



CHAMBER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES INC.

January-February 2009

Strength in Numbers

Cover article to Fall 2001 NAMD (now part of ACCE) Newsletter

I wrote this article for "Membership Matters" the official newsletter of the National Association for Membership Development (now part of American Chamber of Commerce Executives) following the 911 tragedy. It is accurate today....perhaps even inserting Saginaw, MI (refer to last month's newsletter online, to read more about Saginaw), and others, alongside Cushing, OK

A few years back, there was a popular song that went "when the going gets tough the tough get going". How true!

How often in the last few months and especially the last few weeks, have we heard about economic downturns, cutbacks, layoffs, spending freezes etc. Tragic recent events seem to have intensified an already slowing of expenditures for all but the most urgent of necessities. How many in your community perceive of Chamber membership and support as a necessity versus one of the first expenditures to be cut?

Are things as bad as some say? Perhaps they are what we make them to be! It's our attitude!

Since the mission of most Chambers is to unite the citizens of a community to promote business, the quality of life and community development, what do we do to survive as viable organizations and to help our members? Chambers are the glue that keep the community together but we need the involvement and financial support of the multitude to make things happen. When things get tight, the most successful Chambers are those that remind their community of what the Chamber is and how Chamber membership is an investment in themselves and in their community - an investment for which there is definite tangible and intangible return, not the least of which is that of providing them a means to run their business more profitably.

In the oil crisis of the 80's there was a small rural town, Cushing, OK, that was very dependent on oil to survive, so when it bottomed out, it looked like the town would just fold up and die, as had so many other similar communities. The Chamber of Commerce leadership decided that it was not going to happen to them! They

fought back by working together. They asked for some help (it was one of my most unique experiences, not just working with such a dedicated group of people, but memorable because the only motel in town was like the banks and many of the retail stores. It was closed down so my accommodations were at the local funeral home!)

The business people of Cushing turned to each other, pulled their heads out of the sand, dug into their pockets and collectively (and almost unanimously) pooled their energies and resources into a strong, economically sound and proactive Chamber of Commerce. Instead of thinking the Chamber was an expenditure, they proved to each other that working together and supporting each other through the Chamber, meant survival. They realized that their involvement and financial support of the Chamber provided each one of them the tools and opportunities to problem solve and market to one another that standing alone could not do.

Yes Cushing is an All American success story. They grew their Chamber to be strong in numbers, financially sound, and highly effective. Their local economy not only stabilized, but in time, it thrived. They received national recognition and grants for their economic and community development. I heard that several major employers located there because of the "can do" spirit of the people.

When things are tight and businesses are greatly impacted, they need each other and their Chamber the most. It is our job to make more of our business community understand that the Chamber is ready to help them help themselves survive and prosper.

That's the Chamber way: that's the American way!

So You Think You Know How To Do A Membership Campaign?????



I've done 652 membership drive campaigns over the last 25+ years.

Ask me how!

Quote of the Month

Ambition is the path to success.

Persistence is the vehicle you arrive in.

William Eardley IV

Investment Schedule

Ya' Have to Have a Sense of Humor

A goodie from the CDS scrapbook:

From Ted Ringhofer, Owatonna, MN (or whomever he "borrowed" it from, comes a formula to establish a fair share investment schedule:

S.W.A.G.
E.C.

which means: Statistical Wild Assed Guess devised by the Executive Committee.

Promote Event Attendees

To assist their members get even more value from their attendance at events, several Chambers are encouraging members to submit their name, address and phone number with their reservation payment to the Chamber a week before the date of an event such as a mixer or luncheon. Some Chambers collect business cards that can be scanned.

This information is then printed and distributed at the event's welcome table to enhance networking and provide additional advertising for attendees.

A Handful of Good Chambers Wanted

Need More Members?

Need More Dollars?

sure, every Chamber does, so now the tricky question....

(Your Members & Your Community) Need More Understanding of Why the Chamber is an Investment and What the Return on Investment Is?

Then I challenge you to become one of the ONLY 12 Chambers that CDS will design a comprehensive Community Awareness Membership Recruitment and Retention Program for in 2009.

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I welcome your calling any (or all) of our 2008 clients (or any year -

they are all listed on the CDS website) to learn why they value the CDS program, even though they did not add hundreds and hundreds of members...they got more VALUE than just numbers! That's why CDS only works with a maximum of 12 Chambers a year: quality, not just quantity!

CDS 2008 clients (all of them): Chesterfield, VA; Bethesda-Chevy Chase, MD; Las Cruces, NM; Oshkosh, WI; Richardson, TX; West DesMoines, IA; Springfield, OR; Huntsville, TX; Morris/Grundy, IL; Saginaw, MI; Milford, CT; and Houston Galleria, TX


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Contact us today!

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