

Chamber Development Strategies

Issue #52 June 2004 an idea exchange - from Joan Testa, Chamber Development Services, Inc.
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Editor's Corner:

Written for another publication after 9/11, but perhaps this article has meaning this July 4 season.

Strength in Numbers

by Joan Testa
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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!

Tidbits

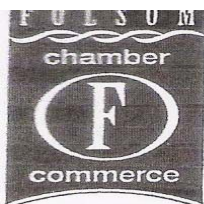
Another great Chamber slogan:
Connecting Business to Profits

Direct quote from April 27, 2004 episode of CBS television series Judging Amy:

"My husband has joined a committee of the Chamber of Commerce. Now he is gone so often I feel like a single mother."

(Sounds to me like at least one television writer knows Chambers!)

Unique Member Discount Program Offered to Members + 7,000 on Intranet



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TO:
FM:

All Chamber Members
Joseph P. Gagliardi

**RE: MEMBER DISCOUNT PROGRAM
DISCOUNT KEY TAGS**



The Folsom Chamber of Commerce is pleased to offer our Member Discount Program available to all Chamber Members. **Members can present the enclosed Discount Key Tag at participating chamber businesses to receive discounts.**

Chamber members receive key tags based upon their membership level. **Additional tags are available for purchase from the chamber at \$2.00 each. Please call for information on purchasing key tags for your employees.**

Discount offers are available to Intel employees, the entire chamber membership, and employees of chamber member businesses. While Intel does not allow medical services to be offered to their employees, these discounts can be offered to the general membership, et. al.

Currently, **over 300 chamber members offer discounts.** Discounts can be changed every two months. The publication schedule is as follows:
June/August – September/October – November/December – January/February

If you wish to participate in the Member Discount Program, please fax or mail the enclosed form to the chamber by the following deadline schedules:
August 15th for the September/October issue and October 15 for November/December issue.

For a complete listing of participating businesses and their discounts, visit the chamber website at FolsomChamber.com or stop by the chamber for a printed copy.

Please call Sharon Broff at 985-2698 if you have any further questions.

Member Discount Program

- This service is free to Chamber members.
- Discount must reflect a minimum savings of 10%.
- The discount offers can be changed every two months.
- A listing of the discount offers will be distributed by Intel to their 7,000 employees, plus employees of other participating corporations and will be available to Chamber members online at the Chamber website (FolsomChamber.com), or can be picked up at the Chamber office.

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