

Chamber Development Strategies

Issue #50 February 2004 an idea exchange - from Joan Testa, Chamber Development Services, Inc.
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Editor's Corner:

Slogans

Every Chamber seems to have a logo with a slogan that helps with their identity and purpose. Being a firm believer in the K.I.S.S. theory, I am particularly fond of a few that I have seen - such as:

OUR BUSINESS IS CARING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Connecting the Business Community Since 1922...

The Road To The Future...

WHERE BUSINESS MEETS THE COMMUNITY

Your Advocate for Small Business Success

Take a look at your slogan: does it project the message you want? While you are at it, how about your mission statement? So many that I see are way too wordy and complex.

"The Next Step"

Years ago I remember Bill Seavey, then president of the Modesto, CA Chamber, telling me about a program that he found to be a very effective membership retention tool.

"The Next Step" is a one-page newsletter for new chamber members only that is sent out quarterly and provides tips and hints for the new chamber member to get the most out of its membership. It is done as a very eye-catching piece with a bright color and professional layout and design.

The Chamber Insider, a publication done by Western Association of Chamber Executives, featured an article about this program going on to say: "The first year a business joins probably is the most important. During that year, that business is paying close attention to what he/she is getting out of the investment made, and it is crucial that the chamber makes sure the member is fully aware of the benefits, products, services, events and successes that the chamber is providing. Although we have said many times that members will get from the chamber what they put in with regard to time and involvement, the chamber many times has to provide the road map for the member to follow."

I could not agree more!

10 Great Reasons to be a Chamber Member

From the Helena, MT Chamber newsletter:

1. Increase revenue
2. Make valuable business contacts at weekly, monthly, and annual events.
3. Receive up-to-date monthly information mailed directly to your business.
4. Display your brochure/business information in the Chamber Visitor Center and Chamber office.
5. Take advantage of special educational opportunities offered throughout the year for you and your employees.
6. Hot-link your business to the Chamber's widely used website.
7. Get involved in exclusive opportunities through the chamber publications and special projects.
8. Have a voice in local, state and federal government on business issues. The Chamber is your business advocate and lobbies as such.
9. Get involved with tourism promotion, meeting and convention marketing.
10. Participate in the economic development of this region.

A Chamber Song ?

The Chamber Alliance of New York State's September newsletter gave me a chuckle with the following article:

"Ellen Daley from the Orange County Chamber reports that at a recent chamber event, a group of panelists spontaneously broke into song to extol the chamber's virtues. For your enjoyment, here are the lyrics, sung to the tune of "Getting to Know You"

Get-ting to know you/ From Ga-la Ball to the Ex-po
Golf-ing and mix-ers/Now we all know what to say
Have-n't you no-ticed/Sud-den-ly your bus-iness has
grown?
Because of all the/Won-der-ful and new/Things the
Cham-ber does for you
Day by day! "

(Now there's a group who have personality!)

Paid Your Dues???

Forget the upsets you have had.
Ignore the weather if it's bad.
Forget the gray streaks in your hair
and envy not the millionaire.
Pass up the coffee if it's cold.
Refuse the knock and never scold.
Forget whatever else you choose,

**But Don't Forget to Pay
Your Dues!**

(from the Motorvator Newsletter, via W.C.C.E. newsletter)

Added Value Membership Benefits

How often do you hear prospective members ask "can't you show me a member benefit immediately yields me savings on my cost of doing business - savings I can see". Well here are two such programs from opposite sides of the country:

Eugene (OR) Area Chamber (population of 130,000 with 1300 members) Group Workers' Compensation Program offers qualified Chamber members a 10% discount on workers' compensation premiums from SAIF (State Accident Insurance Fund).

So. Saratoga County (NY) Chamber (population 94,000 with 900 members) is one of a dozen or so central and upstate NY chambers who offer their members the Energy Alliance (and no wisecracks about the Big Blackout! the program affects only the price for electricity). Participating in the Alliance allows Chamber members to reduce their electric and natural gas costs through the purchasing power of a large group.

Bits and Pieces

The way I see it, if you want the rainbow,
You gotta put up with the rain. Dolly Parton

In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak.

On a Canadian two-dollar bill, the flag flying over the Parliament building is an American flag.

Winston Churchill was born in a ladies' room during a dance.

"Children are a lot like pancakes. You sort of ruin the first one and you get better at it the second time around. By the third one, you flip it over just at the right time." Readers Digest/Kelly Ripa in the Journal News (White Plains, NY)

A Great Member Benefit

Findlay Hancock County, OH (population 38,000 city/104,000 countywide with 904 members until they just added 151 more in a spectacular Community Awareness Membership Recruitment Campaign!) offers a very effective program named "60 Seconds Strictly Business".

In cooperation with two local radio stations, it produces and airs a member spotlight program, which is intended to focus on business and industry, recognizing their efforts in the community. The criteria for the spotlight program include: when the company was founded, number of employees, location and primary business activity. The spot should include the business history and success in the market based on sales and employee growth since its establishment. The spot should be limited to 100 words or less. The service announcements are gratis. They are not commercials, because don't forget, the FCC will not allow a radio station to air "profit-making" commercials at no charge, yet they require stations to do public service announcements.

Here is a sample script (and you can call it a public service announcement if you want, but I call it a darn good Chamber member benefit since the business is getting exposure it would not ordinarily have and it is costing them nothing!)

"Hi, I'm Dionne Neubauer, Vice President for Chamber Relations for the Findlay Hancock County Chamber of Commerce. This week we're recognizing...National Memorial Stone. Located at 1121 W. Main Cross Street in Findlay, National Memorial Stone Company has been family owned and operated since 1904. They have been in the same location and part of the Findlay community for over 30 years. They specialize in all monument counseling needs and pre-needs. National Memorial Stone offers a large variety of cemetery flowers and services to many customers. The Findlay Hancock County Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with WFIN salutes National Memorial Stone."

Check out our website: www.chamberdevelopment.com

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