



CHAMBER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES INC.

November-
December
2008

Volunteer Salesforce Raises \$300,000 - \$400,000 Annually!

The Saginaw County (MI) Chamber of Commerce is located in a region of the country that is really feeling the downturn in the economy, yet their organization is not only making a difference, it is excelling!

Their efforts in re-creating their organization's focus and developing community initiatives to address the last decades' change in their area's economic makeup are outstanding. Their creative and extremely effective "Chamber Challenge" annual program fuels a very large portion of their budget, allowing them to maintain the high quality programming, exceptional staff (including a lobbyist that has been remarkably successful in spearheading legislation funding billions of dollars in economic development) and what I love most, they have a very "bought in" membership!

Bernadette Bingham, Vice President, faced the frustration in the early 2000's of finding and keeping a staff salesperson capable of consistently producing a dollar volume significantly above their cost of employment. Her solution was to take those costs/dollars and build a sales team utilizing commissioned volunteers from their membership. Not a unique idea since many Chambers do total resource and sustainable resource campaigns, but in Saginaw, this program with a many year track record of success, consistently fuels the Chamber budget with huge sums.

Bernadette states that what has made this project successful are incentives, recognition and a very dedicated and loyal group of Diplomats, who with their employers' blessing, work hard and earn 3% -10% commissions based on the sales they have secured. Many also qualify for an all-inclusive trip for two to an exotic destination. The Diplomat volunteers sell sponsorships, advertising and solicit memberships and donations throughout the year and also participate in an Active Phase, with training, motivational meetings, receptions and a strong emphasis on sales renewals from October through January each year. Bernadette Bingham recently commented: "The Chamber Challenge Campaign has been amazingly successful in bringing in sponsorship, advertising and donation dollars, but we experienced a real challenge growing our membership base through this fund development vehicle. The Chamber

Development Services membership campaign, which we titled Faces of the Future Growth Initiative, was a perfect complement for our Chamber Challenge Campaign. In tough economic times, bringing in 160 new members in 2 ½ days, (all cash up front!) was an amazing experience. The Faces of the Future experience was short but intense, certainly very successful, and we will definitely make this process a permanent part of the Chamber Challenge Campaign.

"When all is said and done, for the price of one to 1.5 staff persons, we have more than quadrupled our annual new dues and non- dues income and have built a retention team to boot!" said Bingham. Chamber President & CEO, **Bob VanDeventer** could not agree more! Feel free to contact them at bernadette@saginawchamber.org or bob@saginawchamber.org.

Radio Spots

Short and to the point (and effective) were the following radio spots the Houston Galleria Chamber of Commerce recently ran. "In these volatile times, partner with the premier business organization in Houston, the Galleria Chamber of Commerce. Our name "means business" and can be the path to your success. Join the Chamber today - visit galleriachamber.com and click on "get involved"."

Ad #2: "You want to stay ahead of the competition...You want to grow your business...The Galleria Chamber of Commerce has the answers and the connections you need. Join the Chamber today - visit galleriachamber.com and click on "get involved"."

Quote of the Month

CASE management...
Copy All - Steal Everything
Isn't this S.O.P. for Chambers?

Fulfilling Expectations

Retention Rule #1 = Membership prospect must be sold on real benefits (not because a friend called in a favor or because of a supplier's threat). Retention Rule #2 = Don't overpromise - unfulfilled expectations lead to drops.

One hint is to add a line on your membership application asking why the business is joining the Chamber (what do they expect from their membership). So, if the response, for example, is networking or meeting potential clients, and you never see them at Chamber functions, the red flag is up!

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

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



May all have a wonderful holiday season!
p.s. Santa is checking my list and I bet your name is on it!

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 me a call and let's talk about your Chamber's growth and retention!

More than membership. Real growth and retention.

Contact us today!

Write: joan@chamberdevelopment.com

Call: (800) 584-0321 or cell (817) 247-9677

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