



### Editor's Corner:

### Why Do Businesses Join Your Chamber?

Let's hope it's for the right reasons - to invest in themselves and in their community; to better their business success and better the quality of life in the area in which they have chosen to live and raise their family; to put a little back in. I could go on and on as to the all the right reasons for participating in local Chambers of Commerce. Unfortunately, after almost 17 years and experience with over 550 Chambers in the membership arena, I have seen and heard way too many "wrong" reasons: wanting the ribbon cutting extra publicity and attention; free new member ads the media is providing; or "my banker/lawyer/Indian chief buddy/vendor told me to do it".

To be blunt (surprise!) as someone who makes their living "selling" Chamber memberships, wouldn't you'd think that I'd like anything that gets people to say yes and write that check? No! It isn't good for you (thus me) to have them in today and out tomorrow for a lot of reasons - not the least is that they are the ones who go all over town saying "I joined that Chamber and it didn't do me a bit of good so you shouldn't either" (of course it didn't - they don't even know what the Chamber is, haven't "used" it). Those "one year wonders" are of no interest to me too. That is why when CDS works with a Chamber we won't do the typical membership drive/event. If it is not a Community Awareness Recruitment and Retention Program with emphasis on "the steak, not the sizzle", it's nothing more than a glorified fund-raiser - and CDS does not do fundraising - we are trainers!

There are still some organizations that feel getting them to join any way you can is fine, for they feel they will have use of their funds for the year and can work once in, on keeping them in. I've not seen that work particularly well, especially in non-metropolitan areas where there is not literally unlimited thousands of prospects. But to each their own! Back to the subject of this column: why do they join....how about one of the funniest reasons why they don't that we encountered when working in **Visalia, CA** (population 94,000 with 1000 members):

### Prospect Profile

new

FORMER MEMBER  
# OF EMPLOYEES: ?

INVESTMENT \$ \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS NAME: Mandarin Chinese Restaurant

CONTACT PERSON: Carol PHONE: 627-5743 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

TREET ADDRESS: 1424 N. Ben Madbox CITY: Visalia ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. BOX: 141 North Pointe Center CITY: Visalia ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS CLASSIFICATION: Restaurant E MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:  
They are interested but cannot speak English until Sat. or Sun. Please follow up.

PICK UP CHECK: DAY: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE: \_\_\_\_\_

SOLD BY: \_\_\_\_\_ TEAM: \_\_\_\_\_

MASTERCARD  
 VISA

NAME ON CARD: \_\_\_\_\_  
CARD # \_\_\_\_\_  
EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### Member Benefit: On-Line Referrals

Most Chambers are realizing how important their website is as a member benefit, in light of the thousands of referrals it generates to Chamber members. Is there a better member benefit than tangible proof that the Chamber has assisted the member by sending prospects/clients to them? But do you remind your members that you are doing this for them, or is it like so many other member benefits: you're doing it but the member doesn't know that you are or remember that you are!

Leave it to the consummate Chamber professional, **Zoe Taylor, Ventura, CA** Chamber of Commerce to have a terrific system: look at the email I received a few months ago as a member.

"Your membership in the Ventura Chamber of Commerce is working for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Below is a summary of the number of times your business was referred over the Internet from <http://ventura-chamber.org> to potential customers during the period from 3/01 through 3/31.

We hope this means increased business for you in the future. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need any additional information about this report or your listing in the online Membership Directory. Thank you for your continued support.

Your listing was displayed on our Website: 27  
Your Website was accessed directly from our Website: 2  
A map of your location was displayed on our Website: 1"

Great idea!

## Newsletter Fillers:

### Volunteers are like

**Ford...** they have better ideas;

**Coke...** they're the real thing;

**Dial Soap...** they care more, don't you wish everyone did?;

**VO5 Hair Spray...** their goodness holds in all kinds of weather;

**Hallmark Cards...** they care enough to give their very best;

**Kelloggs Corn Flakes...** They're GREAT!!

You know you're  
a workaholic  
when...

.....  
Your most meaningful  
relationship is with  
Mr. Coffee!



### Quotes of the Month:

"Every day is filled with numerous opportunities for serious error. Enjoy it!"

"The worst mistake is to have the best ladder and the wrong wall." both from Donald Rumsfeld

"The harder I work, the luckier I am." from humorist Stephen Leacock

## Suggestion for a Monthly Newsletter Column

Each week while we assist a client Chamber conduct their membership campaign, it is apparent that many of the participants (in large part, the most active current members) are unaware of many of the benefits that come to their business by being a member of the Chamber.

Through their involvement in the CDS Community Awareness Membership Recruitment and Retention Program, these current members are "retrained". But how about the balance of the membership?

One way to address this subject is by instituting a newsletter column similar to the ones many of our clients now have. Name it "Value Added Benefits" or a similarly catchy name, run it each month in the same location within your newsletter, and be sure that it is a quick overview of some of your member benefits (rotate them until each is covered, then start over). Readers will get in the habit of checking out this column each month to be sure that they are taking advantage of all that the Chamber has to offer them.

**Quote from the Board Chairperson on recruiting new members: "I am an Educator - NOT A SALESPERSON!"**

Dr. Myrtis Tabb, Delta State University and Chair of the Board for the Cleveland/Bolivar, MS Chamber (population 20,000 city 46,000 area with 450 members, 5 staff including tourism and e.d.) defines a true leader!

Initially dreading her participation in their membership program (isn't that a surprise!), she practiced leadership by example by jumping in with both feet during her portion of the CDS Community Awareness Membership Recruitment Outreach.

Dr. Tabb called a business peer who owned three businesses and instead of asking him to do her a favor and join, she explained how Chamber membership would be of value to each one of the three businesses he owned. By day's end, Dr. Tabb had a check for all 3 businesses and big smile (as did we all!)