

# How Can a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club Make a Difference?

**David W. Vandewalker**

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For most music educators, there is too much work and not enough time! Have you ever asked the question, “How do I clone myself so that every thing gets done and I can still retain my sanity?” If you have, you will want to know the answer! Develop a modern Booster Club that functions like a small business!

Several years ago I noticed that I have an army of parents at every football game aggressively convincing everyone in sight “how wonderful their child is!” I asked myself, “What if I could channel that conviction and have them rescue me from my stress and frustration? Why not have them share in the responsibility?” My primary role is to be the teacher, the educator, the giver of knowledge, the motivator, and the refiner of skill—not counselor, recruiter, street vendor, marketing director, etc. Well, some of you are smiling because you know the truth, we as music educators must wear all the aforementioned hats and more at some time or the other.

These questions of cloning, et al arose out of desperation in my own program several years ago. It was June, and we still needed a uniform chairperson and we had no one on the horizon. People were afraid to commit to the unknown, yet I

didn't really have all the information to give them because I had relied forever on the same person to “handle it.” Through those stressful days I realized that throughout the booster organization we needed a serious restructuring to grow out of the “mom and pop shop, little league, PTA style” group and construct an organization that would function as a small business. I shared my vision with a small team that then spread throughout the program one project at a time. Within a year, with basically the same people leading the project teams, one fundraiser grew from a profit of \$1,000 to \$5,000 and our one event grew from a \$5-6,000 event to a \$15-20,000 profit event by implementing our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club program, Boosters to the Rescue.

I spent the remainder of that summer in a process of serious self-evaluation of both the educator team and the booster club in general. I

began to reflect on several questions:

- What do I, the band director, have to do verses what has to be done that does not require a music degree?

**David W. Vandewalker will present “The 21st Century Booster Club” this summer at the TBA Convention/Clinic. Sponsored by Marching Show Concepts, the clinic will be offered in three sessions on Monday, July 27, 8am-6pm.**

**Boosters can register at the Convention/Clinic or print the form from the TBA web site and mail it with a check to TBA. Cost is \$65 for two badges.**

- What are the tasks that I am not very skilled in completing?
- What things do I procrastinate doing because I don't enjoy doing them?

- What are the most time consuming tasks which burn valuable time?

Several insights came to me that could really make

a difference in the life of a band program if a modern, 21<sup>st</sup> century booster club organization existed. If I would be willing to “let go”, build some relationships, and nurture a vision there could be areas of my job where boosters would come to my rescue. I realized that when I get rescued, then the students and I can get back to making more music! Isn't that the ultimate goal for all of us? It becomes a WIN-WIN situation.

In my desire to build a great team, I researched various topics of

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leadership, management, event coordination, etc. and discovered four reoccurring topics, which I believe, are the essentials in building an army of boosters for building a successful small business of volunteers:

- Sharing the Vision
- Relationships
- Preparation
- Empowerment

I find it very intriguing to discover that the qualities of great leaders and visionaries of the past are quite similar to those of present day. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club explores these four topics and their significance in building an effective business plan for the future.

This year the annual TBA Convention/Clinic will be hosting “The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club” in three sessions on Monday, July 27, 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. The purpose of the day will be to explore how to successfully nurture a small army of volunteers through three training sessions integrated with a visit to explore the myriad of vendors in the exhibit hall.

Michael Brashear, TBA Executive Director states, “We are very excited about this opportunity for parents to come to San Antonio and be encouraged, empowered, and equipped. I hope band directors from all across the state will register their booster teams for this exciting day.”

### **Booster Seminar Part One: Enlisting an Army of Volunteers**

Perhaps the biggest issue in establishing volunteers is the situation of taking anyone who will say “YES, I’ll do it.” This circumstance occurs when educators get so buried in the job that one reaches a point of desperation and gladly takes any volunteer who will say “yes” whether or not they are capable or able to do job well. This session will examine the four basic personalities that exist in every organization and how to easily discover their gifts and skill set. Once you identify what people like to do, determine what they do well, and build a relationship...getting them to say

“yes” becomes exponentially easier, thus your army of volunteers continually grows.

### **Booster Seminar Part Two: Creating a Small Business Plan of Volunteers**

It is all in the details. Often in a parent organization, we have people who are willing to help and serve but are timid due to their limited experience. There are several components in which we can assist parents in their success. One needs clearly define the tasks or projects we are asking volunteers to do. It is easy to fall into a “cart before the horse” scenario, if one doesn’t offer definition to tasks and volunteers. In many organizations, leaders don’t know “what” is needed so they really don’t know “who” is needed or “how many” are needed, etc. This session will help discover how to develop plans necessary for developing a successful event or project through clearly defined business plans and project teams.

### **Booster Seminar Part Three: Developing an Effective Project Plan**

This session focuses on how to build the “big picture” and then carry it out in full detail. Once the volunteers are assessed and the business plans are in place, then it is time to build an effective project plan including detailed preparation and information which becomes empowering for the team to create a successful, well-implemented project. This plan is the most critical and also the most difficult component due to the deferred gratification aspect of the effort and preparation necessary to bring it into full realization and completion.

The overall plan is clear: share the vision, build relationships, prepare, and empower your community. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club that functions as a small business enlisting an army of volunteers, creates a successful business plan, and develops effective project teams can truly make a huge difference in the life of a band program.

# SESSIONS INCLUDE:

Creating a Small Business with Volunteers

Enlisting an Army of Volunteers • Developing Effective Project Plans



## The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club Seminar

**TBA Convention**

**Monday, July 27th, 2009**

**Register Your Boosters TODAY!**

**[www.texasbandmasters.org](http://www.texasbandmasters.org)**

Sponsored by Marching Show Concepts



### **Presented by David W. Vandewalker**

David W. Vandewalker is the Director of Bands at Harrison High School in the Cobb County Public Schools (GA). He serves Cobb County and the Georgia State Board of Education as a lead curriculum writer for band as well as GMEA as Chair for the State Music Selection Committee. He serves on the Board of Directors for the National Band Association. He is the author of *Boosters to the Rescue*, *101 Ways to Harmonize the Madness for Music Educators*, and *Foundations for Wind Band Clarity* published by Vision Publications. Prior to 1996, he taught in the Klein and Belton School Districts (TX). As a third generation band director and 20 year veteran educator, Mr. Vandewalker is recognized in multiple editions of *Who's Who Among*

*American Teachers*, and is a seven-time recipient of the prestigious National Band Association's National Citation of Excellence Award. In 2006, Mr. Vandewalker was awarded the Sudler Flag of Honor from the Sousa Foundation and has conducted ensembles in numerous state and national events including: Georgia Music Educators Association Convention Honor Concerts, Bands of America National Concert Band Festivals, and the Midwest Clinic. The Harrison Marching Band is a 2004, 2006, and 2008 Bands of America Regional Champion and a Grand Nationals Finalist. He is affiliated with professional organizations that include the NBA, Phi Beta Mu, MENC, WASBE, and GMEA.