

Chamber Development Strategies

Issue #57

April 2005

an idea exchange - from Joan Testa, Chamber Development Services, Inc.
Toll Free Pager/Voice Mail (888) 502-3323
e-mail: joan@chamberdevelopment.com



Editor's Corner:

Who Am I?

Never one to overstate the obvious (ha ha), I think it is time to once again remind the readership of this newsletter some of its basics:

"Chamber Development Strategies - an idea exchange" is this very simplistic newsletter that I, Joan Testa, write every other month, and have done so since the early 1990's. The purposes behind it were multi fold:

for your benefit as a Chamber professional in securing new ideas or reinforcing established practices in your organization by Chamber Development Services sharing that which we encounter when working with so many different chambers from different parts of the country

and provide this digest as a forum for Chambers to share their ideas/programs, successes and failures with 1000 other chambers (all you have to do is send me the info and it will be included in an upcoming issue)

and allow me to illustrate to those reading this publication that **Membership Recruitment & Retention Through Organizational Development and Leadership Training** isn't just the Chamber Development Services slogan, but what we really believe in: not membership drives but development and training

and get the Joan Testa and CDS name in front of you all every other month in hopes that someday you will call and chat about our working together!

That all said, it's become apparent not all of the purposes illustrated above are being met:

Please send me your ideas so that this digest may continue to be packed with good info.....

Please remember: I am not an author...I am a trainer and Chamber membership "guru". You receive this newsletter as a courtesy....writing it is NOT my business. I am in the business of helping Chambers grow and grow the right way!

So please, as much as I appreciate all the notes and calls complimenting me on this digest and asking for additional copies etc., remember, it is sent to you (**free**) in the hopes you will give me the opportunity to bid on working with you on a **Community Awareness Membership Recruitment and Retention** campaign and program.

Targeted Member Benefit: Direct Mail Opportunities

To continue on with the series of articles from the last few issues of this newsletter that outline specific targeted member benefits: a very popular practice is that of a Chamber providing its members vehicles for getting their product or service promoted to a broad audience at a low cost through a direct mail piece..... a.k.a. small business ad program.

Direct mail advertising is particularly effective for retail and service businesses and it allows them a means to get their advertising message delivered in high volume at a low cost. However, some communities do not have a mailing service such as ValPak or similar, thus the Chamber can fill that need in a variety of ways, such as:

Full page newsletter inserts or mid-month flyers (i.e., for \$200 a member can have a full page ad insert sent with the Chambers' mailing of 1500, thus saving the member over \$500 in postage alone

Use of the Chamber's bulk mail permit (saving each member the \$150 U.S. Postal Service bulk mail permit fee)

Chamber mailing list on labels (the best, most accurate, and most up to date community business roster available to members at a fraction of the cost of a list compiled by a mailing service.

Small businesses, especially those in suburban chambers located in the shadow of metropolitan/high price media, find it hard to afford advertising at reasonable rates. Print advertising from the "big city" newspaper is cost prohibitive. Chamber newsletter advertising is a viable alternative and especially attractive when the newsletter is an insert to the local newspaper.

Longview, TX's "IMPACT" is distributed to over 37,000 subscribers to the local newspaper as well as direct mailed to the Chamber's (Partnership's) mailing list of 1800. In Cookeville, TN, Clear Channel Communications and the other local broadcasting company provide each new member free advertising valued at or above the members' Chamber investment amount. This reinforces the Chamber's philosophy that "Chamber membership doesn't cost...it pays!"



I want to thank you, Lord, for being close to me so far this day. With your help, I haven't been impatient, lost my temper, grumpy, judgmental, or envious of anyone. But, I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think I'll really need your help then.

Amen

$$3 + 3 = 2$$

3 Beliefs about the Chamber
+
3 Components of effective Membership Development
=
2 : Membership Recruitment / Membership Retention

The 3+3=2 concept is an attention-getting slogan to garner the attention and understanding when training new Chamber sales staff and/or volunteers, because it helps them focus.

Beliefs about the Chamber:

1. The Chamber provides a vital service to the community (membership=smart investment in the community)
2. The Chamber provides benefits that allow members to be more successful (membership=smart investment in "my" business)
3. Since the return on investment is there, the reason not everyone is a member, is they just don't know what IT is.

Components of Effective Membership Development:

1. Plan whose elements are: goals & objectives
target your audience
positioning
timetable
who is responsible
2. Tools with simple short explanations of both tangible and intangible member benefits
3. Training on all of the above so that both the "seller" and the "buyer" understand the Chamber (product) better, will participate more (use it) and stay (retention).

from "Growing Your Business Through Chamber Membership" a workshop to kickoff Chamber-Community Awareness Week, by Joan Testa, Chamber Development Services, Inc., Dallas, Texas 888-502-3323

REMEMBER: Most businesses are not members because they don't understand why they should be members...so instead of doing "membership drives" shouldn't you be doing "Community Awareness Programs?" Give me a call and let's talk about it!

Joan Testa
Chamber Development Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 612611, Dallas, TX 75261-2611
Toll Free Pager/Voice Mail (888) 502-3323
e-mail: joan@chamberdevelopment.com

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 444
BEDFORD, TX
ZIP CODE 76021

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED