



## CHAMBER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES INC.

February 2006

### For Valentine's Day, fall in love with membership.



Love membership? When was the last time you heard a board member or even an ambassador or membership committee member say they loved recruiting members? Once in a blue moon, I'd bet! Chambers struggle getting volunteers excited about participating in membership campaigns, yet with the sales staff barely keeping up with replacing the drops, a volunteer driven effort is needed by most Chambers. Thus, most Chambers have a decision to make: how will we do a membership effort that will succeed? Answer: define success, then pursue it! Take your choice: a high volume membership drive where many "joined because my friend told me to" is fast, easy and brings in the most members and dollars. OR a program where return on investment for their membership dollars is explained in the training of the volunteer sponsor recruiters yielding a lesser volume of checks but more businesses who "buy into the Chamber". Members or investors? It's a long term win-win when volunteers sponsor their peers into the Chamber because they feel good about *doing them a favor* (accessing the Chamber toolbox to help them grow their business) instead of *asking for a favor* (join because I asked you). Maybe everyone would love membership development if they realized how rewarding it is to everyone!

### The plan. The tools. The training.

What makes us different? We provide your chamber the plan, the tools, and the training to achieve durable gains in membership. Other companies organize flashy membership drives. We train your volunteers and your staff on key ways to raise community awareness about the benefits of chamber membership. We provide written materials; we conduct educational workshops; and we guide your organization through a membership campaign that employs the skills we teach. We also offer a customized analysis of your chamber's membership base; detailed instructions on how to mentor and retain new members; and a full year of free consultation to help you succeed. That's more than membership. That's real growth and retention. Give CDS a call about your Chamber's growth and retention.

### The Little Chamber That Could !



They COULD and they DID! If any of you know Susan Huntington of **The Dalles, Oregon Chamber**, you know how hard it is to say no to Susan. So when her Board of Directors said they wanted to grow their membership and get the message of the Chamber out into the community, she called "the wicked witch of the west" yours truly, Joan Testa (ok, Susan tried to convince me the nickname was because it was Halloween). I doubted the potential to grow their Chamber since they had over 400 members already with a population of 12,000 (the broad rural area is only 22,000 or so). BUT Susan and her group (jungle

theme played out to the hilt as you can see from the photo of Susan standing with her top producing volunteer) proved what **WANT TO** means: with a quality program (Chamber's product) and caring volunteers led by **100% participation by the Board of Directors** and a darn good staff: they grew their membership by over 100 in just a few days! Best of all, the Board members who objected the most to participating ("I'm too busy", "I don't want to do that", "I'm not a salesperson", etc.) actually *all* did do it, and they were the most excited and gratified at the results.

### Idea of the Month

One Stop Shopping at the **Minot, North Dakota** Chamber of Commerce. Talk about providing service to the community and having everything in one office, how about this? The Motor Vehicle Department, is a division of the Minot Area Chamber of Commerce and provides motorists with the required information and paperwork for their vehicles, such as license plates, titles, etc. Touted as a great local convenience, this is the first time I have heard of this service being offered by a Chamber. Anyone else have an unusual service you'd like to share with the readership of this newsletter? Send it in!

### Make 2006 the year of membership.

Now is the perfect time to plan a membership campaign for 2006. Available dates are filling up so contact us today for a detailed proposal. When you schedule a 2006 membership effort by March 31, your chamber will receive a special bonus: a free two-night vacation package for two adults from Executive Travel, a \$299 value. The vacation package is valid at more than 1,200 first-class hotels in 50 states. You can use it as an incentive during your membership effort; as an auction item at any upcoming chamber event; or as a special thank-you for an excellent chamber volunteer. You'll receive the prepaid travel certificate, a detailed program brochure and easy redemption instructions upon the completion of your membership campaign. For more information about the program, you may contact Joan Testa at CDS 800.584.0321 or Steve Griffiths at Executive Travel at (888) 783-8318.

### Chamber Business Cards that Deliver the Message!

The "grass roots marketing" of Chambers should be the business cards of the staff, and I have seen a few that really do a great job! Take for example: **Emporia Area, KS**

and **Greater Newburyport, MA** print on the back of their cards: "10 Reasons Why Membership is a Good Investment for Your Business, Your Community, Yourself". **Greater Elkhart, IN**, **Cabarrus Regional, NC** and **Marlborough Regional, MA** all print their mission statements on the back of their cards. **Sarpy County, NE** and **Wichita Area, KS** both have catchy slogans on their cards ("The Primary Resource for Business in Sarpy County" and "Growing Business. Growing Jobs. Growing Wichita. These are just a few examples of Chambers that I have met that are continually spreading their message.

**More than membership. Real growth and retention.**

**Contact us today!**

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Call: (800) 584-0321

Visit: <http://www.chamberdevelopment.com>

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