go."

"The new user onboarding experience is something we are very proud of at San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. We want to make sure every new member has an amazing first view of the chorus," says England. "Onboarding new members with Chorus Connection is really easy. We just send new members to Chorus Connection's 1-2 minute feature/demo videos which show them how to look at the calendar, download music, make payments, etc."

England tells us that because Chorus Connection is their primary member tool, their new member document certainly seems to reference Chorus Connection a lot!



RESPONSIVE TO CUSTOMER FEEDBACK & PRODUCT ENHANCEMENTS



“Chorus Connection has always been responsive to our product development requests. There’s a true openness with Chorus Connection to listen to their customers and figure out solutions to things that might not work or might not work at scale. A great example of this is Chorus Connection’s dashboard which was requested by us and then they actually developed it. We use it quite extensively and update it often,” England says.

“In addition, we also discovered that there was a real need to have a shortlist of custom fields to do a bunch of different things like tracking ‘employer,’ ‘t-shirt size,’ ‘gender pronoun,’ etc. Chorus Connection said, ‘okay, here’s 10 custom fields - use them wisely!’” laughs England. “Chorus Connection took our need, measured it against what other choruses needed, and developed it for us in a reasonable timeframe.”

“We continue to push Chorus Connection for product development requests and we have always been met with the attitude of ‘let’s figure out how to make this work’ - a stark difference from Choir Management Software #1.”





FINDING THE 'RIGHT' CHORUS MANAGEMENT TOOL



ON FINDING THE 'RIGHT' TOOL

Since England has now implemented three solutions, he has a lot of advice to give to choruses looking for chorus management solutions.

When evaluating different chorus management platforms, England believes these steps are crucial:

"Ask the company for references to make sure their customers are happy. If you're a small chorus, ask to talk to another small chorus. If you're a particular type of chorus, like a GALA chorus, ask to speak to another GALA chorus. Chorus Connection has great references!"

"Solve for the least tech-savvy person - we chose my husband (who is the chorus's director)!" laughs England. "Choruses are made up of all types of people with a huge range of abilities. So it's important to solve for any level of user including people with a low frustration tolerance."

"When researching new systems, we had a committee of 5 people and came up with an RFP (request for proposal) of sorts. I recommend doing the same and asking questions like 'Do you offer good support and what is your evidence for that?' 'What does the data migration process look like?' and 'How flexible is the interface to add new features?' I think you'll find that Chorus Connection is terrific in answering them!"





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