



Creating Chamber Goals That Yield Positive Results

Look Inside!

Read Through Our Pages For Other Great Articles!

Page 2: Learn How To Integrate Your Staff And Board; Plus! Melynn Sight Breaks Down What You Need To Know Before Surveying Your Members

Page 3: A Non-dues Revenue Solution!; Do You Use Member Intelligence?; Putting The Excitement Back Into Chambers

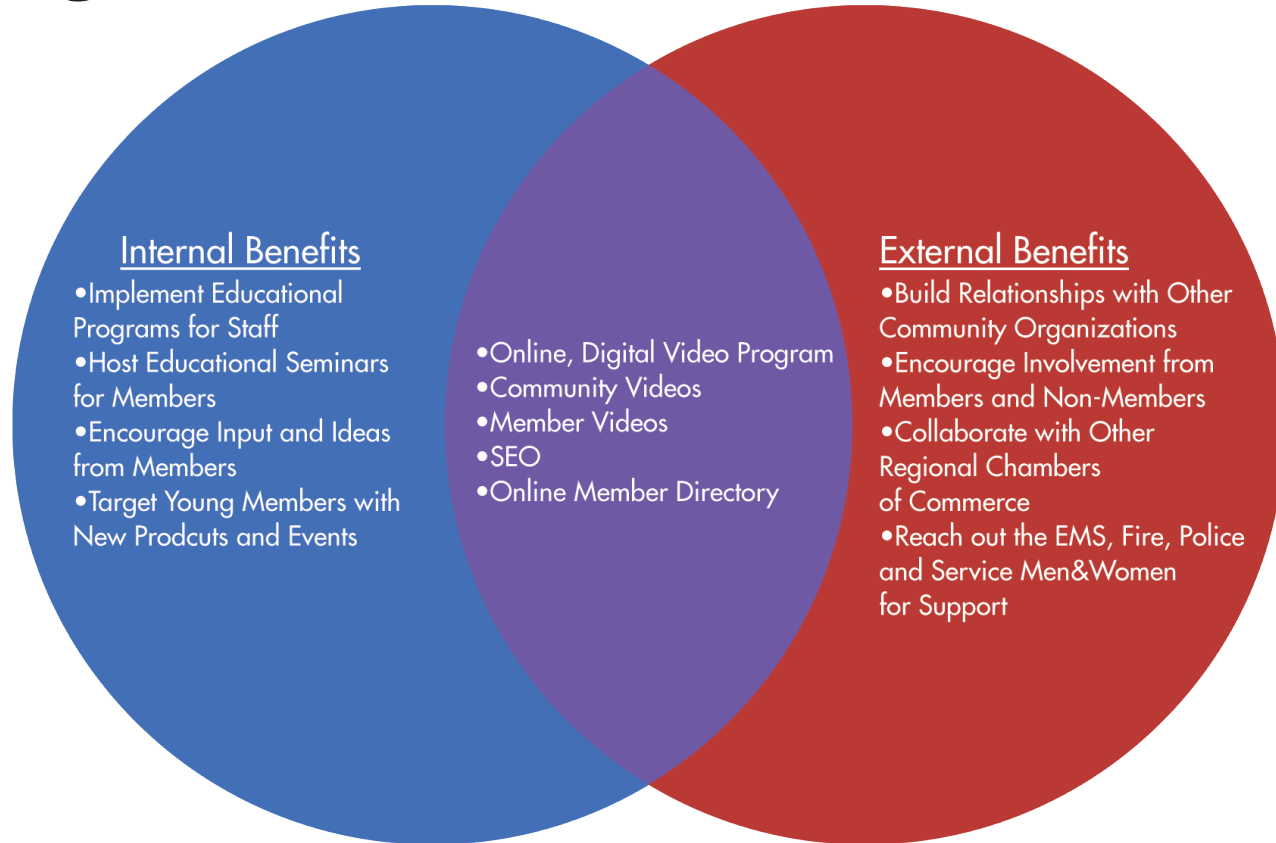
Pages 4 & 5: Read Up On 5 Great Chambers In Our Chamber Spotlight!

Page 6: When Tragedy Strikes, Chambers Respond; U.S. Women's COC

Page 7: Learn How To Listen; U.S. Green COC; Chambers & Philanthropy: A Wonderful Match

Page 8: Upcoming Events, Businesses of the Month, & Chamber Anniversaries!

Page 9: How Chambers Help Young Professionals With Interview Skills



Robyn Johnson and Patrick McCabe

Establishing goals and objectives is an important aspect of any organization. By adhering to a specific plan, an organization is able to accomplish tasks without losing its mission in the sometimes narrow focus of "getting things done." It is important that Chambers strive to maintain both internal focuses ("behind Chamber doors") and external focuses (practices that are recognized in the community). Creating goals and objec-

tives is a concrete way to weave policy, values, and ideology into the activity of the Chamber of Commerce, which is in turn, seen in the community.

Aiming to achieve a variety of goals with long-term intent can be a simple way to uphold the foundation of a Chamber and keep fundamental aspirations always in focus. Chambers are especially vulnerable to losing focus as they are rooted in economic endeavors- an enterprise that is constantly shifting. However, there are several rudimentary goals or objectives

that can back a Chamber's philosophy and produce consistent results if followed. There are a variety of objectives that can aid "in-house" functions, whereas there are specific methods that have a greater impact in the community. However, there are also ways to target both areas simultaneously which are typically seen in media-based efforts. In turn, the people are what make the Chamber and the community all that it is, so focusing on the methods that harnesses their attention (Continued to Page 6)

The New Sales Funnel



Frank J. Kenny, IOM
Contributing Writer

If you are old enough, you may remember the 20th century marketing funnel. The funnel depicted a process where prospects entered into the sales stream at the top of the funnel and, hopefully, became customers at the bottom.

Most people who became aware of the organization entered the funnel through the company's marketing. This was called the "Attention" phase of the funnel. The acronym was AIDA. Attention, Interest, Desire and Action.

That attention was, of course, generated by interrupting (bombarding) people with repeated advertising and marketing messages. If you wanted to enjoy some TV, you had to sit through commercials. Wanted to hear some tunes on the radio? You had to put up with the announcements (remember how all the stations went to commercials at the same time?). Wanted to get caught up on the news? The newspaper pages were cluttered with advertisements. Interrup-

tive, interruptive, interruptive. It worked like hotcakes in the 20th century.

Today, of course, it is very different. Marketers and advertisers can't interrupt our lives nearly as well. We have Netflix, TiVo, and Pandora. The list goes on and on. If we don't want to be interrupted (and who does?) we now have easy options to avoid the marketers, no matter how big their budgets.

To observe what the social media revolution has done to established marketing models, let's take a look at the newspaper industry. Newspaper advertising revenue, adjusted for inflation, is back at 1950s levels according to the Newspaper Association of America. That industry is being decimated, along with many others.

Everything about marketing is different now.

If you are trying to create awareness of your Chamber and its programs using yesterday's marketing models, know this: you are swimming against the current. Yet, this is exactly what most Chambers are doing — just transferring old ways of doing business to an entirely new sales funnel environment.

For instance, take a look at various Facebook Pages of neighboring Chambers. Chances are you will see lots of self-serving posts about their events and programs. That is called social advertising and the vast majority of Chambers are doing entirely too much of it. You can see how their promotions and advertisements are for their own events. You will see ads just like they would run in a newspaper.

Interest and Desire are now established through relationship building.

Let's talk about the next parts of the old funnel, Interest and Desire. How did marketers create interest and desire back in the day? That's right. They used even more commercials and other one-way marketing techniques, such as long-form direct mail pieces and pushy salespeople. They would tell their prospects everything they (the business) wanted them to know about their product or service. Customers were almost completely at the company's mercy for information.

Today, holy goodness. You wouldn't think of believing every word of a marketer (or Chamber). Why? Because consumers simply don't trust companies to tell them the whole truth. It has been reported widely that only 14 percent of people trust ads. Those same reports say that 77 percent of online shoppers use ratings and reviews to help them make purchasing decisions, effectively trusting strangers over the businesses themselves. Whom will your perspective members trust to tell them the truth about your Chamber? Not you. They will trust their friends and what they read online.

Moreover, today, your prospects don't have to go far to get that information. They just go online. They grab their handheld mobile device and type in your organization's name and begin to judge you from what they find. But they won't read your website first. They won't trust you because you have a built-in bias. They want independent info. That search is (Continued to Page 9)

Are Your Members Invisible?

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

It was not that long ago when a highway billboard was the best way to bring in clientele. A simple listing in the yellow pages was sufficient enough to entice potential customers to contact a business. Times have changed. The Internet has become the bloodline of the entire marketing industry. Small mom and pop businesses that do not dedicate themselves to a strong online presence are losing patronage. Internet marketing has flooded every Internet connec-

tion is multifaceted. To be the most successful, a small business should embrace various avenues: website design, website optimization, and, of course, search engine optimization, or SEO. SEO is the process of making a website more visible in search engine results. About 70% of internet users do not click past the first page of search engine results. That translates to the customer not seeing any website not represented on the first page, and your website being almost completely unseen.

Many mom and pop businesses are hesitant to make

more. These business owners spend their time running their business and they just don't have the time or energy to keep up with the speed at which these changes are occurring. You put that all together and they have a fear of the unknown."

For the small businesses that are now jumping on the internet marketing bandwagon, what frequently changes their minds is the catch up game. Once they see the drop in their own business, or the success of their competitors, they are forced to investigate the new advertising frontier. Chambers



tion around the world, changing the advertising climate and the way business is done.

Internet marketing was formerly considered a tactic reserved for large scale businesses. That is not the case anymore; 97% of Americans do online research before making purchases at local businesses. And there is a lot more to internet marketing than just having an attractive website. Internet marketing

significant marketing changes. Bob Neufeglise, Director of Client Relations at CGI Communications Inc. and Next! Ad Agency, explained that many of these smaller businesses that have been around for years have a fear of change. "Most of them know things have changed; they've changed in such a dramatic fashion, from the traditional ways like the yellow pages, to online websites, SEO and

of Commerce are in a unique position to hold the hand of local businesses and to offer guidance to approach this new marketing evolution. Chambers of (Continued to Page 7)

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Know The “Why” Before Surveying Members



Melynn Sight
Contributing Writer

Good planning calls for a strategy with a clear end in sight. Yet many business groups—including Chambers of Commerce—are guilty of developing member surveys with no clear sense of *why*. What will the survey help you accomplish? What burning issues will the survey clarify and help focus a response? Further, what is your plan for reporting survey results and, more importantly, what do you plan to do with the information?

The advent of free online survey tools makes it fast and easy to survey members, but don't forget: these folks are taking time from their businesses to respond, and therefore can fairly expect some follow-up or news of the outcome. Failure to deliver one or both will reduce the likelihood of their participation in a future survey.

With that in mind, the following are some basic guidelines for the things you should do be-

fore and after surveying members. And remember, surveying is both an art and a science. In the absence of in-house expertise, outsource the survey development and analysis to ensure quality information you can use. Before you survey.

- 1.) Know the “why.” If you can't clearly state the purpose for a survey, don't do one. Determine the primary goals you want this survey to support, and then determine what information is needed to make the next big decision to deliver value or solve a problem related to those goals. Knowing the information you need will guide the method of data collection (e.g., phone, mail, email). There are pros and cons to each; a consultant can advise appropriately. While there's no magic for short and simple surveys that solve complex and important issues, if you want sufficient participation for representative sampling, the survey must be kept reasonably short. Organize questions into three groups: must know, useful to know, and nice to know. Discard the last group and take a hard look at the second group.
- 2.) Identify and prioritize two to three member segments. Unless your members are all alike, it will be helpful to compare responses between your most important member groups, as well as with your entire member population.
- 3.) Determine your sample. Survey the full membership if possible. This may not be feasible for large groups, although the larger the sample size, the more

confident you can be that responses reflect the population. The bottom line is to ensure you survey a sufficient percent of your population to achieve a confidence level of at least 95 percent. A survey consultant can guide you as to the number of responses needed to receive a 95 percent confidence level based on your Chamber size.

- 4.) Create your questions. This is where art and science combine. Questions must be clearly and concisely written; no double-barreled questions, e.g., “How would you rate our services and fees?” Split this into two questions. Avoid judgmental wording and don't presuppose anything; respondents should not know where you stand on a topic. Remove ambiguity in words and sentence structure. Terms such as “often” and “rarely” mean different things to different people. Instead use precise phrases such as “Fewer than three time per week.” Avoid jargon and acronyms. Provide an “out” for questions that can't be answered, e.g., “Does not apply” or “Don't know.” (Knowing these responses can also be valuable.)
- 5.) Test your questions. One or more persons other than the questionnaire writer should complete the survey before finalizing it. This test run can reveal problems with question wording and help ensure respondents will understand your questions and give useful answers.
- 6.) Promote your survey in advance. Let members know about the forthcoming survey

and why you're doing it (what's in it for them!). To improve the response rate, offer an incentive (drawing for a one-year dues waiver, gift cards, etc.). Look for ways to make the survey stand out (customized subject line or salutation in email, colorful sticker on an envelope, etc.). Ready, set, send.

You're now ready to send the survey. Indicate a return date, but don't feel you have to live by your own rules. If responses are slow in coming in, extend the deadline and let members know there's still time to respond. Stress the confidentiality of individual responses and that information will be reported only in an aggregated format. Provide a contact number for any questions.

If the survey pertains to satisfaction with services, consider including an open-ended comment section. Open-ended questions can provide valuable information and insight into other survey responses. Include an *optional* place to provide a name and email or phone. In doing so, you should commit to following up on specific comments/concerns. After you survey.

Now that you have the results, what are you going to do with them? By answering the “why” questions on the front end, you should have ready answers to the “what” question.

- 1.) Send a follow-up communication to members. You can simply report that the survey is now closed and thank them for their

feedback, but consider reporting select findings, e.g., “Following are the five most important business issues identified by Chamber members.” Communicate specific actions you will be pursuing as a result of survey findings. It may not be feasible to do so right away, but you can communicate future plans.

- 2.) Avoid temptation to group response categories in your analysis. “Very satisfied” and “Satisfied” are not the same. In fact, “satisfied” members may be your biggest at-risk group for potential defection.
- 3.) Don't write off “dissatisfied” members. Members who respond they are “Very dissatisfied” represent *engaged* members; they have strong opinions, and perceptions can be changed. “Neutral” members can be your biggest problem, as they often represent apathy and a general lack of engagement in the Chamber.
- 4.) Repeat the survey annually and benchmark progress on “Very satisfied” responses at they pertain to your goals.
- 5.) Take action based on survey findings. Set new policies, launch new products, throw out products that few are using. Don't over-react to any single comment or small number of poor rankings (you will never make everyone happy); rather, assess major trends, particularly those associated with your most important members, and take steps in response. Be sure your staff—from the receptionist to senior managers—is aware

of key findings and subsequent actions so they can validate those actions in day-to-day interactions with members.

- 6.) Report follow-up actions. Letting members know how you're responding to the survey (and why) may be the most important thing you do! By communicating this information you are telling members what they think matters and that you are listening. This is a very powerful value proposition for Chambers and can impact member recruitment and retention.

In today's tight economy, many organizations are re-examining their role to determine the most important ways to support members and to make choices regarding the best use of limited resources. A member survey is a key element in this process. Make the most of your member survey by having a clear understanding of why you're conducting a survey, and a subsequent plan to take action based on survey results.

Melynn Sight is a communications consultant with 25 years of marketing and sales experience in the areas of customer acquisition and retention. She works with local, state, and national associations in many industries and Chambers across the country on projects that help to strengthen the connection between associations and their members. Value Proposition is just one of many. Learn more at nSight-Marketing.com or contact Melynn to discuss how nSight Marketing can assist your Chamber in developing your unique value proposition.

Board Members: Who Are These People?

David K. Aaker, IOM
Contributing Writer

Having worked with two Chambers in 20 years, the recognition of board members has always been a neglected point of value. Years ago- January 1, 1995, to be specific- was my first day at the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce. The current Board was in the sixth month of their term, as June 1 is their New Year. I had made a special effort to personally meet with each current board member as I started my first week. With hundreds of calls each day, a few of them were from board members, and the staff would often forward board member calls to me at their request. I heard more often than not that the board member was not certain the staff member knew he or she was a board member until they informed them. I listened to those repeated comments and made a startling discovery with the staff at that time.

Staff development and edification is an ongoing process for staff and the CEO.

What occurred as a result of this “lack of recognition” turned out to be a great opportunity for one of my best... “Chamber Lessons Learned.”

So after the second week, I called each staff member together at the front desk before we opened up one morning, and slapped a \$20 bill on the front counter. I announced that someone here is going to earn this \$20 bill in less than five minutes. I invited all 11 to get a pencil and paper, and who ever could

name the highest number of the 27 current board members, just pick up the \$20 and enjoy it.

With a five minute time limit up, and pencils down, the highest number of correct, current board members that any staff member could recall was sixteen.

The winner took the \$20 bill, and we had an enlightened conversation among all of us, about how we could name all 27 if we did this exercise again.

From this quick and profitable exercise, the following idea was born.

I put the staff in teams of three and invited them, with the board members' permission, to visit each board member in his or her place of business for a half hour, tour the facilities, and get an explanation of that board member's position and responsibility in their company or business. I included myself in a team of three, and we had three tours a week until all board members had a personal visit from the staff.

This was presented as a bonus, treat, and special opportunity for the staff and myself to also understand what Board Members are leaving behind for those few hours a week when they attend board meetings, committee meetings, and ribbon cuttings; when they are not at work making a living.

This was a huge success for the staff, for myself and for our board members, and it did not take long to get around town that the board members were now looking forward to calling the Chamber office, interacting with the staff, and realizing that

we all have one common thread: building a better Chamber, organization, and community.

After a month, it was apparent that the value was increasing as board members joined events, ribbon cuttings, etc, and the staff recognized the board members and the board members recognized the staff members, both interacting with each other with a common thread of interest and passion for the Chamber.

I heard about this for many months, and I found this was the Best \$20 I spent in 20 years of Chamber Management.

Footnote is that after 10 years, most of the staff stayed on the team, and we often had a bit of a chuckle about this learning exercise every time we got a new staff person or intern that joined the team.

Bottom line is that board members and Staff members deserve to know, and can benefit from knowing, each other, their business, their responsibilities, and how we all need each other as we build our organizations.

After a 20 year Successful Chamber Management career, Aaker & Associates was put in full motion in 2004. A Nationally known Speaker, Trainer and Author on Customer Service, David offers his seminars as serious fundraisers for Chambers and Associations nationwide. He was recently named “Among America's Best Speakers” by Sky Radio and featured on 42,000 flights worldwide in 2009. David is available for Keynote and Breakout programs for your local, regional and state conferences David can be found at www.davidkaaker.com, and invites your personal call at 760-323-4600.

How To Be A Great Member



Patrick H. McGaughey CPF, IOM
Contributing Writer

The first step in being a great member of your Chamber of Commerce, or any organization for that matter, is to know what you expect from them. If you are like me, you don't really have a definitive expectation. Sure, we want more business to walk through our doors and we want the community to have a strong economy; but seldom have we taken the time to be specific in what we expect for our annual membership payment.

To help find our expectations, we need to look within the mission of any Chamber of Commerce. Usually, it says the mission is “to serve, protect, and promote our members.” It is much easier to find our expectations by understanding the Chamber as an information center, an issue center, and a marketing center for its members.

If you want to be a great member, start by taking a few moments and listing what information and data is important to your annual budgeting and planning process. We should expect updated demo-

graphics and trends from our Chamber of Commerce as a working tool for our businesses. If we actually start using the information provided by the Chamber of Commerce, the odds are that we will tell others and they, too, will utilize the information. Implementing the tools an organization offers is being a great member.

Next, identify the issues and regulations that are the key roadblocks for your business. Are they local or state issues? Are there regulations you hate but don't know how to fight? If you can identify them and let the Chamber of Commerce know, it's the first step for the organization to start prioritizing the issues they face. The public affairs committee is only guessing what's important to us until we take a moment to call or email with our input. Listing your issues is being a great member.

The third step in being a great member is the first lesson taught to newly elected board members: show up. 80% of a board member's job is simply showing up. If we truly expect to increase business and acquire new customers through our membership, we (or a representative) have to show up at the various events and programs to make that happen. Showing up is being a great member. If the programs and events offered don't interest you, take a moment and call the Chamber of Commerce Executive directly and let them know. That's being an even greater member. The truth helps as much as it may hurt.

Telling the truth here isn't complaining; it's allowing the

organization to stop assuming. Great members take the time to call and recommend what would be more useful to them. We don't want the Chamber of Commerce making assumptions about what we want, but they HAVE to assume what we want until we tell them.

Be a great member by knowing what you expect and being sure the Chamber of Commerce knows as well. It doesn't work if you keep it a secret. Imagine what would happen at the next planning session if you and every other member took the time to share their true expectations of the Chamber of Commerce.

Patrick H. McGaughey, CPF, IOM is an international business speaker and consultant to Chambers of Commerce and industry associations. He received his CPF designation as a certified professional facilitator from the International Association of Facilitators. Pat has been a regular faculty member for the United States Chamber of Commerce Institute for Organization Management since 2000 and he regularly receives the highest possible classroom evaluations for content and presentation. For more, go to www.ChamberMentor.com or email pat@chambermentor.com.

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Do You Use Member Intelligence?



Cathi Hight
Contributing Writer

Let's start first with understanding business intelligence, or BI. What is BI? According to Wikipedia, it's "a broad category of applications and technologies for gathering, providing access to, and analyzing data for the purpose of helping enterprise users make better business decisions." The ultimate objective of business intelligence is to provide timeliness and quality of information. Timely and good quality information provides organizations with a crystal ball, key insights, and an indication of what may be the best course to take.

In our world, "membership intelligence" refers to a set of tools, technology, and insights to manage our relationships with members by:

- Understanding our changing member base
- Studying past and current member engagement patterns
- Analyzing member behaviors and recognizing how members' interest/needs change over time
- Leveraging our knowledge to influence member loyalty
- Anticipating new services/benefits to align with members' evolving needs

In this very competitive, fast-paced, and always-changing business environment, the only thing that will help member-based organizations remain relevant is how quickly they respond to members' needs and adapt to change. So, How Do We Gain Member Intelligence?

First, it's important to understand the relationship of data to member intelligence. Collecting data and generating information is what most organizations already do—some better than others. Developing knowledge and gaining member intelligence is what most organizations fail to do—this is the real magic behind the hard core data that your membership management software could provide. The outcomes are the best tools for helping you to increase revenue and retention.

- Member Intelligence (Insights and projections)
- Knowledge (Identify patterns between variables)
- Information (Summary of data and statistics)
- Data (Individual member fields and transactions)

Steps to Gaining Member Intelligence:

1. Start by collecting clean and consistent data.
 - Use common database fields such as size of organization, industry sector, zip code, year joined, dues level
 - Consider adding other fields to learn more about members such as reason for joining (renewing), referral source for acquisition, length of time in business, participation/engagement activities
2. Generate information by running reports that create summaries of data. Segment the data by

member groups to learn what they have in common and what's specifically unique about them.

3. Develop knowledge by discovering patterns between different variables. Explore what may be driving these patterns and watch for developing trends.
4. Gain member intelligence by making assumptions about what you know, exploring cause and effect relationships, anticipating members' needs, and proactively creating results to meet your goals. Ask questions such as:
 - Who are our best or ideal members and why?
 - Which members are the most-at-risk and what do they have in common?
 - Whose engagement level has dropped and more likely to drop?
 - Whose engagement level has increased and likely to be interested in new opportunities?
 - Who needs to be contacted/re-engaged immediately to enhance retention rates?
 - Who wants to participate, but may need encouragement?
 - Who is most likely to be interested in a new affinity program?
 - Who would likely sponsor a hole at the upcoming golf tournament?

Strategies for Practicing Member Intelligence

Doing the right things consistently will make this undertaking successful. These strategies are worth considering if you want to take advantage of all that membership intelligence offers:

- Commit to honoring a data-culture; data is king and without good data, MI is impossible
- Identify what you want to know on a regular basis; determine what's important to track
- Integrate all data points and push toward full compatibility; funnel all information to a central source (e.g., financials, database content, member engagement, e-communication between staff and members)
- Enter data on a consistent basis; emphasize that all staff enter content into the database
- Develop fields and reports for analyzing data; customize fields and reports to produce relevant results
- Clean up existing data in the member base; invest time to maintain quality data
- Populate all pertinent fields; use consistently the fields that matter the most
- Set up streamlined procedures to save time and eliminate duplication of data entry; make the process easy for staff to use and eliminate rework
- Train staff to use new systems and procedures; train all users to be proficient
- Run reports, analyze results, and refine processes; Test outcomes and make it work for you
- Develop dashboards to review what you want to know, when you want to know it; channel information from different sources to create charts that pop up on your computer screen and save time running reports or asking others for information

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Penny Maynard, IOM
Contributing Writer

When your membership consists of smaller businesses and start-ups facing challenging economic times, increasing dues is, of course, not desirable. On the other hand, cutting expenses, and in turn reducing member services, isn't practical or advised either. In this scenario, increasing the non-dues revenue stream is the way to go. These recession-proof options exist; you just have to know where to look, or how to see something potentially big in what you already do. Here's an example that's worked for me.

I came to the position of Chief Executive of a financially struggling Chamber with five months of operating income remaining. We could not raise dues because the membership was primarily comprised of businesses with less than 50 employees, most in the 5-20 range. There were resorts in the area, but the word "tourism" was not considered resident-friendly in this newly formed city, and couldn't be used as a branding or marketing element to grow the economy.

Chambers Of Commerce: Exciting Like Batman

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

Do you know why Charles Lindbergh's plane was called *The Spirit of Saint Louis*? Because the Saint Louis Chamber of Commerce helped pay for his history-making flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

How did the Miss America Pageant come to be? One guess... yep. The Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce got that started.

Having heard these little tidbits at some point, perhaps on a radio program or at a bar trivia night, I grew curious about what other wild and crazy things I take for granted might have been the brainchildren of Chambers of Commerce. It didn't take long for an article to pop up in my browser that confirmed not only the above assertions, but also offered other enlightening information. As it turns out, the Chicago Association of Commerce contributed



Charles Lindbergh Credit: SDASM Archives

Recession Proof Non-Dues Income



Penny Maynard, IOM
Contributing Writer

When your membership consists of smaller businesses and start-ups facing challenging economic times, increasing dues is, of course, not desirable. On the other hand, cutting expenses, and in turn reducing member services, isn't practical or advised either. In this scenario, increasing the non-dues revenue stream is the way to go. These recession-proof options exist; you just have to know where to look, or how to see something potentially big in what you already do. Here's an example that's worked for me.

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to the demise of Al Capone's shady career. It's true; look it up. And it was the president of the White Lake-Bethel, New York Chamber of Commerce who got the permit for Woodstock. Without that Chamber of Commerce, the Woodstock Art & Music Festival never would have happened. And the imprints of *Summer of Love* would be forever changed our cultural memory. There are a lot of recovering hippies out there probably seeking to join their local Chambers in thanks of that glorious realization.

The point? Chambers of Commerce are much more exciting than people realize; we only need to look at a bit of history to demonstrate that. And they are still exciting; that fiery zest is not just in the past. It is the present. The now. Ahora. Let us not become stagnant creatures of habit. Let us rise to the Chamber occasion.

The first Chamber of Commerce started in Marseille, France in 1599. The world's first English speaking Chamber was in New York City in 1768. The first time a Chamber of Commerce helped take down the world's most notorious gangster was in 1931. It is not in the scope of most Chambers to go around catching notorious criminals. But why not find our own answer to the Miss America Pageant? Not necessarily a annual, nationally tele-

vised, sexist segment featuring girls in bikinis, but something that makes people stop and take notice. Something that brings the community together. Something that says, "Hey community! We are your Chamber of Commerce. We support local business, and we are awesome!"

I wonder which Chamber will be the first to use a Social Impact Bond in the United States? Or which will be the first Chamber of Commerce in a town with a zero percent unemployment rate? How do we stay exciting and how do we continue to inspire each other? How do we show our coolness to the public? How do we enlighten those around us to want to join? We need to start some campaigns to get ourselves out there. We are cool. We are no government conglomerate. We are not political pawns. Chambers of Commerce have an honorable mission. We do not want to go stale in the changing tides of time and culture. We must always find a way to think fresh, enliven the community, keep our local businesses and economy in the forefront of the community psyche. We must bring in new, young, zesty, fresh minded spirits while operating under the guidance and knowledge of the experienced, seasoned generations of business minds.

Many Chambers of Commerce have a Young Professionals group or committee; revenue for the Chamber. During my eleven year tenure, it rose from \$35,000 to \$150,000.

Factors to consider:

Security had always been a safety concern, and was also necessary to ensure that only registered participants were on the course. I learned the term "bandits" early on: those people who jump in after the start to avoid payment to register. We were fortunate to have Marines at the initial leg of the run which kept "bandit" participation to a minimum. These Marines also awarded the Finisher's Medals for the Kids Runs. Having their participation served a purpose in maintaining order, but also brought a sense of security to the event that, with it, created a sense of community. In the current climate, and for larger events, meetings with representatives from your local law enforcement, Homeland Security, and FBI might be advisable.

Also, there's always the issue of liability. Whether the event is USA Track & Field Sanctioned, professionally-timed, or a local start up Fun Run, liability insurance is a must. This coverage can be added to your General Liability policy or events policy.

A few things about runners: Weather, cold or rain, can sometimes be a factor, but not necessarily a deterrent. Exceptions may be hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis. While you have no control over their occurrence, you can get insurance to address these concerns. I have learned that most runners run, no matter what, and the number of events makes almost no difference. Similar



Batman & Robin Public Domain

that's a good start. But what are those groups doing? Existing in name alone will not draw in new business owners, nor will it make your Chamber more visible to the community at large. Perhaps your foodie city needs a food fair. Or maybe hosting a Chamber of Commerce members-only hiring job fair might be the ticket to bringing in more people. You probably don't have the funds to support the next Charles Lindbergh. And even if you did, there isn't going to be another Charles Lindbergh. And really, even if there was, how many new and revitalized members for the Chambers of Commerce did they really get out of naming the plane after their city? I imagine not too many.

But look to these historical inspirations to help think outside the box. Think new. Think fresh. Think community. Be exciting. Because Chambers of Commerce are way cooler than people realize.

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runs around your event will not impact the number of registrations. Runners run on a Sunday, then again the following Saturday, and again on the holiday (as in the case of our event)—when-ever the opportunity is there, they make time to participate. It's the runners' culture. A family member of ours runs whether an event is large or small; she'll drive miles to reach it, and schedules her weekends around favored run opportunities. The fact that during the recent recession, run/race registrations were up nationally, illustrates the addictive nature of this exercise and the concept that if you plan it, the runners will come.

What I've learned over an eleven year period has afforded me the expertise to advise organizations looking to start events such as these. I can evaluate quickly and easily whether the requirements exist within your organization to consider such an event, and if they are not all there, there's no loss of investment. Do it, you've got nothing to lose!

After a 22 year career as a Chamber Executive professional and a graduate of the US Chamber Institute program, Penny now provides, through Chamber 911, consulting services as a transitional executive and financial turnaround specialist for your Chamber, association, or organization. Contact Penny by email at pdanabeach@sbcglobal.net or via her personal cell at 949-370-6520.

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Princeton-Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce:

- Princeton, KY



Pictured: Heidi Boyd, Owner of Capitol Cinemas & Shea Hughes, Exec. Dir. of Princeton-Caldwell County COC Credit: Stacey Menser, Times-Leader

Patrick McCabe
Editor

What makes a community great? The people, yes; the local businesses; the care and passion of community organizations...but what about the smell of fresh baked cookies? If you're lucky enough to be a part of the Princeton, Kentucky community, you are quite familiar with the sweet smells

wafting through the streets. Princeton, KY is home to the Princeton-Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce. One of the Chambers largest members, and one of the area's largest employers, is Bremner Foods Ltd. Part of the Ralcorp Food Group, Bremner produces millions of pounds of cereal, cookies, and crackers every year. Bremner is incredibly valuable as a job-maker

Chamber covers agriculture, retail, industry, and recreation." Hughes has been the Executive Director of the Chamber since August 2012, but the Chamber has roots in the community since 1957. When she started last year, Hughes was surprised by the perception of her Chamber among local businesses. They kept asking, "What does the Chamber need?" Nearly at the end of her

first year, her goal has been to switch that question to "What can the Chamber do to help you?" She and the board are bringing value back to what it means to be a Chamber member, inspiring business owners to seek out membership for its value, not just because "this is what I'm supposed to do."

Hughes focuses her energy on marketing her members, helping members work together, and creating opportunities for members to achieve their own business goals. Her efforts are working. The Chamber has gained four to five new members in each of the last few months, a great addition to a Chamber with a membership around 200.

The Chamber recently teamed up with local newspaper, *The Times-Leader*, to put their member directory in the *Princeton Area Guide*. This publication has a circulation of 15,000, and is sent to those looking to move to the Princeton, KY area. This is an additional free service offered to Chamber members- another way to get their name out to new customers.

Members are offered a monthly Lunch & Learn seminar, a networking and continuing education program to help members connect with one another as well as learn new techniques to market and improve their business. A recent event focused on "What is a brand? What does it matter?" This particular lesson helped members learn that branding isn't just about having a logo, but having a complete strategy to put themselves in the correct light for consumers.

Other major events for the Chamber include Holiday Open House and Moonlight Madness. These are community-wide promotional events that see Chamber members offering customers great deals on their goods and services. Because so many members get in on the event, the Chamber is able to get great deals on advertisements from local newspapers, radio stations, and more.

But not everything is straight forward and easy for the Chamber. One of the biggest challenges facing the Chamber is the possible extinction of one of their members: Capitol Cinemas. Like many small movie theaters across the country, Capitol Cinemas is facing a dire dilemma: either switch to digital technology (at a price tag of \$200,000) or close their doors forever.

We may take for granted the ease and convenience of going to see the newest movies every weekend, but movie theaters are a massive money-maker for communities. It's the #1 entertainment choice for families, drawing more people than all theme parks and sporting events combined. Did you know that 48% of movie goers visit a restaurant either immediately before or after they see a film? And did you know that 17% of movie goers reported going to a retail store either immediately before or after seeing a film?

Not just that, but Capitol Cinemas is a one-of-a-kind theater in Kentucky. It's the only restored downtown theater in the state that shows first-run films on five screens or less. It's a community staple that will be

sadly and sorely missed should they not meet their goal. With the help of the Chamber, they hope to meet this goal soon.

The Princeton-Caldwell County Chamber may work closely with local businesses, but it's the future of the entire community that is on its mind.

Picnic in the Park, an event held this past May, is a fundraiser to help the Chamber Scholarship. The Chamber Scholarship is awarded to several seniors at Caldwell County High School. Picnic in the Park brings together local restaurants, who donate food, and invites the whole community for a BBQ in the park. This year, the Chamber has raised \$1200 that will go towards fifteen scholarships: \$500 awarded to one student based on an application and essay, and fourteen \$50 awards given to students who excelled on the Kentucky Occupational Skills Standard Assessment (KOSSA) for business and marketing.

In between all of the fundraising, marketing awareness, and business-saving, what does Shea Hughes' best day as a Chamber Exec look like? "Not in my office but out talking and working with our members. I love to go into the shops and find out what is working, what needs working, and help come up with solutions. Some days, the perfect day is just taking one of Mrs. McLovet's custom cupcakes to show appreciation."

From the scent in the air to the treats in the window, life is sweet at the Princeton-Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce. www.princetonkychamber.org

Kingman Area Chamber of Commerce

- Kingman, KS

Patrick McCabe
Editor

"One of the things I've been known to say is Rock 'N' Roll, because that's what we do." - Wanda Kelsey, Executive Director Kingman Area Chamber of Commerce

With a dedication to growth, a commitment to member reach, and a true resilience in character, Kingman Area Chamber of Commerce in Kingman, KS has proudly served their members for nearly 75 years. Being a small Chamber in a small town has brought many challenges to the decision makers at the Kingman Area Chamber. From low member turn-out to a smaller than necessary workforce, the folks at the Kingman Area Chamber have done a tremendous job of offering value to their members year in and out.

I spoke with Wanda Kelsey, who has been the Executive Director of the Kingman Area Chamber of Commerce since November 2007. In that time, the membership of their Chamber has doubled. Because they are the Kingman Area Chamber, their members aren't just from Kingman City, but the entire county as well. They even get members from other communities like Wichita and Pratt. Now at 143 members strong, the Kingman Area Chamber is looking to take advantage of the many affordable marketing opportunities available to them through the ease of new technology. When I asked Wanda what

they had to offer current and potential members, the answer was easy. "We do a great job of promoting our members," she said. "We do a weekly e-blast, we do a monthly newsletter, we have a website, we post on Facebook, and we just started a Twitter account. Our Facebook followings in the last few weeks have exceed 1,500 hits in one week, and I think that's pretty phenomenal. That's a lot of people following us, and we're hoping that our Twitter account grows just as quickly."

"I think that's the biggest thing we have going for us, promotion. We enable our members to input in our e-blast each week and our newsletter. I generally put out a newsletter that's ten pages or more each month, and my goal is to fill that with member information, whether it be a sale they're having or employee growth that they've had. And we also use our newsletter to educate our members. For instance, tomorrow we're having two sessions through the Kansas Small Business Development Center. We're offering 'New Products for New Customers,' and the 2nd session is 'Low and No-Cost Marketing.'"

Because they are a small Chamber, a lot of their membership consists of small local businesses, but that's not entirely the case. Two of the largest employers in the area, and two of their largest members, are Kingman Community Hospital and Fab Pro. Often, many Chambers will have different levels of membership depending on size or employment of their members, but not Kingman. Every member is offered the same products and services as any other. "Everyone gets the same representation, we don't have

levels. I tell new members that they will get out of the Chamber what they're willing to put in. Be it through volunteerism or participating in the newsletter or the e-blasts...it takes active participation, because the opportunities are certainly there."

What opportunities? For one, networking. Chamber members host business after-hours and morning "percolator" meetings. These meetings are a chance for members to show off their businesses, invite other members and community residents by for a meet and greet, and show them why they should work with their business. There are also two annual Arts & Crafts Festivals each year; members are invited to start a booth and reach the community that way.

But the biggest event of the year is the Lighted Christmas Parade. Celebrating their 20th Anniversary in 2013, the Lighted Christmas Parade draws a crowd of 3,000 in a town of 3,500 people. This is a major event for the Chamber that al-

lows them to show the community how they're branding the Chamber and moving forward.

One of the biggest problems facing their Chamber is a pretty common story these days. With the rough economy, many members are finding it difficult to afford their dues to remain a member of the Chamber. The Kingman Area Chamber has started offering payment plans to help their members. The Chamber is willing to work with members because the promotional services offered by the Chamber are just too valuable for these businesses who really need new customers.

It's also a lack of a work force driving these local businesses further down. They have more open jobs than they do unemployed workers. Many residents from larger areas like Wichita have been coming to Kingman in order to find steady work.

One goal of the Chamber is to continue working with other organizations in the community in order to improve

Kingman for everyone. "Right now we're doing strategic planning. We've invited our City and County Commissioners and some of the major retail manufacturers in town, representatives from there, the high school, the hospital, and we are strategically planning for the future of Kingman and Kingman County. And that's been a great jam session to talk about what's wrong with the area, what's right, and where we're headed."

"We wanted to be able to identify...What are the real characteristics of our area? In other words, if you were to say to me 'What's Kingman known for?' Used to be we were the Catfish Capital of Kansas. So we're working right now to identify, 'Who are we?' We anticipate that will be at least a year long session and an ongoing thing. I think that might be a little different for Chambers to take the lead in that. We've invited Mayors from the other surrounding communities in Kingman County to attend as well. We're

trying to give everybody a chance to give some feedback."

Between working with City and County officials and handling the re-branding of her entire area, when does Ms. Kelsey have time to connect with her members? Well, when I asked her what her best day as a Chamber Exec looked like, the answer came fast.

"We have a lot of foot traffic...members, visitors, new business. I think my best days, if I sit here and all I'm able to do is sit with people and talk, that's a great day for me. And if it results in a new member, that's even better."

When I expressed surprise at how busy she was, how she was able to handle Chamber business on all fronts, and still find time to talk to everyone who comes through her door, I asked her how she did it all and her answer was simple: "Rock 'N' Roll."

For more information, visit www.kingmanchamber.org



Welcome to Kingman, Kansas!

Credit: Kingman COC

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Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce

– Naples, FL

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

When the area that is now Naples, Florida was first populated with European descendants, articles boasted that the mild climate and ample fishing and gaming were reminiscent of the Italian peninsula. Founded in the late 1880s, early promoters of the area described it as "surpassing the bay in Naples, Italy" and from there, the name stuck.

Almost a century and a half later, Naples is now "the crown jewel of Southwest Florida." With its charming, sophisticated, beautiful beaches along the Gulf of Mexico, Naples is home to world class dining, shopping, hotels, and resorts, as well as a plethora of golf courses. The people are friendly, the air is temperate, and the ocean water is warm. Between the elegant architecture and exquisite neighborhoods, Naples is the ideal place to raise a family or visit for vacation. Very near to the famous Florida everglades, Naples is also a popular jumping off point to visit the other wonders that Florida offers.

Helping to enhance the thriving Naples economy is the



Naples, FL Dock

bers and the community. Their website details everything from CEO Executive workshops for professionals, to Alternative Financing Methods Panels, to Summer Jazz on the Golf at Naples Beach Club Hotel. And of course, it would not be a truly community-centered website without presenting all necessary information about the 4th of July parade and fireworks show.

The Chamber maintains over an 80% retention rate among its members, demonstrating the value and benefits to membership by local business owners. Its mission is to "make Collier County the best place in America to live, work, and visit by promoting a quality of life which attracts the country's next generation of talent." Membership of the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce currently represents more than 50,000 employees in the area, spread out over more than 1,800 member companies. As part of the Chamber of Commerce, those companies now are in a network with contacts and decision makers that drive the Naples business community and together they lobby on behalf of the current and pressing business issues facing them.

well-respected Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's website reads, "The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce is the largest of 25 Chambers in the five county Southwest Florida region, recognized as among the best of the 300 Chambers in Florida." The Greater Naples Chamber's primary purpose is "to foster business advancement and advocate effective government policy to ensure a healthy business climate." The Chamber works to accomplish this goal using a five-platform overview that includes member services, public policy, public communications, leadership development, and The Partnership for Collier Future Economy.

The Leadership Collier Foundation (LCF) operates in partnership with the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, working towards its goal of educating business leaders on the "societal and economic challenges facing the community today through the programs it governs. The mission of the LCF is to build a broad-based network of community leaders who enhance their leadership abilities and skills through continuing education, shared perspectives, and community involvement in order to enable them to work toward solutions in the public interest."

The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce offers diverse panels and events for its mem-

In addition to the direct help to local businesses, the Naples Chamber also manages the Visitor Information Center. The Naples Visitor Information Center is run by a staff of more than 90 volunteers. Through seven different locations throughout the city, the Naples Visitor Information Center receives more than 70,000 guests annually, both foreign tourists and domestic visitors. There, one can find information about all the focal points of Naples such as shopping in the historic downtown area, home to art galleries, home décor boutiques, and clothing stores, as well as a plethora of restaurants, cafes, and bars with a view of the beautiful beach side. Due to its proximity to the Everglades, Naples is also popular among ecotourists. The economy of Naples is based largely on tourism, so it is a natural partnership for the Chamber of Commerce to have oversight of the Visitor Information Centers.

The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce networking opportunities, business advocacy efforts, professional development opportunities, and targeted advertising campaigns are top notch examples of what Chambers of Commerce can accomplish for their members and their communities.

For more information on the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, visit their website at www.napleschamber.org.

Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce

– Providence, RI



Providence, RI

Patrick McCabe
Editor

A community of abundance, academic prowess, and growth: Providence, Rhode Island has much to offer local business owners. At the center of that environment is the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce. Founded in 1868, and now with over 1500 members, the Greater Providence COC works to help local businesses on a two-fold platform. From their website: "Primarily, we are there to be your advocate and your watchdog on policy issues ranging from taxes and health care to the fire code and labor regulations. In addition, we provide direct member services and specialized problem solving to small and medium-size businesses."

First, let's talk about those member services. There are countless ways for members to get involved with the Chamber. Whether you're looking to promote yourself, help other members increase their business, or take action in the community, the Chamber has a place for members to accomplish their goals.

Every member receives free promotion from the Chamber, just for being a member. These online platforms provide members the space to get their latest news out in the places where potential customers are going to look. The Chamber's website and social media networks host these opportunities for members.

Members are encouraged to share news and events with the Chamber. They're always posting announcements about recent product developments, awards, ribbon-cuttings, and more. But it's not just their website. The Greater Providence COC loves connecting with members through social media. With Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts, the Chamber has multiple avenues for members to share their updates. The Chamber's website also hosts a member directory as well as a restaurant directory for those visiting the area.

A unique aspect of their member promotion is *The Inside Track*. Designed to be a vehicle for relating lessons and success stories to other members, *The Inside Track* is a presentation forum where members display 20 images that help tell their business' story, and how their products and services address needs in the marketplace. With a discussion led by members accompanying each presentation, *The Inside Track* is incredibly valuable to those looking to succeed in the Rhode Island business environment.

For additional fees, the Chamber's marketing and pro-

motional tools really kick it up a notch. With their B2B website you have access to a qualified e-mail list of over 6,000 Southern New England business professionals, as well as all the social media and interactive tools you need to stand out. "Advertorial" pages allow you to tell the complete story of your business. With one month of exposure on the Chamber's home page, your business is front and center. You also get editorial support, and free links to your article!

For more affordable additional promotions, especially helpful to small business owners, the Chamber offers "Did You Know?" ads. Your logo, a short line of copy, and a hyperlink to your website create a quick little ad for website viewers to find out more about your services. Other options are additional listings in the member directory, email event advertising, and targeted email blasts. Whatever your budget, the Chamber offers solutions to increase your brand's reach.

However, advertising isn't the only way members can get involved with the Greater Providence COC. As was mentioned, the Chamber's first priority is advocacy on behalf of their members. These Chamber programs not only assist members, but also give members a chance to help.

Those looking to get involved with what's happening at the Chamber can volunteer to be an Ambassador. The Chamber Ambassadors work as a liaison between the Chamber board and staff and their members. They encourage members to participate in Chamber programs and events, and encourage other businesses to become members of the Chamber.

Those looking to volunteer in a capacity more directly related to the well-being of the Providence community should look no further than the Chamber Committees. Depending on your interests, there are several to choose from: Transportation, Government Affairs, Municipal Affairs, Federal Affairs, and the IPIC Committee.

These are just a couple examples of how the Greater Providence COC is truly a voice for their members. Helping small and mid-size businesses expand their customer base; advocating for members to oppose a \$165 million expansion of Rhode Island sales tax; engaging local business and government leaders in real discussions for local improvement; these are all reasons why the Greater Providence COC is vital to their community. For the good of your business, for the good of your city, get involved.

To learn more about this Chamber and their services, visit www.providencechamber.com.

Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce – Sioux Falls, SD

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

Sioux Falls boasts a per-capita crime rate that is half of our nation's average as well as a growing economy that has thrived its way into the list of top ten cities in the United States. Chair of the Board of the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce Rob Oliver stated on their website, "Our economy continues to be recognized: For the second straight year, Sioux Falls was among the top Ten Strongest Metro Areas, according to policom.com. Sioux Falls is the smallest city on the list, keeping company with cities like Austin, TX; Madison, WI; and Nashville, TN. The research backs up what we already know here in Sioux Falls; our economy is robust and has created consistent economic growth despite national trends."

With its growing notoriety, CNN has listed Sioux Falls as one of the Top 100 Best Places to Live and Launch. South Dakota residents pay one of the lowest tax rates in the country, with just under 6% sales tax, no personal income tax, no state corporate tax, no personal property or inheritance tax. The low tax rate is part of the appeal for the new trend in business relocation to the state. With business relocations, a bustling economy, and thus an influx of white collar jobs, Sioux Falls has been enjoying a Cultural Revolution and explosion of art in the region. The popularity of literary events is on the rise, bringing in many new community festivals and activities, most notably of which might be the Sioux Falls Jazz and Blues Festival, bringing in musicians and visitors to the area for three days every year.

This is all good news for the community at large and of course, for the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce who hosts annual Ambassador's membership drives. The Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce is enjoying growing popularity right along with the city's expanding economy. As the strongest business advocacy group in the region, membership offers many benefits for businesses, both old and new. The Sioux Falls Chamber mission statement is, "As the leading Sioux Falls area business advocate we represent our members by advancing and promoting the economic health and quality of life of the region."

Over 90 percent of Sioux Falls residents responding to a recent survey ranked the quality of life there as good or excellent. The Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce offers ample opportunities to get involved within the community, and continues to harness the

improvement of Sioux Falls quality of life. Upcoming community events are prevalent on the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce website, and those events seem to be the epitome of what any American would want from their community vibe. For one, Sioux Falls has a SculptureWalk, a year-round exhibit of sculptures displayed throughout its downtown. Each sculpture is exhibited for a year, voted on by the citizens, and one is chosen for an award. And for the whole family, there is Seuss Falls (you read that right). Sioux Falls' very own Washington Pavilion is transformed into Seuss Falls "with Dr. Seuss' artwork, sculptures and artifacts located throughout the Visual Arts Center and Kirby Science Discovery Center." Once a month between April and September, the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce hosts a series of hour long gatherings that together they call Chamber Café. Each program is conducted by Chamber members presenting on their individual areas of expertise. They also have a twice yearly event called Good Morning Sioux Falls; one to discuss the South Dakota Legislative Session and the other to discuss local topical issues such as construction projects. "Sponsored by the Diplomat Committee, Good Morning Sioux Falls is a great way to network with other Chamber members over breakfast." The Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce is not only committed to its businesses and its community at large, they are also extremely committed to Military & Veterans affairs. "The Chamber's Military & Veterans Affairs Committee works with a variety of organizations to promote Veterans activities throughout the year." The Military & Veterans Affairs Committee sponsors Veteran's Day and Armed Forces Day events, and others, throughout the year. "Sioux Falls is proud to be home to four military installations. Each has played an important role in the global war on terrorism and throughout the nation's history."

To learn more about the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce and their membership base, or to learn about the area before traveling there, visit the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce website at www.siouxfallschamber.com.

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Sioux Falls, SD

Credit: Seabear 70 (Wikimedia Commons)

U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce – I Am Woman, That Yield Positive Results

(Continued from Page 1)



Credit: The Library of Congress
Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce has been called the most influential and effective economic force for women in America in what is referred to as the Economic Revolution. "The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce unifies the collective strength of women to leverage our position as the most influential economic force in America... Women have moved from the home to the workforce, home ownership, elected office, and business ownership. By leveraging our collective strength, we are taking the reins to own our future... By taking ownership of our business and financial education and solutions, we put an end to target marketing of women, and are building a sustainable economic foundation that powers the long-term needs of our community and future generations."

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce "puts women in the driver's seat for business, career, and financial growth." The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce works toward its mission on various platforms. One is to collaborate toward change in our legal system to rectify any action preventing female business owners, female employees, and female consumers from being treated differently from their male counterparts. Members of the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce testify before House and Senate committees, they prepare reports for Congress, they educate women about political and legal issues that are barriers to growth. They are a voice.

Another arena in which they strive towards change, the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce works with other organizations to support the advancement of women. They provide education and resources to help women grow their businesses; they hold frequent events free of charge to help women reach the next level of business development. They provide financial planning and retirement solutions. They operate under the belief that "establishing a bold, new women-led economic marketplace that transforms the purchasing power of women to achieve greater opportunities, independence and sustainability for our community... Providing control of our own business and financial solutions bringing choice, independence, trust and sustainability to our community."

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce is an independent organization and has no ties to the government or any outside corporations. They are dedicated entirely to the economic needs of American women. Margot Dorfman, CEO, ex-

plains, "The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce offers countless resources, from advancing The Women-Led Economy to establishing a platform to drive economic progress, The Women's Chamber works specifically to grow your business."

On the U.S. Women's Chamber website there is a link to information on the "Women Led Economy" and there they provide a *Snapshot of the Women's Movement*. It goes something like this: During World War I, with all the men away, the nation's labor needs pushed women into workforce. When the war was over and the men returned, they took their jobs back. But women had started to feel "growing control and ownership of their lives." In 1920, after years of fighting, women won the right to vote.

Then, in the wake of World War II, once again women were driven back into workforce. This time, more women were inspired by these changes to pursue a college education. In the 1960s more women started careers and birth control became widely available. In the 1970's and 1980's, feminism started drawing fire and the fight for equal pay in the workforce took center stage. The 2000's are referred to as the *Women's Ownership Movement*; this is when women widely began leaving their jobs at corporations to start businesses, more women were graduating from college, owned homes, and managed family finances.

Now, in the 2010's we are experiencing what the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce refers to as the *Women-Led Economy*, and it is described as women focusing "their purchasing power to raise the revenues of women business owners enabling women to more strongly shape workplace environments, fair pay, and promotion." Female business ownerships are on the rise and the cries for equal pay are getting even louder. The last 100 years has seen steady movement toward equality, but we are not there yet.

I have heard speculation as to whether or not specialized organizations aimed at benefiting subgroups of people are necessary anymore. Yes, they are. Even though society has improved over the years since women's suffrage, we still have a long way to go as a nation and as a workforce. Creating an environment away from society's bias helps to strengthen the female population as a tool to raise themselves up to the level playing field. And that is what the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce is all about.

To learn more about the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, visit their website at www.uswcc.org.

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can make a significant impact.

Catering to members is a somewhat obvious drive behind Chamber functioning, so paying attention to what members want and need is a way to better the entire organization and build a strong working relationship. Similarly, striving to keep a positive and fulfilled staff will make a significant difference; the integrity of an organization is rooted in its members, so they have to thrive. Chambers of Commerce, in the busy reality of the business world, may forget about the immense value of their young members. Energizing young Chamber members places stock and confidence in the young professional's ability and drive; aiming to inspire young members will likely develop a bond that will keep these professionals close to home and in your business community.

The individual needs of members are valuable, but the needs of members as an entity or group ranks high as well. Implementing educational programs is a low-cost but effective way to engage members, raise practical standards and generate greater revenue in the long-term; a well-educated team knows how to conduct business. Likewise, educational seminars and programs connect the group and open up a forum for input which is another important objective to maintain. Providing the opportunity for staff and Chamber members to provide ideas and input validates membership and will guarantee connection and growth.

Another important objective is keeping your staff and members at the forefront of whatever it is that they want to represent. Bridging the gap between the Chamber and the community is a critical aspect of showcasing how important businesses are not only to the Chamber, but to the local area they are a part of. Digital media sources are the most effective way to showcase a Chamber or business's innovation, modernity, and ability to comprehensively connect. Tools like Search Engine Optimization, social media advertising, and online digital video can enable Chambers and businesses to reach each other, new customers, and the broader community.

Instead of investing in a directory program, where members purchase advertisements hoping to attract new movers that inquire about a Chamber's welcome packet, many Chambers are sponsoring online video programs that allow their members to have video advertisements placed on the Chamber's website. With requests for welcome packets declining, and search engine inquiries only increasing, it's beneficial to make this switch to a medium that your new movers are more comfortable with. It allows them to find you the way they prefer to: online. And not only will they be able to watch videos about your Chamber, your community, and your members, they will already be on your website, able to view your directory should they wish to.

Many Chambers and businesses, particularly those that have existed for a long time, have yet to truly assimilate technological tools into busi-

ness practices. Many of your older members may still prefer your more traditional methods of advertisement, so those practices are still beneficial, but what about attracting new members? Incorporating technology is critical for young business leaders and potential young members to feel integrated; young professionals use technology to accomplish almost every task, business-related and not. Feeding into their comfort zone will only help to attract more members.

There are ways that setting particular goals and objectives can impact not only the internal organization, but the Chamber's surrounding community; striving to develop a connection with the local community and non-chamber member organizations and individuals is important for a variety of reasons. First, non-members are either current or potential customers and users of Chamber members' services; the value of these relationships is exponential and prioritizing their growth should be a fundamental goal. Striving to contribute to civic organizations is another great way to connect the Chamber and the community. Offer non-profits a free booth at your next event; give local emergency response departments a free sponsorship, and encourage event participants to donate. There are many ways to keep the Chamber connected locally. The Chamber's internal and external worth increase when the community recognizes the civic value of an organization. Keeping this goal in mind will inform some of the Chamber's practices and, in turn, yield a better quality of life both the Chamber and community can appreciate.

Finally, using the local region as an asset and a tool can provide benefits for growth. Although Chambers are typically regarded as stand-alone entities, connecting with other local Chambers can have great benefits. For instance, building a regional alliance with local Chambers can enable growth and the potential for collaboration. Combine forces for a county-wide event, and share the entry revenue; or exchange sponsorship titles for each other's major events. It is important for local Chambers to see themselves as partners in a challenging economic climate; aiming to develop contacts with other Chambers can allow for an increased exchange of information, the sharing of beneficial ideas, and further economic growth.

Ultimately, reaching new people and connecting with those already involved are fundamental aspects of what Chambers should strive for. A dual approach is captivating and comprehensive. Establishing an audience both within the organization and externally within the community opens the door for long-lasting Chamber success.

ARE WE MISSING SOMETHING?

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Responding To Tragedy



Boston Marathon Bombings

Credit: Russavia (Wikimedia Commons)

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

Sometimes, in the wake of tragedy, we see people at their best. Citizens frequently come together through the bond of despair and partner to help communities recover from the unimaginable. It is in the throes of horror and pain when we come to realize how much love and caring is also in the world.

The Newtown, Connecticut Chamber of Commerce Facebook page still displays a beautiful and heartfelt letter of condolence from Tim Haas, Newtown Chamber President, urging his community to stay strong and promising that they will overcome. Next to it, I read a condolence letter from the Chamber of Commerce in Aurora, Colorado, home to another recent senseless tragedy. These letters were followed by the unfolding of peaceful events and fundraisers to help enliven the spirit of a shattered town's broken heart.

West, Texas was recently half leveled by a fertilizer plant explosion. The small town of 2800 people, 20 miles from the better-known city of Waco, Texas, had only three ambulances and a volunteer medical team to respond to over 200 wounded. Since the events, West residents have been busy amidst the settling dust of the explosion. As West was dealing hands-on with the response and rebuild, the nearby Greater Hewitt Chamber of Commerce started a web page with information for help available to West residents, numbers to call, and ways to volunteer. Because of the caring and community spirit of this neighboring Chamber of Commerce there was a central place online with information on where to make blood donations, help recovering families, and even where those affected could get free meals.

Chambers exist as parts of communities, in support of communities, and in support of community businesses. It makes sense that Chambers frequently rise to the occasion when tragedy strikes. To show support. To help rebuild. To be a driving force in the spirit of a community and strengthening the community bond. To rise above; to rise above the death and destruction, to rise above violence, to rise above sensationalized media, and be there to help one another.

In April, two bombs exploded near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing 3 people, wounding hundreds, and forever altering the nostalgia and care free spectatorship of one of the world's most popular athletic events. Local Chambers of Commerce rallied in support of Boston, hosting everything from blood drives to clean up efforts. Another area of focus, of

course, was on business recovery. There were many businesses adversely affected by the Boston Marathon bombings. The Greater Boston Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with Boston mayor Tom Menino to establish the Boston Business Assistance Center. The Boston Business Assistance Center was created to provide services to assist the affected businesses so they could reopen their doors as quickly as possible.

The Greater Boston Area Chamber of Commerce, in continuing support of its community business recovery, posted Mayor Menino's announcement on April 24 that parking meters throughout the area of the bombing would be free from that day through the following weekend. Mayor Menino said, "The City encourages all to come back to the area, go to our restaurants, go to our shops and get involved in the recovery effort. Boston is strong and we will support Boston Strong all weekend long." As of that posting, many businesses which had been off limits since the bombing were finally reopening and were happy to be open for their community thanks to the direct support of the City of Boston.

Chambers of Commerce are in a unique and wonderful position to help communities in need. They can help with any aspect; blood drives, fund raising, clean up, rebuilding, or they can focus directly on affected businesses, keeping in line with the primary mission of Chambers. I hope your community never faces a tragedy like those recently filling the headlines and weighing on our hearts. I hope one day to live in a world that is not widely plagued by disaster and tragedy. In the meantime, I am content to live in a world where communities and community organizations partner to help those in need, and I thank each of these aforementioned Chambers of Commerce for helping their communities be great once again.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

WE WANT FEEDBACK FROM YOU!

TIPS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS, COMMENTS?

E-MAIL INFO@CHAMBERREVIEW.ORG AND TELL US HOW YOU FEEL.

OR, CALL AND LEAVE US A MESSAGE AT 1-877-316-4311 TODAY!

Listening...The Forgotten Communication Skill



Kerry Robertson
Contributing Writer

There are many benefits to being an effective listener. It improves communication and consequently decreases tension and stress. It encourages mutual respect, cooperation, support, and teamwork. It's also a powerful confrontation reduction skill that allows real issues to surface. If you master the skill of listening, you have mastered the powerful core of communication, connecting with others, and caring that can literally transform conversations and relationships.

It's important to remember that we all have a deep desire to be acknowledged and validated by others. We need to feel that we are being heard and to know that others care enough to listen to what we have to say. We need to know that our words are valued. Listening validates the other person.

How good of a listener are you? Do you have a tendency to do all of the talking and very little listening? Do you interrupt others before they finish a thought? If you answered yes to these questions, you need to be aware of the negative signals you're sending to other people.

Here are three simple steps that can help you become an effective listener and improve your communication skills. Good listening habits take focus, mental energy, commitment, and practice!

Step #1 STOP

-Stop what you're doing and face the person talking to you. Give the person the gift of your undivided attention.
-Stop what you're thinking about and concentrate. Be attentive. Put your own ideas aside so that you can listen more attentively.
-Minimize any distractions and eliminate listening barriers, such as the phone, loud noises and people walking into your office.

Step #2 LOOK

-Look at the person who is talking to you! Make eye contact. It is the glue of communication and a sign of respect. Eye contact helps you connect and focus on what the other person is saying. This simple courtesy goes a long way towards building and maintaining good relationships.
-Look at facial expressions. Become an observer of what a person's non-verbal signals are telling you about their true feelings and the emotions behind their words.
-Look at a person's entire body language. Again, observe all of the non-verbal cues being sent your way. How is the other person standing, holding their arms and hands? Does their body language tell you they are nervous, confident, worried, impatient, open-minded or defensive? Look and you will learn!

Step #3 LISTEN

-Listen twice as much as you speak and don't interrupt. Zip your lip! Interrupting others while they're talking is a definite sign of poor listening skills and is considered just plain rude and inconsiderate. If you dominate conversations, you may appear to be lecturing or self-centered, controlling, or simply uninterested in what anyone else has to say. Good communication is not a one-way street. It is an exchange of messages and feedback that flows back and forth between people. While listening, be sure to provide non-verbal or verbal feedback to reflect your attentiveness and level of understanding. Feedback can be a simple nod, smile, grunt or groan, or a simple phrase such as "I see" or "I understand." Feedback shows interest and pushes the conversation forward.

-Listen with an open mind (easier said than done) and open body language. Don't judge content while you're listening to others. This is a sure way to miss information that might be valuable to you. Remember that even dull, boring messages can be meaningful. To express interest, lean towards the person who is speaking. To show that you're open-minded, keep your arms open and unfolded.
-Listen between the lines and with all of your senses. Focus totally on the other person's words and underlying messages. Pay attention to the tone of voice being used. It's not always what we say, but how we say it, that expresses our true feelings.

One last thing: It's important to remember that every time you speak or listen to another person, you have the opportunity to either build up or tear down that relationship with the words you choose, your tone of voice, and your actions.

Kerry Robertson is a speaker, trainer and coach specializing in presentation and communication skills and media training. She was recently named one of "Oklahoma's 50 women Making a Difference" for her contribution in training and her 18 year career as a talk show host and news anchor. Kerry is available for keynote presentations, seminars and breakout sessions. For more information, visit her website www.KerryRobertson.com. Your personal call is welcomed, 405-840-1777.

Members Invisible?

(Continued from Page 1)

Commerce can offer pathways and information on how to get started with small business SEO. For example, the Irvine, California Chamber of Commerce hosted a discussion on SEO tips and then posted follow-up tips on their website. The Durham, North Carolina Chamber has a blog on their website aimed entirely at SEO tips. And Chambers all over the nation have hosted internet marketing specialists as guest speakers to whet the marketing appetites of their local businesses.

Most small businesses are not equipped with the technical knowledge and updated marketing savvy to create their own competitive SEO. As a result, Internet marketing companies have seen a large increase of small businesses outsourcing website optimization and SEO.

Many small businesses start off by having friends or family members create their websites. Neufeglise explains that frequently results in "a lot of sites which 'look good on paper,' however they are almost virtually invisible to search engines." That is where SEO outsourcing comes into play.

The evidence suggests that the businesses embracing SEO outsourcing are very happy with the results, as the numbers for return business at internet marketing firms almost always outweigh the number of businesses that do not return. It is important to remember that it takes time to see the benefits of SEO. Since search engines usually update popularity rankings about once every three months, and search engine spiders will not index new sites as frequently as they do older sites, it could take a full year to see the maximum results from your SEO efforts. Neufeglise explains, "The great thing about our product and service though is that we do it the right way, by the book. Which at times can take a little longer, but as most businesses know, a quick fix is not always the right fix."

In addition to SEO, a complete internet marketing package should also embrace web design and web optimization. Almost half of all internet users in the United States today surf the internet using a mobile Internet device, such as a smart phone or tablet. When a website is not optimized, it will not function properly on mobile Internet devices. This forces the consumer to move on to the next website in their search results. That is business lost- business that could have been held by a simple website update. In the same realm, a website that is not attractive or easy to navigate will also frustrate potential customers, compelling them to move on to the next website and the next company. So internet marketing is more than just where your website shows up in the search results. It is also how it looks and how it operates.

Encourage your members to stay on the edge of marketing technology. Their customers will notice, and they'll thank you for it. For more information on NEXT! Ad Agency and their SEO services, contact Bob Neufeglise at 1-877-763-8751 or bobn@nextadagency.com.

Philanthropy, It's What's For Dinner

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

The term *philanthropy* comes from a root meaning "love of humanity." In modern times, it means to drive forth the betterment of the human condition. As human beings, we have the drive to contribute to society's improvement. Organized society presents us with many avenues for doing so.

This past May 14th marked the centennial celebration of the Rockefeller Foundation. For 100 years, the Rockefeller Foundation has been the face of philanthropy, "promoting the well-being of mankind throughout the world." The Rockefeller Foundation has been the primary driver behind the formation of the Red Cross, researching global public health epidemics and vaccines, global agricultural campaigns, and much more. As we turn through the philanthropist pages of time we

come to find two more recent, sparkling, philanthropic superstars in the form of Warren Buffett and Bill Gates. Both of these brilliant, hard-working, generous men donate massive percentages of their income to the greater good. Better still, they encourage other billionaires to do the same. But philanthropy is not just a big name attached to charity, nor is it a fad amongst the über-wealthy. Philanthropy is any action motivated by a desire to do good, be it from your home, religious organization, or business.

Chambers of Commerce exist to support local businesses within their communities. The way I see it, philanthropy is the very best way for Chambers to reach out and connect with their respective cities and towns. Granted, Chambers themselves are nonprofit entities and it is not easy, or ideal, for them to directly donate funds. But there are other ways for Chambers to be charitable. Chambers can create incentives for members who donate to local charities such as a discounted membership or highlighted advertising within Chamber publications. Another option for incentives could be a free low-level sponsorship at a golf tournament or gala. Be creative! Think of something that would drive your members. Good will knocks down barriers while giving birth to new and fruitful relationships. The Chamber is a tool to accomplish this, while raising itself up the visibility chain with the promotion of good will and gold of fashioned community business practices.

A Chamber of Commerce can accomplish the goals to build good will and form community partnerships by striving to inspire. For one example, in partnership with the Baltimore Business Journal, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce has a Maryland Business Philanthropy Awards Program. The Maryland Chamber's website explains it is a program to "recognize Maryland businesses that have demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of life for residents of the state through philanthropic efforts." Judged by a panel of community leaders, the awards are presented at the annual Association of Fundraising Professionals' Philanthropy Day Luncheon. Each year, more and more companies are in the running for this award and are looking for new ways to help their community.

Another way Chambers can work toward their community philanthropic goals is to partner and promote. Lara Reed is the Executive Director of the Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. She believes one of the biggest responsibilities of the Chamber is to be a resource for the overall life and well-being of the Rhinelander community. One way they do this is by supporting nonprofits and community organizations that are in search of volunteers. On the Rhinelander Chamber website, Reed is quoted to say, "I think it's important for Chambers to set an example in their communities and to show people that we have a passion for not just our work and programs, but the community as a whole...A strong community is a community that works together, a community that community members are invested in, and want to contribute. The desire

to volunteer helps instill a sense of ownership in a community, which only helps it to grow and thrive, which benefits us all."

The Rhinelander Chamber of Commerce has developed a unique partnership with Volunteer Wisconsin to use Volunteer Connection, a free resource for the 44 counties without a local Volunteer Center. The site is a database for nonprofits to recruit volunteers and for local residents to search for volunteer opportunities online. "Volunteer Wisconsin gives us access to resources that a small Chamber would not normally be able to obtain," says Reed.

According to Volunteer Wisconsin, the Rhinelander Chamber has been an exceptional partner. The Rhinelander Chamber Visitor Services Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator, Chrissy Peterson, serves on the Volunteer Wisconsin Steering Committee, providing input and direction on Volunteer Wisconsin's development and programming. "It is vital for Volunteer Wisconsin to receive input from the local communities we are working to serve," says Rachel Bruns, Director of Volunteer Wisconsin. "Our success is dependent on the local organizations and relationships we develop."

Chambers of Commerce and philanthropic endeavors go together like peas and carrots, spreading their veggie arms wide around each other and around the businesses and non profits that make individual communities great. Philanthropy is here to stay. It is part of what makes us human, and a part of what makes our communities so great. Giving back to the towns we live in helps enhance our homes to become charming, safer areas, helping local economies thrive. What is your Chamber doing to help improve your community?

Give Green A Chance; The U.S. Green COC

Caroline Adair Freeman
Staff Writer

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Green. Green is the color of emeralds, of fresh grass, of stems holding up flowers, and of the leaves on the trees. For the last couple of decades, "green" is also the word we use to refer to the environmental movement. As more time passes, the word "green" is used to connote environmentalism more frequently than it refers to the color. Along with that shift in language is a shift in attitude, understanding, and focus.

We all know the reasons it is important to be environmentally aware: air quality, dwindling natural resources, and the impending doom of climate change, just to name a few. But not everyone realizes the plethora of other reasons to be a green company. Being green is looked at as a real benefit to prospective employees, especially those in the younger generations. The green lifestyle is spreading beyond the cars we buy and how we live in our homes; it is also sought after in the workplace. Being a green business attracts clients for the same reason. Every business making the move toward green initiatives opens their business doors a little

further to allow new and passionate employees along with forward-thinking clients to walk in and form partnerships.

Being a green company saves a lot of money. A lot. Dow Chemicals, corporate giant and one of the largest chemical product manufacturers and suppliers on the globe with \$60 billion in annual revenues, has been making green investments for decades. Since 1990, DOW Chemicals has spent \$2 billion on these green efforts. It has saved over \$9 billion as a result. Even on a reduced scale for the average business owner, the money potentially saved is extremely significant, especially over time.

While many Chambers of Commerce have taken strides in their communities to support the green initiative, one particular Chamber was created with the green initiative in mind. The U.S. Green Chamber of Commerce originated in San Diego in 2009 and has since spread across the country with additional offices in Texas and Florida. Their website explains, "Do good for the planet, grow your business and your profits." Former CEO David Steel has been "moved for many years by the state of our planet, and (has) been committed to creating an organization that can make sustainable practices practical, beneficial, and easily accessible under the Green Chamber."

Changing government regulations are forcing green practices on businesses, making it expensive and risky not to make environmentally-friendly changes. In addition to the government, pressure also comes from staff, clients, and quickly evolving world views, making the implementation of green changes more essential to success than ever before. But to many organizations, especially small family run stores, implementing green practices can be overwhelming. The U.S. Green Chamber focuses on helping businesses make these changes.

The mission of the U.S. Green Chamber is "to empower businesses and communities to grow through achieving the triple bottom line: economic, environmental, and social sustainability. To improve operational efficiencies, implement environmentally sustainable practices, and tap into unexplored markets and opportunities in both established and emerging companies."

To work towards that mission, the U.S. Green Chamber focuses on the key initiatives of networking, education, and advocacy. Members of the U.S. Green Chamber have the opportunity to network with each other, partnering with other green-thinking businesses. This partnership translates to shared planned events, references to third party companies, and ideas for green services and green resources. In addition to providing a growing network of like-minded professionals, the U.S. Green Chamber also educates its members about advancements in sustainability. And finally, the U.S. Green Chamber considers advocacy to be "an integral part" of their mission by lobbying issues that effect green business, the green economy, and the green movement. "Members under the U.S. Green Chamber are helping us spearhead a green revolution, so that they, in turn, can continue to specialize and succeed in their field."

CHAMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Congratulations to these Chambers for years of wonderful service!

If your Chamber is celebrating one of these milestones in 2013, write info@chamberreview.org and let us know!

1 Year

-Mid-America Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

10 Years

-East Quogue Village Green Chamber of Commerce, New York
-Indio-US Chamber of Commerce, Northeast Florida

20 Years

-Orange Country Chamber of Commerce, New York

30 Years

-French-American Chamber of Commerce
-Warsaw-Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce, Winona, Indiana

45 Years

-Franklin Square Chamber of Commerce, New York

50 Years

-Menifee Chamber of Commerce, California
-German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest
-Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Washington

-North Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, Arizona

75 Years

-Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina
-Shippensburg Chamber of Commerce, Pennsylvania
-Grove Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma

100 Years

-Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, Virginia
-Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce, California
-Kauai Chamber of Commerce, Hawaii
-PennSuburban Chamber of Commerce, Pennsylvania
-Sherman Chamber of Commerce, Texas
125 Years
-Oceanside Chamber of Com-

merce, California
-Milton Chamber of Commerce, Delaware
-Narragansett Chamber of Commerce, Rhode Island

150 Years

-Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, Michigan

175 Years

-Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce
-Carthage, Illinois Chamber of Commerce

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESSES OF THE MONTH: 2nd QUARTER, 2013

Let us know about your Businesses of the Month for July, August & September, 2013. E-mail submissions@chamberreview.org today!

April, 2013

Martinez Chamber of Commerce - Martinez, California - Barrel Aged Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge. They are proud to serve the finest ingredients in our crafted American fare lunch & dinner cuisine.

South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce - Foley, Alabama - Gulf Coast Occupational, Sports and Pain Medicine. Gulf Coast Occupational, Sports and Pain Medicine offers a comprehensive array of industrial health services and programs to meet the needs of each company.

Wells Country Chamber of Commerce - Wells County, Indiana - BKM Real Estate. Dean and Cyndee Fiechter have owned BKM Real Estate since 1997, have 19 agents, and have an office in Bluffton and Ossian. In 2011, they saw a need for the auction business and opened BKM Auction to serve their customers. "We live in such a wonderful community and it has been good to us," says Cyndee.

Whitehouse Chamber of Commerce - Whitehouse, Texas - Keep Whitehouse Beautiful (KWB). An all-volunteer organization dedicated to educating individu-

als to take responsibility for their community environment. They are involved in beautification around the community, hosting the Great Texas Trash Off, Whitehouse Large Item Drop Off, and coordinating tours at the Recycle Center plus educational programs in our schools.

Needville Area Chamber of Commerce - Needville, Texas - Edward Jones. Financial advisor Glenn Schmidt's Edward Jones office was recently named Business of the Month of April 2013 by the Needville Area Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Schmidt opened his Edward Jones office in April 2008; he is celebrating five years of business in the Needville community. "We are grateful for this honor," said Schmidt. "We believe in building relationships and in treating our clients as we would like to be treated. It shapes the way we do business: face-to-face from convenient locations in the communities where our clients live and work."

May, 2013

Humboldt Chamber of Commerce - Humboldt, Tennessee - Humboldt Utilities. Humboldt Utilities is a municipally owned utility serving Humboldt and the surrounding area

since 1939, provides electric, gas, water and wastewater services to approximately 4400 customers. Humboldt Utilities' mission is to provide service 24 hours a day and commit to bettering the community of Humboldt with our actions, volunteering spirit and service.

Greenville Chamber - Greenville, South Carolina - HTI Employment Solutions - They take the time to get to know their clients so they can recommend an employment solution that's really a solution.

Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce - Northeast Metro Atlanta, Georgia - LAN Systems. LAN Systems provides a wide-range of IT solutions, service and support throughout the Greater Metro Atlanta Area. From installing a new system to upgrading existing equipment and maintaining your IT systems, LAN Systems has a solution that works for your business.

Lathrop District Chamber of Commerce - Lathrop, California - Gordon Trucking. Gordon Trucking has employed trucking's most courteous and professional truck drivers since 1946. As one of North America's safest and most reliable large trucking

companies, Gordon Trucking offers a variety of truck driving jobs with industry leading compensation, affordable benefits and late model trucks that include all the latest technology and driver comfort features.

Haywood County Chamber of Commerce - Canton, North Carolina - Silver Bluff Village. Silver Bluff Village offers a staff of 250 highly trained, professional caregivers, who are dedicated to providing quality long-term health care to individuals who need assistance in meeting the challenges of daily living that come with the advancing of age and the decline of physical and/or mental health.

Early Chamber of Commerce - Early, Texas - Prima Pasta Italian Restaurant. Prima Pasta is a supporter of the Early Chamber of Commerce and the community. They have the best Italian food, steaks, fresh homemade bread and salads.

June, 2013

Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce - Mystic, Connecticut - Mystic Arts Center. Celebrating their centennial anniversary this year, the Mystic Arts Center has been an integral part of Mystic and the

regional art scene for the past 100 years. Today, the Mystic Arts Center is a place of culture, tradition and New England charm. Mystic Arts Center's mission is to foster the creation, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the visual arts through exhibitions and education programs designed to facilitate these objectives.

North Tampa Chamber of Commerce - Tampa, Florida - Cyberscribe Virtual Assistants, Inc. Are you missing deadlines? Submitting projects/reports that are missing key elements? CyberScribe can organize your calendar and prepare your projects to ensure your business runs smoothly and your projects are submitted in full and on time. Are you losing billable hours to administrative tasks? CyberScribe can complete all your administrative projects thereby freeing your time to complete billable tasks.

Phelps Chamber of Commerce - Phelps, New York - Steve's Electric Company Co., LLC. Through its 35 years of business, Steve's Electric Company has left its mark all over the Finger Lakes and surrounding areas in Central New York. When asked what he loves most about

live music, celebrate, and savor.

Carmel Chamber of Commerce - Carmel, California - On August 18th will be the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Once each year, on a Sunday in August, 175 of the most prized collector cars in the world roll onto what is often called the best finishing hole in golf - the famed 18th fairway at Pebble Beach. The Concours is not a contest of speed, but of excellence. Automobiles are judged for their historical accuracy, their technical merit and their style. And the best garner reward and recognition.

September, 2013

Whitefish Chamber of Commerce - Whitefish, Montana - On September 5th, the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce is hosting the 26th Annual Taste of Whitefish. The Taste of Whitefish has become one of Montana's premier food events. Over 25 restaurants, caterers and beverage companies will be offering samples of their finest specialties, with live entertainment. Your ticket includes beer & wine tasting and unlimited visits to all food & beverage booth.

Eagle River Chamber of Commerce - Eagle River, Wisconsin - On September 14 & 15 there will be a World Championship Vintage Snowmobile Show and

doing business in Phelps, Steve's response is certain: "It's where I grew up... this is my home."

Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce - Robins, Georgia - Saint John of Kanty Domestic Services, LLC. St. John of Kanty Domestic Services, LLC is a fully licensed, bonded and insured company. Their commitment is to provide the highest quality services at the most affordable prices to middle Georgia.

Tallmadge Chamber of Commerce - Tallmadge, Ohio - TLC Catering. Joe Catalano of TLC Catering caters all events at St. George Fellowship Centre and does private parties.

Sherwood Chamber of Commerce - Sherwood, Arkansas - North Point Ford Lincoln. The mission at North Point Ford Lincoln is to take your car buying experience to a new level. Their Management team has over 100 years of combined experience in the automotive industry. They feel their expertise lies in their open and honest approach to doing business, their professional communication with the customer, and most of all their commitment to excellence. They strive for a no-pressure sales environment, convenient shopping when your schedule allows, and as always friendly and efficient service.

"Reunion." This is an invitation to all Snowmobile Enthusiasts. Two great days of the "grand old days" of snowmobiling. Friday night includes grass drags under the lights and displays of beautifully restored vintage sleds. Then on Saturday it's a full day of vintage drag racing, swapping and sled showing followed by an awards ceremony and trophy presentation.

Jackson Hole Wyoming Chamber of Commerce - Jackson Hole, Wyoming - There will be a walking tour of historic downtown Jackson on September 12th. Bring your visit to Jackson Hole to life with this free tour. Meet in the center of Town Square for hour-long stroll of historic downtown Jackson.

The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce - Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina - On September 17th the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce is hosting the Chamber Ambassadors Meeting. Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors meet monthly at the Chamber office in Kill Devil Hills for an update on Chamber programs, services, and events. Volunteers register to work Chamber events, support fundraising efforts, and learn about new members of the Chamber.

3rd QUARTER 2013 UPCOMING EVENTS:

If you have important events coming up in October, November & December of 2013, e-mail submissions@chamberreview.org to submit them for our next issue!

July, 2013

Provincetown Chamber of Commerce - Provincetown, Massachusetts - On July 7th, The Provincetown Chamber of Commerce is hosting Summer Jazz with Bart Weisman at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum. Bart Weisman has performed for Presidents, Heads of State, Celebrities, and opened for the Boston Pops. CapeCodToday says, "Cape's Jazz Scene is vibrant and powerful and Bart Weisman is at the center of rich local tradition."

Sayville Chamber of Commerce - Sayville, New York - July 19th-21st, Sayville Chamber of Commerce is hosting Sayville's Annual Sidewalk Sale Days. Enjoy great deals and specials all through downtown Sayville Friday through Sunday - search for treasures and treats indoors and out!

Tomah Chamber of Commerce - Tomah, Wisconsin - On July 13th, the Tomah Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Family Fun Day. Join them for a free day of excitement and fun for the whole family. There will be inflatables, games, a petting zoo, face painting, and family games. Open to the public.

Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce - Bainbridge Island, Washington - 2013 will mark the 25th anniversary of Bainbridge in Bloom! Mark your calendars now the garden tour on Friday and Saturday, July 12 and 13, and the Evening in Bloom gala and auction on Saturday, July 13. All proceeds benefit Arts & Humanities programs and the individual artists who have generously donated their work and talent.

Narragansett Chamber of Commerce - Narragansett, Rhode Island - July 21st and July 22nd, Friday and Saturday evening, the Narragansett Chamber of Commerce will be hosting Ballon Glow, which will include Friday evening concert and fireworks, hot air balloons, crafts, music, catch and release fishing, food and carnival rides.

Nevada City Chamber of Commerce - Nevada City, Nevada - The Nevada City Chamber of Commerce on July 17, 24, & 31 is hosting the Annual Summer Nights in Nevada City celebration, an outdoor festival of art and music, will be held three Wednesday evenings in July. The best FREE entertain-

ment for the entire family!

August, 2013

Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce - Fredericksburg, Texas - On August 4th, Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Chamber Workshop Series: Sales Tax: Collection, Reporting and Policy Matters. Andre Eames, Tax Enforcement Officer with the Texas Comptroller's Office, will present two sessions: one designed for businesses and one for non-profit organizations. Both sessions will include how to properly collect Texas Sales Tax, record keeping requirements, resale and exemption issues, along with time for tax policy questions. \$25, register in advance

Petoskey Chamber of Commerce - Petoskey, Michigan - On August 16th - 18th, Petoskey Chamber of Commerce is hosting their 11th Annual Festival on the Bay. Festival on the Bay features include: Live Music, Triathlon, Bay Cruises, an Arts & Crafts Show, a nightly celebration of their "Million Dollar Sunsets" and much more!

Chatham Chamber of Commerce - Chatham, Massachu-

setts - On August 7th, there will be a tour of the Chatham Lighthouse. Located on the grounds of Coast Guard Station Chatham, Chatham Light has a long and rich history and is available to tour during select months.

Schoodic Area Chamber of Commerce - Winter Harbor, Maine - On August 10th, the Schoodic Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting the Winter Harbor Lobster Festival. The 49th annual festival kicks off with a road race, excites with lobster boat races, presents a full day craft fair with kids' activities, offers lobster dinners, and ends the day with a community parade. Free admission to the festival; fee for lobster dinners. Rain or shine, it's a full day of family fun.

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce - Bennington, VT - Named a top 10 Vermont Event, the 18th Annual Southern Vermont Garlic & Herb Festival is on August 31 & September 1, 2013. Garlic lovers unite! From garlic ice cream to garlic jelly, garlic pickled, roasted, and braided, the place to be is the Annual Southern Vermont Garlic & Herb Festival at Camelot Village in Bennington. Enjoy the

The New Sales Funnel

(Continued from Page 1)

now called the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT). ZMOT is the moment before a consumer decides who to buy from. It's the moment that comes from their own independent research online. What will they find others are saying about you?

The Chamber Social Media Marketing Funnel

For Chambers, it goes like this: at the top, awareness is created from sharing your story (not advertising). People might hear about your Chamber through Facebook. Or Twitter. Or any of a dozen other major platforms. You didn't interrupt them, though. You posted a photo of the golf tournament or the farmers' market. You shared who won the business of the year award. You provided value. You promoted your members and community, not yourself.

Your prospects may even have become aware of your Chamber through someone else's posts or shares. Either way, they are exposed to your Chamber's message (your story). If it matches their worldview — and this is critically important — as Seth Godin termed it in "All Marketers Are Liars," they move a step deeper into the funnel. If they couldn't care less about your Chamber's story, then you remain practically invisible to them and they slip out of your funnel. If they have exactly the worldview you are looking for, when they see your posts,

they will say, "That's for me!" Relationship Building

The next part of the new funnel is relationship building. Defenses come down when you create familiarity, when you find things in common, when you create "know, like, and trust." During this stage, you are removing friction by building up your social proof, your likability, and your authority. You consistently provide value with no demand of return other than permission to send them more valuable content (often times through email). The human side comes out and people start to become salespeople (through social media) for your Chamber, creating awareness by telling their friends about the Chamber.

Each point of contact moves your new friends deeper into the funnel. These are minor conversions. Each gift from you creates reciprocity. Each acceptance by them creates consistency. Prospects become friends, friends become members, and members become advocates (creating more awareness).

Full Conversion

Full conversion occurs deeper in the funnel, not at the top or upper middle parts. They don't know, like, or trust you enough yet. Quit going for third base on your first date by using social media to close the sale. This process takes patience. A lot of the unconnected generation won't understand this. They want ROI from a Facebook post or a tweet. They become frustrated. So they double down and automate their posts, hammering the so-

cial media sites with marketing messages, driving people away.

Now. Understand this. You still have to have a solid product or service at the right price. The world hasn't changed so much that just telling your story and engaging with your new friends closes the deal. You still have to ask for the sale. But to whom would you rather sell? The busy small businessperson who has never heard of you, or your Facebook friend who loves your story and wants to be part of a winning tribe? The new funnel is ARC. Awareness, Relationships, Conversion.

Frank J. Kenny is an internationally recognized author, professional speaker and business consultant. As a faculty member for the Institute for Organization Management (IOM), Frank instructs on Integrating Strategic Technology Solutions, Technology Tools and Trends, and Using Data to Grow and Sustain Your Organization. He is the founder and host of the Chamber Focus Show. As president/CEO of a county-wide Chamber, he led a team in doubling the membership of that 45-year-old organization over an 18-month period, primarily through strategic social media solutions. Free Chamber resources can be found at FrankJKenny.com.

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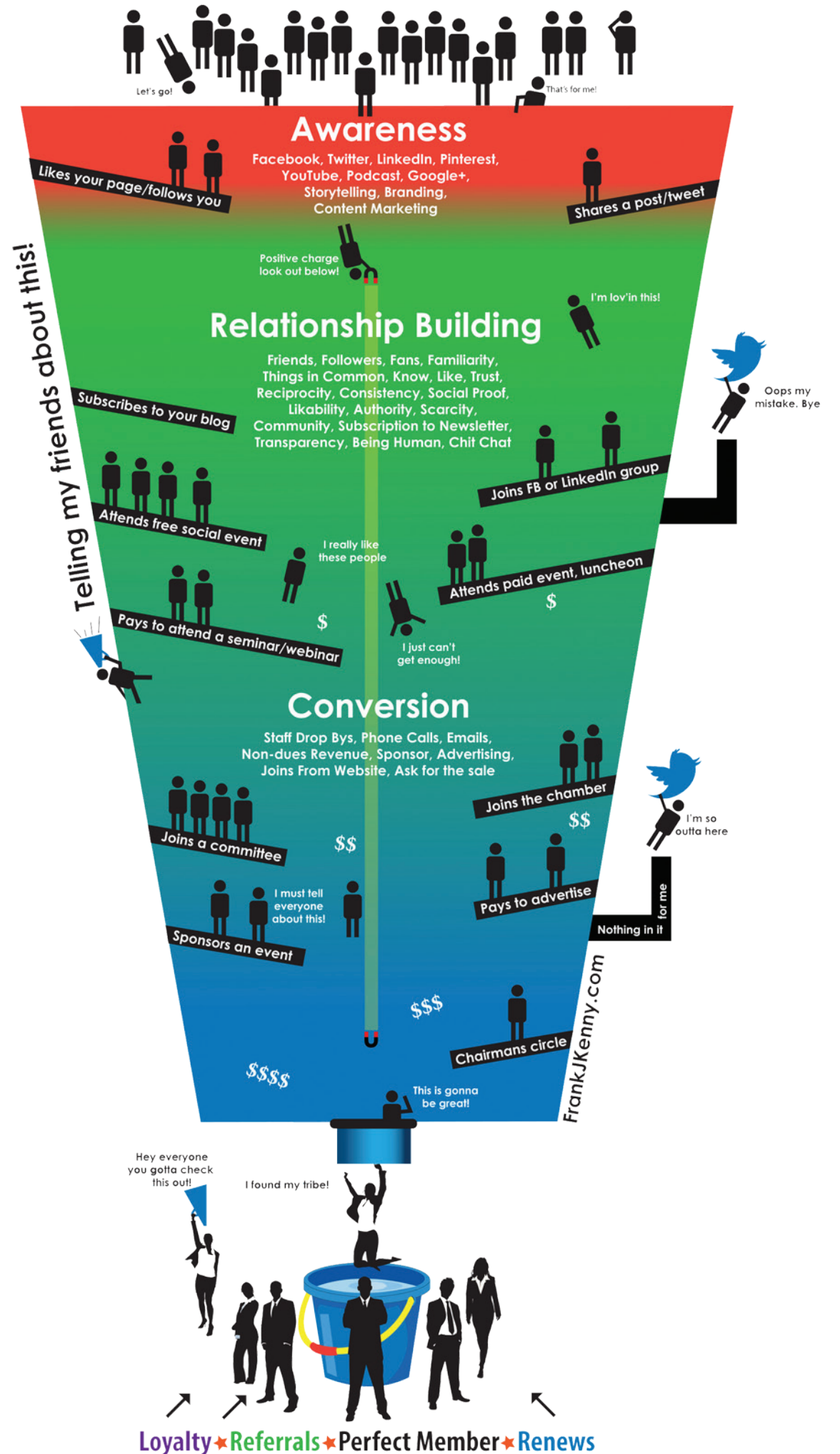
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ARC. The New Social Media Sales Funnel



If You'd Wear It to the State Fair, Don't Wear It to Work!



Glenn Shepard
Contributing Writer

When I graduated from college with a degree in management in 1985, "Dress for Success" was everyone's mantra. I distinctly remember my dad taking me to Men's Warehouse to buy two suits for interviewing — one navy blue and one grey pinstripe.

He told me that if I wanted to make a million bucks, I first had to look like a million bucks.

The most coveted job in those days was with IBM. The joke was that men could wear three colors of shirt — "white, white, or white".

While most companies weren't that strict, it was a given that professionals dressed up to go to work (and that everyone dressed up for a job interview).

Fast forward to 2013.

Over 10,000 managers and small business owners attend my management seminar every year, and their stories of what people wear to work these days are jaw-dropping.

While society has righted a wrong by fighting the discrimination of the past, there are

some people in our great country who have mistaken tolerance to mean "I can dress any way I want and you shouldn't judge me because of my appearance."

An entire generation now entering the workforce has never been taught to dress appropriately.

Thousands of managers have told me of job applicants who think nothing of taking a cell phone call during an interview. One applicant in Chicago even asked the interviewer to step out of his own office while the applicant took the call.

In 2006, I interviewed a gentleman (in a southern state I won't mention at his request) for my sixth book. We were discussing how people will wear anything to work these days, and he told me one of his administrative assistants came to work wearing her pajama bottoms. That would have been bad enough, but what made this worse was that he was the Governor of his state.

That book was titled "How to Be the Employee Your Company Can't Live Without: 18 Ways to Become Indispensable," and in it I addressed the importance of dressing professionally.

It went on to become my first #1 best seller in the U.S., and was eventually published in five foreign languages.

I've never been more proud than when we began receiving fan mail and requests for interviews from places as far away as Japan, India, China, Russia and many other countries I've never visited. But I've never been more embarrassed

or felt as naive as when I discovered that Americans are known worldwide for dressing poorly.

I love my country and am proud to be an American. When I became an Eagle Scout over 30 years ago, I was taught to appreciate how much more freedom and opportunity people have in our great country than in any other.

It's pathetic that while we're known as the land of opportunity, we're also known for dressing and acting unprofessionally in the workplace.

In an April 2013 article in *USA Today* ("Wanted: Millennials Who Know How to Interview"), it was reported that a college senior applying for a job with American Eagle brought her cat to the interview with her.

And the problem is getting worse.

A 2013 study conducted by York College of Pennsylvania's Center for Professional Excellence found increases from 2009 in the number of employers reporting everything from computer etiquette problems to young employees exhibiting a sense of entitlement.

So if schools and parents aren't teaching kids how to dress and act for work, where will they learn?

Chambers of Commerce may be in the best position to teach these soft skills. Brad Schneider of the Henderson, KY Chamber, and Mendi Goble of the Richmond, KY Chamber both shared with me recently that they're seeing phenomenal success in teaching high school seniors what

employers expect from them.

In particular, Mr. Schneider was recently asked to speak to 1,200 high school students about the importance of basics such as appropriate dress, a good handshake, eye contact, etc.

As he put it, "I expected them to tune me out because you'd think this would be boring to teenagers. But they ate it up, and I could tell many of them had never been taught these things before."

Because many of the employers that are struggling to find good people to hire are Chamber members, this might just be a marriage made in heaven.

Glenn Shepard lives in Nashville, Tennessee, and is the best-selling author of six books, including "How to Manage Problem Employees". He is also president of Glenn Shepard Seminars, which provides accredited management seminars for businesses at no cost to chambers. For a free copy of his "Rules of Work" poster, which includes "If You'd Wear It to the State Fair, Don't Wear It to Work", go to www.glennshepard.com or call (615) 353-7125 (offer limited to Chamber execs only).

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