



Have the publishers of chamber maps and directories become a PONZI SCHEME? On time production and royalty payout is the new name of the game

KATIE SHORTT
Editor

There once was a point in time where new movers expected a packet of information from the Chamber of Commerce upon their arrival at their new address. Community maps, area brochures, and business directories have long been a staple product for Chambers of Commerce. Generally offered at no cost to Chambers, the maps and brochures serve as a great resource that the Chambers can provide not only to new movers, but also to their members, their community, and its visitors.

These brochures and packets also serve as an important source of income for Chambers through royalties on advertising sales that are promised to them by the publishing companies. So a chamber would be silly not to participate in such a program, right? Not if they knew what was going on in the chamber publishing industry today. A multitude of factors have combined to make the environment for successful chamber publishing a stormy one – and it has adverse affects on chambers, too.

It's no secret that the economy is no longer as strong as it once was, so it should also be no surprise that companies and their employees alike are being a little more fierce in looking out for themselves monetarily. Jerry Wright, former president and CEO of Mosher-Adams, a publishing company that worked with Chambers until it went bankrupt in 1999, notes that publishing companies "take most of the revenue, but all the margins are squeezing." Wright explains that many publishing companies are dealing with fewer ad sales from the local businesses that once fueled publication costs. Add to that the fact that salespeople



Bob Bartosiewicz,
Courtesy of CGI Communications, Inc.

want higher pay and chambers want more commission, and huge problems arise throughout the industry.

Ed Zapencki is a prime example of what can happen to companies if they aren't careful. Zapencki used to travel from community to community in Wisconsin and Illinois selling "Fun Treasure Maps," community maps highlighting small local businesses in a fun, cartoon style. Zapencki would sell spots on the map for a few hundred dollars or through trades with business owners. The problem was that the maps arrived months or even years late - if at all. Allegedly, businesses paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for advertising on maps which were never produced.

Wisconsin's FOX6 News investigated Zapencki's scheme, and after being made aware of and investigating numerous complaints, the state of Wisconsin filed suit against him. In early 2012, Zapencki was ordered by a Wisconsin Circuit Court to pay \$250,000 restitution, forfeitures, and costs. It also prohibited him from col-

lecting advance payments for promised future goods or services and ordered him to provide the state with a record of all transactions and map deliveries since 2007.

"chamber presidents are waiting a year to get their royalty checks"

of rivals, Mosher-Adams seemed like an untouchable force in the chamber publishing industry. Unfortunately for them, things weren't what they seemed. An article published in Inc. Magazine in 2000, shortly after the company closed down, cited a sales force unable to keep up with the company's expansion and declining profit margins as reasons for the company's demise.

Towery is another one. Founded in 1986, Towery Publishing worked with Chambers across America to produce books, city guides, and membership directories. Purchased in 2001 by a Chicago holding company, Towery shut down seemingly abruptly the following year – without notifying the Chambers they were working with that were still waiting on their publications. A 2002 article from the Pittsburgh Business Times cites that Chambers weren't the only ones blindsided – Towery had over 50 employees that were owed back wages at the time of their closing.

Mosher-Adams and Towery

are just two companies on an unfortunately lengthy list. A resounding number of chamber publishing companies have gone bankrupt in the past decade – and that number becomes even more despairing when you think about how many chamber clients each company had.

A chamber executive, who wished to remain anonymous, cited that her current publication, which was supposed to come out on a yearly basis, was late. She was notified that the publication's arrival date was being pushed back one month – but it wasn't until two months after that new date that the book finally arrived. As for the royalties that chamber was promised, they were still waiting to receive them at the time this article was written. The publication's tardiness has had adverse affects for the chamber. "It makes it more complicated to do another book," the executive said. "Now the directory is coming out at the wrong time of the year... It makes us look stupid." When asked whether she would continue to work with the publishing company, her response was bleak: "it's a three year contract, we have no other choice."

While there may be chambers

even adds some advice for Chamber Executives: "my suggestion to them, when they're working with traditional media companies, is to make sure they get the full transparency out of their publisher."

Bartosiewicz believes so firmly in full transparency royalty reporting that his company now provides Chamber clients with a website where they can check the royalties they are owed in real time. According to Bartosiewicz, chambers "can literally see what sales volume was done on a weekly basis, right on the internet, and when that check has been cleared. Within a matter of seven days, they'll receive their portion of the royalty on a per week basis, and it's wired right into their account." CGI's product line will also soon include a debit card where the royalties can be deposited, which will be available in early September.

In a time of a rapidly decomposing industry, it seems easy to pin the blame on the products themselves notwithstanding the test of time. However, a closer look reveals that companies can still thrive in the chamber service industry, as long as they take the proper steps. Hopefully chambers that may have been burned in the past can use this information as a reassurance that not all chamber publishing companies are scams, while other chambers can see this as a cautionary tale. Remember to do your research before signing on to a program, and make sure you're working with a reputable company that will ensure you receive the products and royalties your chamber deserves.

For more information on New Atlas, visit www.newatlas.com. More information on CGI can be found at www.cgicompany.com



Chamber Card Prototype, courtesy of CGI Communications, Inc.

suffering because of the changing industry, there is a silver lining to this cloud: more companies are refining their products and practices to ensure that they don't run into trouble with their payments, and more importantly, that no more chambers need to deal with missing products and royalties.

When Mosher-Adams went under, Wright acquired the Oklahoma City street atlas and used that to start up New Atlas Dot Com. Wright noted that in the early stages of the new company, they "had stopped doing community materials" altogether. It wasn't until Chambers sought him out and asked to work with him again that he decided to venture back into the industry – but this time, he was prepared.

Referencing Mosher-Adams, Wright said that the business' "problems were correctable – they just weren't corrected on time." At New Atlas, Wright made sure to adjust the business model to better accommodate what his company was willing to put forth, as well as what Chambers wanted. The result was a new model where Chambers sell the ad space themselves. "They know members better than a stranger [from a publishing company]," notes Wright. "They share in the revenue; they get more money. We do everything but sell the ads." New Atlas has converted most of the production process to be online, making things easier for Chambers to handle sales. The new model takes a lot of the risk out of the process for them. "There's no invoice until the product is delivered," Wright assures.

Bartosiewicz's company has also restructured the way the royalties are handled for his products. "It's not our money, why would we hold it?" he asks, referencing other companies' royalty payback procedures. He

The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce: Success with the Community Video Network

ROBYN JOHNSON
Staff Writer

As one of the nation's largest chambers of commerce, Chicagoland serves six counties in Northeast Illinois and areas of Ohio, Wisconsin and Indiana. Chicagoland serves these

communities as a private, non-profit source of assistance and development for area businesses. The chamber aims to promote economic development, foster economic growth and cultivate a competitive yet fair business arena.

With such powerfully upheld objectives and vastly spanning areas of service, the chamber has come to

utilize technological resources to assist in communicating the benefits of economic and social participation in the Chicagoland area. The chamber's use of the Community Video Network has proven its proficiency as a tool for conveniently displaying information pertaining to businesses, communities

Continued on page 8

National Chamber Review
130 East Main St., Granite Building
Rochester, NY 14604

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROCHESTER, NY
PERMIT #51

Special Section Inside:
The United States Chamber of Commerce
Celebrates 100 Years of Service.

See Page 3

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN PERIL:

How Review Pages and Daily Deal Sites Could Spell Trouble For Chambers

NICK PALERMO
Tech Writer

Gone are the days of new residents expecting a welcome package from the Chamber of Commerce upon arriving at their new home. No doubt chambers still send these tidings, but the mindset of the public has shifted. Social networks have made the world seem even smaller. Word of mouth can travel across the country in a nanosecond with the touch of your finger. Students can read all about a city's hot-spots without ever having touched down.

A site like Google+ Local (formerly Google Places) compiles reviews from residents and to determine the business' place in the search results. If it is determined to be more reputable, meaning there are more legitimate and positive reviews posted, it will get better results in searches; regardless of an investment like chamber membership.

Angie's List is another

review page that offers even more secure data regarding business reviews. Safeguards prevent anonymous posting, and quality control ensures that competitors are unable to grieve fellow businesses. The level of quality offered by Angie's List is due to the cost of membership by the users.

Caught up in the competition of Google's sheer numbers versus the quality-assured members of Angie's List both providing reputable reviews the chamber members have to fight for a voice in new ways. Members aren't thrust into the forefront of a new resident's mind by default. The benefits of membership and chamber advertising are no longer the only advantage to propel a chamber business forward.

In addition to sites that catalog reviews, local businesses are also snapping up exposure on the ever-popular daily deal sites. Pages like "LivingSocial.com" and "GetMyPerks.com" feature enormous discounts for

users looking for food, entertainment and services through businesses in their hometown. Constantly expanding their reach daily deal sites are popping up in major cities with no end in sight.

So many resources available to small businesses doesn't have to spell doom for chamber members so long as they're willing to recognize the edge provided by keeping up with the available resources. There was a time when the yellow pages and the chamber of commerce were the beacons of a business' quality; the people who pioneered those new tools were on the cutting edge. The same pioneer attitude can be adopted for businesses choosing to stay current with the new-age options now exploding across the Internet. Now more than ever it may be important to give equal diligence to what's familiar, like the local Chamber of Commerce, and what's new, like maintaining an online reputation.

With so many many op-



Photo by Tim Epner

tions available, it can be stressful to keep up. Several companies have capitalized on the need to consolidate online reputation management, doing all of the legwork for the business owner, which in turn, allows them to focus on what's important-

ning the business. One such example is Next! Ad Agency. Next! serves as an all-inclusive point of contact for small businesses to maintain all venues of online activity, including: SEO, verified reviews, daily deal-liaisons, Google + Local page maintenance, Facebook Pages

and anything else that can be done to improve online presence.

For information regarding businesses mentioned, visit: www.angieslist.com, www.google.com/+learnmore/local/ or www.nextadagency.com/.

info@chamberreview.org



Facebook's home page, which cites "it's free and always will be"

The Facebook Tidal Wave: Has the New Big Blue Changed Advertising?

NICK PALERMO
Tech Writer

Internet advertising is nothing new; banners appearing on websites encouraging you to click because you've won, annoying pop-ups and the like have been around for quite a while. However, internet advertisements have come a long way in the past few years - so is there anything small businesses should be doing to keep up? Site traffic and stock value might point to Facebook, but

daily life of people around the world. Facebook users encompass one twelfth of the world's population. If they represented a country, it would be the 3rd largest on Earth. All of this was achieved by maintaining the original mantra of their tag line, still found on the sign-up page: "It's Free, and Always Will Be." That kind of user accessibility, combined with the legitimizing action of teaming up with thousands of websites (subsequently connecting more people than ever in recorded history),

Ads on Facebook are unique from other forms of online advertising in that they can target the demographics and geography of users with laser-like accuracy. With all the information people willingly give the social network, there's no reason the ads shouldn't be that precise. Is there any amount of demographic-targeting on a social networking site that can translate to revenue?

The short answer: not nearly the way you'd expect. A report by PC World in mid-

"it's FREE and always will be."

what would the pioneers of Facebook advertising tell you? It might be surprising.

Less than 10 years ago, Facebook didn't exist. Originally exclusive to college students, the first iteration of the social network was raw and unpolished at best. Over time, it evolved, but the real "ah-ha moment" was when Facebook integration became commonplace across a large portion of the Internet. The ability to utilize a common social network profile to log into countless news and information sites led to a sense of legitimacy.

In such a short time after its inception, the networking titan has literally altered the

earned founder, president, and CEO Mark Zuckerberg the title "Person of the Year" by Time magazine in 2010.

So what does all that mean for small business owners thinking about advertising online? If you were paying attention at the start of the last quarter of 2011, you may have heard about gesture made by the US Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business, and Facebook, where the three major players gave away ten million dollars in advertising credits intended to spark small business involvement on the site. Unfortunately, good intentions can't pay the bills.

May featured GM's withdrawal from Facebook advertising after it determined that paid ads on the site are simply not effective. People are not interested in clicking on ads when they're in the realm of a social network, it's simply not part of the mindset of users while on the site. Ads through search engines like Google are proven to be more effective because people are looking for things through those sites. This leads to more clicks, and in turn, more revenue.

According to WordStream, a search marketing software service aimed at helping marketers get better

Continued on page 4

"SPOTLIGHT ON INNOVATION" Manhattan Chamber of Commerce Steps Up

NICK PALERMO
Tech Writer

Chambers are struggling to maintain membership and relevance in a business world where social networks are climbing the ladder to become titans of marketing and traditional publications have fallen by the wayside. However, not every chamber raises the white flag easily.

A chamber that demonstrates initiative, creativity and advocacy can propel itself ahead of the curve. That's why the spotlight on innovation falls on the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce for its efforts to incorporate new technologies as a means to reach more members. Serving 1,500 active members and approximately 10,000 subscribers, the MCC advocates for all business in the Greater New York City area, and is constantly innovating to keep pace with evolving technologies. One such technology is a weekly Internet radio show featuring chamber members.

How did such a tool get implemented? It was a quick transition to be sure - not exactly an overnight change, but quite rapid nonetheless. The man to thank for that is chamber member Dr. Bruce Hurwitz. During a discussion with chamber ambassador Gil Efron, the subject of Hurwitz's Internet radio program came up and

put the idea in motion to execute something similar in the chamber's interest. After a pilot episode and council approval, "The Voice of Manhattan Business" was born.

The idea couldn't have come at a better time. Recently discontinuing its own quarterly publication, "Business Matters," due to cost, and in an effort to steer the chamber in a more green direction, the addition of digital content piqued the interest of the board members. According to Efron, the chamber was interested in what he calls "digital engagement" as a new way to engage members.

The show itself is hosted by Hurwitz, and broadcast through a website called BlogTalkRadio.com once per week, with each episode archived afterwards. Hosting isn't Hurwitz's only duty for maintaining "The Voice of Manhattan Business." He is also responsible for managing the website, researching the guests, and taking care of all the preparations through the BlogTalkRadio website. This includes reserving an hour time slot on the site for the live broadcast and allowing for enough time to get all promotional materials regarding the week's guest posted onto thevoiceofmanhattanbusiness.com.

Broadcasting live once per week since April 4th, totaling 9 episodes at the time this

article was being written, Hurwitz seems pleased with what the SEO reports are showing. BlogTalkRadio tracks all listener data for premium members, allowing the administrator to view important information such as where a person listened, what kind of device played the show, and how many people listened live.

Future plans include integration of advertising opportunities for chamber members into the program. There is already a sponsorship system in place, and the intention is to grow out from there by increasing the ways in which chamber members can participate.

When asked if he could impart any advice for other chambers looking to start something similar, Hurwitz offered this: "one thing the host has to remember is that no one is tuning in to listen to the host. You prepare the questions ahead of time. You ask the questions, and maybe ask a follow up, but let the guest do the talking. Also, never let them write out their answers ahead of time, people can tell when it sounds too scripted."

The Voice of Manhattan Business airs on Wednesdays at 12pm Eastern Time at www.voiceofmanhattanbusiness.com. Any changes to the regular schedule will be posted there ahead of time.

info@chamberreview.org



Hurwitz works in the Voice of Manhattan Business studio, courtesy of Bruce Hurwitz

FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

JOEL STOJKOVIC
Staff Contributor

As an athlete my entire life, I have participated in and watched hundreds of games in a handful of sports and can honestly say one aspect that continues to puzzle me is teamwork. Why, when the sum of a team is greater than its individual parts, do players often attempt to do it all themselves and go it alone? Making the situation will more maddening is when it is easy to see that the team itself has plenty more to offer than the individual.

Admittedly, this team first attitude has carried over with the launch of the National Chamber Review, which led me to pose that same question regarding Chamber memberships and the businesses that decide to move forward on their own.

One of the keys for any successful sports franchise is the ability to attract and bring in new talent, and keep that talent in house, and grow the franchise from within. A team that utilizes everything about their great city and sends only the top people from management to meet with the prospects has the chance to lure the best of the best to put on their uniform. What would happen if those players were never approached with an offer, or worse, what if the offer was poorly received or delivered unprofessionally? When the aforementioned business owners were asked how their respective area chambers had approached their particular businesses, the responses were the same. The typical mailer with information on the chamber itself, usually followed shortly by an application to join, was the most common response. If a player wouldn't join a team without a visit from upper management then why would a business put their trust in something that at first glance seems so distant?

For one small business owner outside the Chicago area, joining the "team" makes no sense simply because of a lack of information regarding their returns on the initial investment. That owner, who is not a chamber member, said, "I don't think most people know exactly what the chamber can do for them. But that's how it is with any networking or advertising that a small business does. You don't know the results or the feedback until you have spent the money, put your company's name and reputation out there, and waited to see what happens next." For many companies, it seems to boil down to whether

Continued on page 7

National Chamber Review

Investigating, informing, and inspiring Chambers of Commerce on the issues that matter to Main Street

How to Reach Us
www.chamberreview.org
E-mail: info@chamberreview.org
Advertising: advertisers@chamberreview.org
Content: submissions@chamberreview.org

Staff
Katie Shortt, Editor,
General Manager of Production
Chasity Beikirch, Staff Writer
Robyn Johnson, Staff Writer
Nick Palermo, Staff Writer
Patrick McCabe, Staff Contributor
Joel Stojkovic, Staff Contributor
Geoff Toomey, Staff Contributor
Carolyn Wagner, Layout Manager
Joshua Doty, Logo Design, Artist



"HIRING OUR HEROES" AND "GOT YOUR 6" Work Together for Veterans

ROBYN JOHNSON
Staff Writer

With unemployment rates for post-9/11 veterans landing in the staggering range of 12.1 to 26%, a variety of organizations have begun recognizing the importance of creating programs that address and repair this national fault. Two particularly powerful program developers, the national entertainment industry (ServiceNation) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, have created initiatives that share a common objective - reintegrate military service members culturally, socially and economically in a way that redefines the nation's contemporary value of veterans.

"Got Your 6", a military vernacular meaning "got your back", is a campaign which was established by the entertainment industry after ServiceNation hosted a collaborative meeting with the industry at large to discuss Veteran's issues. Guilds, studios, and networks agreed on the importance of helping the nation's veterans and their families.

The provisional discussion rapidly evolved into a comprehensive and widely supported campaign to drastically shift the nature of the United States' approach toward handling veterans' issues, which is generally a topic that lacks empowerment. The program aims to bridge the transitional gap that veterans

experience after serving in the military and returning to civilian life. By providing resources and tools for all Americans and drawing attention to veterans issues, "Got Your 6" attempts to make the United States as a whole feel more comfortable with the concepts surrounding military service and veteran status. The program's objective is to generate a national value of duty, service and respect that is mutually shared by citizens and service members. Similarly, the program focuses on several pillars of military-civilian reintegration that require national improvement - jobs, education, health, housing, families, and leadership - giving broader meaning to the "6". The enter-

tainment industry will conquer these issues, or "activate" the campaign, by shining a spotlight on the aforementioned concepts; veterans' issues will be integrated into scripts and creative content, veterans programs will be endorsed by celebrities and "Got Your 6" merchandise with collect funds with which the campaign can further develop.

While "Got Your 6" is certainly a less-formal approach toward addressing veterans' issues, its partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce compliments the collaborative efforts of both programs with regard to formality. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is interested in strengthening the "job" pillar described by "Got Your 6", hence the development of "Hiring Our Heroes". "Hiring Our Heroes" is a program directed toward assisting veterans and their spouses in finding employment from which they can derive meaning and value. The program hosts job fairs catered specifically to veterans and features employers who commend and appreciate the value of service members.

Most employers are among the private sector. In the first year of "Hiring Our Heroes", 9000 veterans and their spouses were helped to find employment; the program now holds a goal of employing 500,000 service members and their partners by 2014. In order to accomplish this goal, "Hiring Our Heroes" plans to expand their efforts to incorporate an additional 400 communities across the country in which job

fairs can be held. The program's partnership with the American Legion allows for smaller communities to be involved in the veteran recruitment process in the same way that large cities like New York, Chicago, Indianapolis and Dallas are. NBCUniversal has also proven to be an ally and promoter of the hiring program. Expansion efforts are also rooted in influencing and encouraging the involvement of local chambers across the country and the 3 million members of the Small Business Federation.

"Hiring Our Heroes" is the first pillar in a massive campaign to shift the American regard for what military service, mutual support and national collaboration mean. Both the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the entertainment industry's approaches demand the recognition of veterans' issues as critical in the eye of the American public. Although the national chamber and Hollywood are a seemingly unlikely collaborative team, this method of portraying and correcting a national problem solicits the public's attention in a way that cannot be ignored.

A steadfast resolution, however, is determined by the willing participation of communities, local chambers of commerce and businesses in the effort to hire our heroes.

For a list of "Hiring Our Heroes" job fairs and events, or to get involved, visit: <https://hoh.greatjob.net/sc/index.action>

info@chamberreview.org

U.S. Chamber's Centennial Made Possible by Early Local Chambers

ROBYN JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Before the establishment of the federal chamber of commerce, local chambers had worked tirelessly to not only benefit business, but to guide community development and generate civic change. In 1893, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce - a particularly innovative chamber - developed an approach that shaped and improved the community for citizens and businesses alike. The chamber's business-like approach was efficient, and when combined with humanitarian goals of bettering education, government processes, citizens' well-being, and city planning, the chamber developed a comprehensive method that connected social well-fare and economic advancement. The cumulative result was a community that thrived and, in turn, inspired other local chambers to also become such proponents of civic change.

The federal government, led by the local example, saw the need to establish an organization that united businesses, and essentially reflected the success of local chambers on a national

level. In 1911, Howard Taft addressed congress and proposed that businesses and associations be centralized and connected in order to unify American economic interests. The following year, Taft and hundreds of delegates representing various fields of commerce and trade established the United States Chamber of Commerce. Now, on the chamber's 100th birthday, it is recognized as the world's largest business federation and represents more than 3 million businesses. The chamber's early objectives aimed to protect free enterprise and individual opportunity. Although these objectives have morphed to fit a changing society, environment and economy, they are still rooted in the chamber's priorities.

While local chambers, as previously mentioned, have done much to shape the civic landscape of their communities, this is nationally reflected as the U.S. Chamber helps to further develop our society. Today, at 100 years old, the U.S. Chamber still pays close attention to the social and economic context in which businesses find themselves. The chamber currently aims to protect financial mar-

kets and consumers, uphold a competitive business environment and cultivate and support legislation that will "positively affect job creators and the economy," as demonstrated in the chamber's 2012 Policy Priorities. At the forefront of the chamber's agenda are environmental and energy concerns; the Chamber's position, while controversial, indicates that there is a significant negative economic impact generated by environmental regulation. However, the chamber supports and is an advocate of clean energy production and incentives for businesses that practice energy efficiency. Likewise, the chamber encourages domestic natural resource exploration and oil drilling for the purposes of American economic self-sufficiency. The chamber also focuses a great deal on consumer involvement in the democratic process; the chamber encourages consumers and businesses alike to participate in the review of public policies that affect the economy. To save businesses money, the chamber takes a stance on another controversial issue - healthcare. While the chamber supports programs

that aim to improve the health of employees, the chamber opposes government enforcements of costly business health plans. With regard to education, the chamber funds efforts to increase students' competencies in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math. Finally, the U.S. Chamber takes an interesting approach toward the ever-growing issue of immigration. Although border security is a pursued and supported issue, the chamber strongly opposes (and has openly resisted) mandatory immigration status evaluations of employees in Arizona. The chamber's stance is rooted in securing employment when domestic employees are unavailable.

Although the chamber is not a governmental agency, it certainly plays a role in our nation's affairs. Local chambers can connect with the U.S. Chamber through various membership options that provide opportunities for networking and political action. The U.S. Chamber, through the Small Business Summit and Small Business Nation options, encourage businesses that favor pro-growth policies to be active

at the National level. However, it is important to note that the U.S. Chamber opposes "buy local" mandates, which may be discerning for chambers that do not seek significant growth. Because the U.S. Chamber and local chambers are separate entities with differing commitments, there are naturally conflicts in interest - this being one of the most significant for small businesses. So, although the chamber may have been established 100 years ago with the interests of local commerce primarily in mind, contemporary policy positions speak volumes to how our economy has grown and changed - due greatly to the efforts of both the national and local chambers.

Although differing somewhat in origin and objective, local chambers and the U.S. Chamber can both celebrate the centennial. The U.S. Chamber for its progress, and local chambers for their inspirational role in our nation's economic development. Happy Birthday to the U.S. Chamber, and congratulations to all of the local chambers for mobilizing civic and fiscal activity.

info@chamberreview.org

GOING GREEN: What It Means For Your Chamber

PATRICK MCCABE
Staff Contributor

Green is good. From the leaves on the trees and the waves of the sea to the money in your wallet, we all like a little green in our lives. So what does 'going green'

mean? Is it all just recycling and energy efficient air conditioners? Well...yes and no, though that's certainly a good start.

What does going green mean for local business owners, and more specifically, chamber members? A lot depends on

your location and industry. For example, you can imagine the massive benefits a waste management facility would receive by maintaining green practices as opposed to, say, a dental office - but the truth is every type of business can benefit. By working together, business owners can help themselves, each other, the local community, and their environment. From coast to coast, Chambers are getting involved in the trendy

green movement - but this isn't a dying trend. In fact, it's gaining speed...and quickly.

The National City Chamber of Commerce in National City, California sponsors a Green Business Program for their members, with the goal of helping local businesses adopt sustainable business practices. They "encourage and facilitate energy efficient business practices in National City through education, outreach, network-

ing, marketing, and advocacy." All chamber members are encouraged to apply to become a part of the program.

A similar program exists among the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce in Indianapolis, Indiana. Available only to chamber members, Green Memberships are given to businesses that apply and meet the necessary requirements.

Continued on page 4

GOING GREEN:

(Continued from page 3)

PATRICK MCCABE
Staff Contributor

Although inclusion in this club isn't meant to be exclusive. Lisa Travis, Business Advocacy Assistant at Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce says that although the designation is only available to Chamber members, "we're trying to educate our members and non-members on what it's like to live green." With nearly 100 members in their green program, it seems to be catching on.

Members are accepted into the program by implementing energy efficient upgrades and showing an active pursuit of green business practices. Requirements for both National City and Greater Indianapolis vary depending on the type and size of the business, but generally it comes down to having an active recycling program, showing a dedication to using electronic, paperless communication, having internal policies for operating electronics only when necessary, and installing LED light bulbs throughout their facility. Yes, Chambers look out for the best interests of their members, but they also care deeply about the best interests of their communities. By adhering to these small requirements, businesses can go a long way to improving the environment where they live and work.

The benefits of membership are felt almost immediately. According to their website, National City Chamber of Commerce Green Members received installation and/or retrofitting of energy efficient equipment at low or no cost, a free energy toolkit, free workshops and seminars, community recognition of their voluntary efforts to improve their environment, and free advertising and promotion of their business – not to mention the savings gained through improved efficiency, energy, and water. The Chamber also sponsors a Direct Install Program which provides free energy and money-saving services for those that qualify. Visit their website at www.nationalcitychamber.com to find out more.

Similarly, in Greater Indianapolis, green members are able to offer services to each other at a lower cost, with the knowledge that they both use similar business practices. That distinction is the biggest draw to many of these Chamber members. Green members are able to advertise themselves as such, which is a powerful marketing tool when it comes to appealing to consumers and other businesses. "Green business owners tend to want to work with other green business owners," says Lisa Travis. "This membership lets you in a group of like-minded people. Everyone has the mentality that to go green you need to spend money, but in the long run, you end up

saving money through the program." Green members appeal to consumers and other businesses for both social and economic reasons, and that appeal can help their business grow. Go to www.indygreenbusiness.com to find out more.

Joel Markland, a member of the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Green Committee, and Director of Project Development at Bruce Carter Associates, a local environmental consulting firm, says that the Chamber is "taking a harder look to make sure the public and chamber members are aware. Awareness not only [of] our stewardship that we have to carry for environmental issues, but the benefits they can realize with savings and taking on sustainability programs or initiatives. Bottom line: Greener isn't just a social issue, but there's a value to it monetarily." Bruce Carter Associates works with local manufacturers, keeping them in compliance with environmental regulations. You can find out more about their cleanup efforts at www.bcaconsultants.com

Regardless of the benefits to the members themselves, the more businesses that participate in these programs, the better off their communities will be. The goal of these programs, first and foremost, is awareness. Not all green Chamber programs have requirements or offer distinction. The benefits come with working with other green members and improving their local community. Kori Hippe, Manager of Member Communications at Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina says that's why their green program was started. "It was community awareness...and [we] wanted to be an example for the community and for our members."

Recycling programs are a huge part of Myrtle Beach Area's green program. They want their community to stay clean, and the efforts of local businesses do not go unnoticed. Members can e-mail Hippe, who posts their conservation initiatives on their website at www.myrtlebeachareachamber.com. "[Members have] been sending a lot of ideas on ways they're conserving energy," says Hippe. "Whether it's just turning off their lights or a lot of recycling. We've seen a lot of recycling... one of our members, at Fisher Recycling, they go around and pick up paper and cans from [other] businesses. So we've helped to promote them, and they've offered specials to our members."

Regardless of intentions, it's difficult to see a bad side to green programs. Clean energy is beneficial to everyone. Whether your Chamber is in National City, Indianapolis, Myrtle Beach, or elsewhere, there are plenty of ways to get involved, become active, and set an example. Your community will thank you for it.

Supporting Local Economies, One Beer at a Time



Barrels at Ellicottville Brewing Company, Courtesy of EBC

GEOFF TOOMEY
Staff Contributor

What's on tap? It's a question that's been heard a lot in the past few years, and the answer is getting more diverse. Whether started just for the fun of brewing their own beer or with the initial intention of making it a full time occupation, craft breweries are popping up all over the place - and as pint glasses continue to fill, the growing craft beer industry continues to create jobs.

"Consumer habits are changing," Cheri Chastain, the Sustainability Coordinator for Sierra Nevada Brewing Company says. "We see consumers are getting really excited for craft beer. Small breweries are popping up both right and left and every time that happens you're creating jobs."

In the past ten years, the number of small craft breweries in the U.S. has seen a significant increase, and according to the Brewers Association (brewersassociation.org), craft brewers are providers of an estimated 103,585 jobs in the U.S. In an economy that seems hard pressed for both spending and employment, craft breweries continue bottling beer after beer.

"Craft is king," Peter Kreinheder, owner of Ellicottville Brewing Company states, adding that, "wineries and craft brewers are a cornerstone to small resort towns," such as Ellicottville, New York.

Starting as a family business over seventeen years ago, Ellicottville Brewing Company is now host to 64 jobs, which includes the servers and staff of their two brewpubs, one in Ellicottville and the other in Fredonia, New York.

Ellicottville Brewing Company joined their local Chamber of Commerce upon their formation. What used to be a small town that depended on their winter travelers, Ellicottville has bloomed into a four season travel destination. "I'd say that working with the Chamber of Ellicottville is eas-

ily worth fifty grand for our branding and marketing," reasons Kreinheder. The Ellicottville Brewery pools their money with the Chamber, who matches their funds and, in turn, promotes the brewery, along with the area and other businesses, too. "People don't just come for the brewery, they come for Ellicottville," Kreinheder says.

Ellicottville Brewing Company is in the process of building a 30 barrel German-style brewhouse with one of the most advanced beer gardens in the country. "We're looking to become an ultimate destination," Peter says. The new building will not only create more jobs for the brewery itself, but through its completion - just like anything new - it will create work for other associated industries, from the designers to the workers who will help build this future destination.

For other craft breweries, joining a chamber may be more of an afterthought. Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, which has been a highlight to the Chico, California area since its inception in 1980, has only been a member of the Chico Chamber of Commerce since 2009. Even though they've only recently joined their chamber, Sierra Nevada has always garnished their local roots in the area.

As one of the nations leading craft breweries, Sierra Nevada employs over 550 individuals, with about 100 of those working as sales representatives across the country. The on-site location in Chico is home to one of the areas largest local restaurants. Sierra Nevada has teamed up with their local college in an effort to implement a "buy local grow local initiative," which has resulted in the

brewery becoming a leading example for green and sustainable energy. The brewery owns its own herd of cattle for the restaurant, and Chastain adds, "we even have our own two-acre organic garden on site were we grow both produce and herbs for the restaurant. Everything else for the restaurant is always as local and in season as we can [get]."

In the upcoming year, Sierra Nevada will begin building a new facility in Mills River, North Carolina. Here, they will look to continue leading the way as an environmentally conscious brewery, hopefully adding as many as 100 jobs locally. As far as joining a local chamber, Chastain wasn't sure. "Mills River is a very small town and we definitely plan to be part of the community in a positive way, to really integrate ourselves, not only in the brewing community, but in the community as a whole, by partnering with the university and other non-profits."

Whether from micro-breweries or brewpubs, 2011 saw a continued trend that individuals are deciding to drink craft beers, as sales surpassed the volume share of larger beer companies. These craft breweries are small businesses, and towns and communities are beginning to realize that these breweries will not only help create jobs, but bring in travelers - which could help other small businesses.

Whether you're traveling or stopping into your local pub, why not ask if they have anything local? Who knows, you may find your new favorite beer.

info@chamberreview.org

Facebook Tidal Wave:

(Continued from page 2)

NICK PALERMO
Staff Writer

results from their SEO efforts, research detailing the effectiveness of Facebook ads showed that "the average click-through rate of an ad on the Google Display Network is...almost 10 times as high as the typical Facebook ad. Average CTR on Facebook is...about half the industry average for online banner ads. At the same time, costs per thousand impressions on Facebook are climbing."

Smaller businesses that couldn't afford to pioneer the Facebook advertising path like GM, or were maybe too skeptical to venture first, seem to have played it correctly. Factor in Facebook's recent disappointing IPO and others may be following suit soon. The state of the New Big Blue seems shaken at the moment, with Wall Street experts falling on both sides of the line; some are insisting that Facebook is too big to fail, and others referencing the dot com boom of 1999 as a model for how this will play out.

With multiple investors suing days after the market opening Facebook is off to a questionable start. Even more startling are the estimated numbers for Facebook to sustain itself. According to Paul B. Farrell of the Wall Street Journal's Market Watch, "if Facebook is valued at \$100 billion, its valuation would be 33 times its advertising revenue...to sustain its value, Facebook would need to grow its revenues by 41% percent per year for the next five years. That is very hard to do for any company, especially one of Facebook's size."

With that in mind, is now the right time to invest in Facebook advertising? That depends on how confident you are with your company's capital, and with what Facebook might be hiding up its sleeve. Unfortunately, only time will tell. Until then, eager businesses will have to take what they know about how Facebook changed technology and daily life for millions of people and determine if the Internet advertising overhaul is on the horizon - and if it will pay out.

info@chamberreview.org

What Types of Connections Do Your Members Need?

CATHI HIGHT
Contributing Columnist

How do you define 'networking?' The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "the

exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions," which is how most of us view networking on a broad level. Personally, I like this definition better: "the introduction of

people with common interests to each other," because it has a more profound outcome. Wally "Famous" Amos perhaps said it best: "I truly believe, when all is said and done, networking is

Continued on page 5



By KEVIN BAER

It's Always Time to Update Your Website

SCOTT JURANEK
Contributing Columnist

The French philosopher Henri Bergson said, "To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."

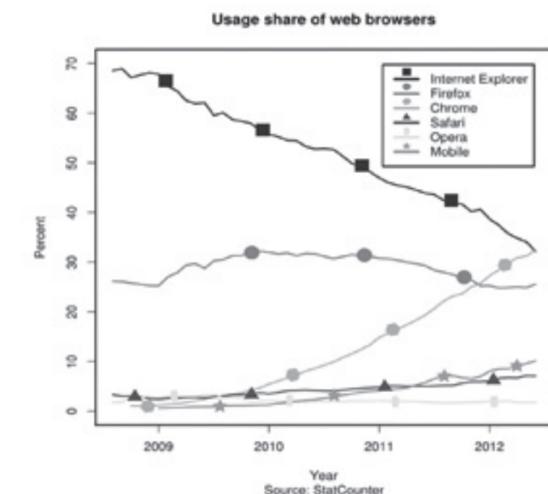
"If you've met one chamber, you've met ONE chamber." I've heard this statement several times by different chamber executives. While it's true that all chambers are distinctive and have a character all their own, it's also true that there are some patterns we can chart across hundreds of chambers that can be highly instructive. At MicroNet we're in the unique position of being able to see data from over 1200 chambers that use our software for managing their day-to-day member management processes. As a result, we've seen that as chamber websites are updated, their traffic starts a steady climb upward.



Scott Juranek

Several chambers have just completed the spectrum from simple refreshes to major facelifts, and in each instance, statistics for unique visitors as well as returners are on the rise.

It's tough to know exactly when to make the time and effort to update your site; however, market forces wait for no one. For example, only a few months ago you would have been fine optimizing your site for Internet Explorer. However,



Google's Chrome browser is beginning to overtake IE - meaning you'll need to make sure your site is just as speedy and looks as professional on at least three browsers.

Here are a few qualifying questions to help you decide if it's time to revisit your website:

1. Are you concerned that your website isn't displaying correctly in the latest browsers, including mobile browsers?
2. Are you using a technology that makes it difficult to

update the content yourself on a regular basis? Do you have easy access to a content management system?

3. Has your website kept up with blogs, images, newsletters, videos, and links to social media?

4. Is your site up to date with your branding? Is it a valuable asset for showing members that your organization is current?

5. Is it easy for you to do banner advertising on behalf of your members?

6. Does your site compare well against competitors, such as national directory sites? Is it something you can be proud of?

7. Is it optimized for search engines?

On this last point, one of the biggest reasons to update content is to improve your search engine potential (the ability to show up for a certain search term, and hopefully yours is higher than your competitors). Search engines love to see fresh, clean and unique content: it gives them a reason to return to your site to see what's new. Creating new content also gives you the opportunity to be found for phrases you weren't previously talking about on your website.

It's important to note that updating or changing content is different from adding new content. Revising content may actually drop your search engine potential if you remove a valuable key phrase (say from the page title, or page headline). So it is important to understand which of your pages are already generating good traffic, and monitor what impact changes to content may have on your

search ranking. SEO 3.0 Compliance

Investing in making sure our website templates are SEO 3.0 compliant means our customers will have greater success with Bing and Yahoo, which are growing in popularity. Another big change with SEO 3.0 is Google's addition of a preview pane.

This means visitors don't have to click to see your site-just hover. If you notice your traffic declining, it might be because your home page doesn't compete well against others. And the fewer people who visit your site, the lower your rankings will go.

If your traffic is standing still or declining, it's definitely time to look at a site refresh.

Scott Juranek is the CEO of MicroNet, Inc., providers of member management software and website solutions for over 1200 Chambers of Commerce. His background is in software development and he is very passionate about using technology to make business easier. Scott and his family live in Nisswa, Minnesota.

HOW TO DOUBLE THE SIZE OF YOUR CHAMBER – without Spending a Dime

GLENN SHEPARD
Contributing Columnist

I'm "lucky" enough to be in the top 10% of speakers who earn a speaking fee of \$10,000 or more, and in the top 1% of authors who've had a #1 best seller.

The sad part is that I know lots of people who speak and write much better than me, and have more degrees than a thermometer, but are broke.

What's the difference? It's a little "secret" of success in the publishing and speaking business, that shouldn't be a secret at all. As my executive editor at John Wiley & Sons in New York City tells all his authors, "Spend 75% of your time on marketing, and 25% on everything else."

And he should know. Wiley is over 200 years old, and has published literary legends including Edgar Allen Poe, Herman Melville, and Charles Dickens.

My publicist in Philadelphia says "You can't tell a book by the cover, but you can sell a book by the cover".

Whether you're a car dealer, author, speaker, restaurant owner, or anything else, marketing is what drives everything in business.

This also applies to 501c3 and 501c6 organizations.

Just look at how many commercials you see for hospitals these days. And if you want to see the most aggressive marketing in the world, watch the controversial anti-smoking commercials the Centers for Disease Control are running right now.

They show chain smokers who've had multiple amputations and have so many disfigurements that they're hard to watch.

I know from experience that a substantial percentage of the chamber execs reading this won't be in the chamber industry a year from now. Just this morning, I received emails

from chamber execs in Florida, Texas, and Ohio, asking to be added to my monthly chamber exec jobs email because they're no longer with their chambers. I don't know what you'll be doing this time next year, but I can guarantee you this. No matter what business you're in, your income will be directly proportional to how good you are at marketing.

To see proof of this, you need look no further than the job interview. One of the cruelest realities for job seekers is that the person who gets the job isn't necessarily the one who's best qualified; it's the one who's best at interviewing. That's marketing.

So how do you get good at marketing?

Well that's the million dollar question (billions, actually) that takes far more than one magazine article to answer. But here's the place to start.

The cardinal sin of marketing is being boring, because people forget fast.

I drive by the perfect example of this every day. The house a few doors down from ours is owned by a singer named Arnold Dorsey.

Never heard of Arnold? That's because he chose the stage name Engelbert Humperdinck.

He's a great singer, but lots of people are, especially here in Nashville where we live. What's more important is that he's a great marketer. He figured that Engelbert Humperdinck is a harder name to pronounce than Arnold Dorsey, but it's also a much harder name to forget.

The same is true in my business. One of the best known motivational speakers in the world is Hilary Hinton. Of course, you know Hilary Hinton Ziglar as "Zig".

Zig's a great speaker, but he's also a great marketer, and that's why he's been so successful.

So how do you apply these principles to your chamber? I'll show you in the next



Glenn Shepard

issue of The National Chamber Review.

If you're impatient and prefer to get a sample, now, I just gave you two.

First, notice that the title of this article isn't "Why Marketing is So Important", because that would be booooooooring.

Instead, it uses a very powerful advertising formula for headlines, called "How to... Without...".

You'll see it in the weight loss business: "How to Lose Weight without Dieting".

There's even a musical named "How to Succeed in Business without Trying". There's even a book titled "How to Improve Your Marriage without Talking About It".

The second example is called The AIDA Principal. Notice how I finished this article with "I'll show you in the next issue of National Chamber Review".

AIDA stands for "Grab their Attention, create Interest, stimulate Desire, and call for Action".

These are the same principles that companies like General Motors (the third largest advertiser in the U.S.) that spend millions use in their marketing, but I'll show you how to implement them for free with your chamber.

See you next quarter. *Glenn Shepard is the president of Glenn Shepard Seminars, which provides accredited seminars at no costs for Chamber of Commerce. For more info, go to www.glennshepard.com*

Members Need?

(Continued from page 4)

CATHI HIGHT
Contributing Columnist

just another way of saying, 'people helping people.'

I had the privilege of meeting and learning from Ken Erdman, author of Network Your Way to Success, in 1994 when I worked as VP of Operations for the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and we booked him to deliver a seminar for our members. Although Ken is no longer among us, his principles resonated with me and helped me see networking in a whole different way. Ken said, "No matter where the networking process begins, it will be enhanced along the way by contacts, relationships, experiences and information." Social media didn't arrive on the scene until much later and Ken's words are as true today as they were 16 years ago!

Ken taught us that people are looking for six types of connections in their networks:

The first kind are The Pros—They help you get everyday tasks done efficiently and at good prices. You need these services on a regular basis and these people are anchors in your database. At times, you're in need of a new pro to replace someone or you have new regular needs so you're on the look out to meet the best ones available.

The second kind are The Librarians—You can ask them anything since they always seem to have the answers! They are vast storehouses of knowledge and are multi-faceted people. Librarians are diverse readers of books, trade journals, magazines, newspapers, etc. They love challenges. Ask them a question and they'll go out of their way to get your answer, even by accessing other resources or experts in their network. And do all of this for the sheer joy of helping others with no personal agenda attached.

The third kind are Mentors—They are more successful than you or have skill sets and

knowledge you need. They set a standard for you personally or professionally. They take a vested interest in your success and can be called upon for special needs or introductions to others. They teach you how to navigate the waters and often share success secrets you never learned in school or through reading books. Mentors believe in cultivating their replacements and don't act as your competitors by holding back knowledge or contacts.

The fourth kind are Superknots—You could not get along without them because they are very special friends who can seemingly get you in front of everyone who's worth knowing. They are seen as the 'super-networkers.' They grant many favors, have long memories, and will redeem those favors when needed.

The fifth kind are Advocates—They are your evangelists and they tell everyone they know to buy from you. They act as your disciples because they love what you offer and promote you without any kickbacks or agendas. Advocates like and respect you and they're willing to tell others what they think about you. This kind of promotion can't be bought and is priceless!

The sixth and final kind are the Tomorrows—You haven't met these people yet and they are future connections that should be in your network. You will meet them by chance unexpectedly at events or through existing connections. As soon as you meet them, you recognize their worth and want to keep them in your network.

So, how can you help members develop stronger networks? Employ these tips and you will build your members and your own networking skills:

Send Four Cards a Week—Find reasons to send out four handwritten notes every week to those in your network, to help those in your network, and to people you want in your network. Reasons can include: thank you, congratulations, thought you should know, this may be of interest to you, birthday, anniversary, sympathy, appreciation (you get the gist). When you take away



Cathi Hight

the bills and junk mail received, most people don't get anything nice in the mail. Be the 'best thing that happened today.'

Make Four Calls a Day—Do it for many of the same reasons above although something about a warm, personal voice in a time of stress, aggressive sales pitches, or a down economy can go a long way. Even if you leave a voice message, your outreach will be noticed and appreciated.

Develop Four New Contacts a Week—You never know when you'll make a great new connection for you or for someone in your network. Strike up a conversation while standing in the grocery line or riding in an elevator with a stranger. Believe in '6 degrees of separation' and recognize that the new person you meet could become a friend, alliance or a new customer. Play Matchmaker—The best networkers listen to others, understand their needs, and share their resources. Referrals are wonderful and strategic introductions are the best type of referrals. Offer to introduce someone in your network to another who would be a great connection, supplier, this through an e-mail, three-way call, or by bringing people together for coffee or lunch.

By investing in your network and taking time to build on others' networks, you never know what doors you'll open or where they might lead. Leverage the power of people and realize that relationship economics is better than money in the bank! Happy networking!!

Cathi can be reached at (720) 304-0747 or e-mail: cathi@hightperformance.com.

Learning From Successful Chambers:

Implementing Tried and True Best Practices

CHASITY BEIKRICH
Staff Writer

The buzzwords “best practices” in the chamber business can mean anything from business models to direct mailers to facility crisis strategies. Whether you are a settled chamber looking to move into changing technologies or a burgeoning chamber looking to retain membership, deciding which best practices your chamber should adapt to benefit your members can be difficult.

Fortunately, there are several resources available for chambers looking to establish or change their best practices. The US Chamber of Commerce website (www.uschamber.com) lists resources from chambers across the nation that have recently met their standards for accreditation. There are a multitude of topics to choose from as well as information from several chambers varying in size; a little digging into these resources can help chambers that need change find specifically what is working for others.

Your chamber members may be more open to adapting a strategy that has already proven successful in a given area, while another good strategy for your chamber may be to blend elements from multiple chambers to fit your membership. The Albany Area Chamber of Commerce in Georgia, accredited by the US Chamber of Commerce, uses a marketing plan that includes ideas like “Shop the Chamber Stars,” a membership growth program that encourages local shoppers to search out chamber member businesses. For the Albany Chamber, “Shop the Chamber Stars” increased membership, drove up revenue to participating businesses, and established the chamber as an influential voice in the business community.

The Chambers for Innovation and Green Energy website (www.chambersforinnovation.com) lists the best practices of those chambers who are participating in movement towards “clean energy.” Like the US Chamber of Commerce site, the lists are general by topic of interest. However, each topic then has specific strategies that chambers have implemented. For example, the Grand Junction Area Chamber in Colorado is using the practice of establishing relationships with vendors to create an affili-

ate rebate program with area solar energy providers. This affiliate relationship benefits both the chamber and the participating businesses, providing an incentive to join and an opportunity to restructure energy usage. The Grand Junction Area Chamber was able to increase their membership through this program, as well as their non-member revenue, while branding themselves as a supporter of green energy practices. What began as a business relationship expanded to membership practices, revenue generation, branding, and small business support.

By using resources from sites like the US Chamber of Commerce and the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (www.acce.org), chambers of commerce can expand the library of research beyond their members. Not only can chambers use these successful strategies as jumping off points for their own growth, they can begin to foster relationships with area businesses by teaching about and being an example of best business practices.

Leading a membership meeting or a business conference about the best practices that other businesses and chambers have found effective can increase confidence in the chamber. The Clermont Chamber of Commerce in Ohio holds seminars on best practices for small business in the area and awards those business leaders who have found success. By highlighting businesses of varying size that are successful in the area, the Clermont Chamber is able to draw in new membership and put these ideas to use in the chamber itself. It also allows the Clermont Chamber to align with the small businesses in the area and become a necessary business tool to both existing and new companies.

Whatever area your chamber of commerce may need to fine tune, there are a variety of free resources to help guide those choices. The resources at the US Chamber of Commerce website are available even to those chambers that are not members of the organization. By taking the best practices of successful chambers and adjusting them to your membership and region, your chamber can become a well-run and influential service in your community.

info@chamberreview.org

UPCOMING EVENTS: Chamber events around the country

Northeast:

1. Boothbay Harbor Region Chamber of Commerce, Boothbay Harbor, ME: The Opera House at Boothbay Harbor serves as one of the community's greatest sources of entertainment. The Chamber hosts a variety of comedy and musical acts throughout each month of the year. Every Thursday and Friday night in August will be filled with activity at the Opera House.

2. Greenwich Chamber of Commerce, Greenwich CT: The 2012 Sidewalk Sales Days are a way for local businesses to show the community what they have to offer while enjoying the weather outdoors. Businesses showcase their products in front of their stores (On July 12th through 15th) and promote the community to shop and experience the local economy.

3. Harlem Valley Chamber of Commerce, Amenia, NY: Between August 3rd and 5th the Wassaic Project Summer Festival will celebrate local art, music and culture within the Harlem Valley community. The festival takes place at The Maxon Mills in Wassaic.

4. Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Newburyport, MA: The Newburyport Chamber will host a one-day music festival on July 7th from 1:00 P.M. until 6:00 P.M. The festival will offer a variety of music, vendors and activities to be enjoyed by the entire family.

5. Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, Concord, NH: At noon on Saturday, July 14th, the Lincoln Fire Department will host the Loon Mountain Family Fun Day in the White Mountains. There will be an array of activities for all ages and no-cost admission.

6. Greater Vineland Chamber of Commerce, Vineland, NJ: The Bellview Winery will host its Harvest Party on September 15. The community can enjoy a low-cost, five-dollar admission, grape-stomping and entertainment for the entire family.

7. Acadian Chamber of Commerce, Southwest Harbor, ME: For the entire month of August, the Southwest Harbor Public Library will house a silent art auction to benefit and further support the library.

8. Ellicottville Chamber of

Commerce, Ellicottville, NY: Ellicottville's streets will be lined with musicians, residents and visitors for the Ellicottville Jazz and Blues Weekend on July 28. Renowned artists will display their talents for the community.

Midwest:

1. Mukwonago Area Chamber of Commerce, Mukwonago, WI: Mukwonago Area Farmer's Market. Each Wednesday, July through September, the community is able to enjoy the bounty of its land from local growers at the Mukwonago Area Farmer's Market from 12 noon until 6:00 P.M.

2. Painesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Painesville, OH: August 31st through September 3rd will offer the community days of entertainment at the Ohio Celtic and International Fall Fest. The Painesville Chamber draws together the broader community and the local community for this authentic cultural event.

3. White Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Montague/Whitehall, MI: Arts and Crafts by the Lake will be held at Goodrich Park Annex on Saturday, August 11th. Over 75 artisans will display and vend their masterpieces.

4. South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, Oak Creek, WI: The Active Business Leads Exchange South Luncheon will connect local chambers on August 28th. The event aims to promote networking and effective business practices by drawing five area chambers together for an eventful afternoon.

West:

1. Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce, Yakima, WA: Tieton Arts and Humanities and the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce have sponsored the “10x10x10xTieton” art exhibit. Artists from around the world contribute to this annual event which features a variety of submissions, none of which exceed ten inches in dimension.

2. Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce, Walnut Creek, CA: The Benecia Art Walk boasts the Walnut Creek Chamber area's beauty and economy. The art walk takes place on the second Saturday of every month (beginning June 9th and running through the year) and serves to showcase downtown's vibrant culture.

8. Ellicottville Chamber of

3. Nampa Chamber of Commerce, Nampa, ID: The Nampa Recreation Center will offer Fit and Fall-Proof Classes on Mondays and Wednesdays between May 30th and July 6th. The class teaches strength and mobility-increasing exercises that help older community members reduce the risk of falls and injury.

4. Saratoga Chamber of Commerce, Saratoga, CA: The Saratoga Chamber is supporting Guglielmo Winery's 21st Annual Harvest Festival on August 18th. This all-day event features games, wine tastings, dinner and live music which are all included with the purchase of a \$60 ticket.

5. Latin Chamber of Commerce, Las Vegas, NV: The National Council of La Raza will hold its Annual Conference and National Latino Family Expo, sponsored by the Latin Chamber of Commerce, at the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Convention Center from July 7th to 10th. The event promotes economic and social change within this Las Vegas community.

6. Craig Chamber of Commerce, Craig, CO: Each Sunday in August the Craig Chamber of Commerce will offer Bingo at the VFW Post.

7. Rio Rancho Regional Chamber of Commerce, Rio Rancho, NM: The Rio Rancho Chamber will hold a Networking Extravaganza on Monday, July 30th from 11:30 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. This luncheon is a fun opportunity for chamber members and non-members to connect and exchange business ideas and information.

8. Helena Area Chamber of Commerce, Helena, MT: From August 3rd to 4th, vigilant community members will be participating in the Lewis and Clark County Relay for Life to fight cancer and celebrate lost loved ones. The relay will include all-night music, entertainment, and socializing to benefit the community at large.

9. Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, Mount Vernon, WA: The topic of The Unity Group's monthly business workshop is internet marketing, which will be featured on the 10th of July from 8:00 A.M. until 9:00 A.M. The workshop consistently aims to better inform local business men and women and maintain modern business practices.

10. Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, Palo Alto, CA: The 6th Annual Edible Landscaping Tour will occur from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. on July 21. The event showcases locally-grown foods, beautifully landscaped gardens and ideas to take home.

11. Cotati Chamber of Commerce, Cotati, CA: August 19 will mark the date of the 22nd Annual Cotati Accordion Festival. The weekend will be filled with culture, food and drink, dance and abundant fun.

South:

1. Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Tampa, FL: On July 18, the New Member Coffee Connection will bring together first-year chamber members to assist in the building and development of member relationships. This event is held bi-monthly for member convenience.

2. Treasure Island Chamber of Commerce, Treasure Island FL: All summer long the Treasure Island Chamber of Commerce offers “Friday Flicks”-a movie night at Treasure Island Community Park. The event is family-friendly and offers areas for children to play and convenient food and beverage vendors.

3. Middletown Area Chamber of Commerce, Middletown, DE: The Middletown Area Chamber of Commerce will hold its 7th Annual Scholarship Golf Outing on July 19, 2012. This popular event supports the future of Middletown's community members

4. Williamson County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin, TN: The Williamson-Franklin Chamber will host its 6th annual “Franklin Tomorrow” Shrimp Boil at Eastern Flank Battle Park on July 14th. This fund-raising event supports the community while providing the family an opportunity to experience Franklin's culture.

5. Howard County Chamber of Commerce, Columbia, MD: The chamber's annual signature event with take place September 28th and features guest speaker Carol Leifer, who is known for her contributions to comedy and television production. The event celebrates and awards local business leaders for their efforts within the community.

info@chamberreview.org

FUTURE ECONOMIC LEADERS DEVELOP THROUGH EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

ROBYN JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A common theme recognized by many chambers of commerce is that the future of the workplace and the quality of the community is a reflection of the education citizens receive.

Similarly, leadership programs for youth appear to contribute to both the economic and educational success of a community. From national to local levels, chambers across the country are placing greater emphasis on adequately educating their community's children to ensure they are capable of

competing in an ever-changing workforce. Since many chambers' workforces are the primary expression of the quality of life of the community, greater emphasis is being placed on generating competent students who can then demonstrate their aptitude in a variety of fields.

A variety of chambers are taking the initiative to ensure the development of leadership qualities in young people across the country. The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, serving a number of communities on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay in Alabama, has created the “Blue Print for a Better To-

morrow” which draws attention to focusing students on career paths at a young age. Students as young as eighth grade are encouraged to determine their educational and occupational interests; students are then able to plan their high school course work and demonstrate better preparedness for participation in the workforce after high school or college.

Some chambers have noticed a disconnect between workforce participation and young people actually possessing adequate skills such as communication and leadership that are necessary for

any field of work. The goal of the “Blue Print” program is to produce in young people these skills that can later flourish in areas of occupation. Similarly, the program hopes to preserve the community's reputation as a populace with an education level that is higher than the national average.

Additionally, the plan aims to improve recruitment efforts by focusing on the aforementioned reputation and demonstrating that Eastern Shore has a thriving economy and salutary quality of life.

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce has a

plan similar to Eastern Shore's called “ONE NASHVILLE.” Not only does the program encourage reform that dictates coursework with a career focus, but also emphasizes that parents, community members, and business leaders connect in order to improve metro schools.

Like Eastern Shore and Nashville, The Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce has created “Passport to Your Future.” This program provides twelfth-grade students hands-on experience working in fields such as healthcare, mathematics, technology and science with local professionals who

represent their respective fields. Providing young adults the opportunity to “practice” in growing professional fields will encourage academic progress and demonstrate to students what the community has to offer in terms of employment after high school.

Focusing on youth retention is a common theme among local chambers; programs that target young adults and incorporate them into the community address this effectively.

Continued on page 7

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

(Continued from page 6)

ROBYN JOHNSON
Staff Writer

With regard to national chamber interests, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce constructed an educational and economic initiative known as the "Institute for a Competitive Workforce." The institute's focus is to correct the inconsistencies between race and income and achievement levels, as well as the unimproved rural and urban dropout rates. The chamber hopes to rectify the systematic problems by displaying information that reveals its discrepancies and encouraging business leaders to be a part of educational reform. The chamber's effort to show the country's educational performance, titled "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly," demonstrated that Nebraska, North Dakota, Montana, Maine and Alaska are among the "bad and ugly." However, Nebraska has taken an initiative to combat such perceptions of the area's educational quality. Leadership Omaha, a supplemental educational program produced by the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, attempts to develop strong community leaders with the goals of CALM (communication, awareness, leadership and motivation). So, the question must be posed, what can other local chambers that struggle do to improve their communities?

All communities share the common interest of breeding competent and educated members of the workforce. The greater the local investment of a chamber or business in its community (particularly areas of education), the greater the

economic return. Although it is often difficult for chambers of commerce to stay involved in educational affairs because of competing political interests, chambers can have a tremendous influence on producing capable workforce members. Local chambers are especially effective when they collaborate to influence the educational system. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce indicates that there are several factors to consider when attempting to create a community with a rich workforce and proficient citizens. The most effective route is the reformation of community schools; human talent, effective systems, innovation and measurement are tools for yielding desirable results. "Human talent" refers to employing quality teachers and "effective systems" pertains to invigorating the current curriculum that, in the U.S. Chamber's opinion, lacks rigor. The concept of "innovation" encourages the experimentation with new educational approaches or identifying a failed method and reinventing it. Finally, "measurement" refers to assessing, correcting and holding the system accountable.

The development of sound programs that target specific community goals reflect a commonly desired sentiment of building strong leaders and keeping them close. Through the building of leadership, incorporation of youth and recognition of self-sustained value within a community, chambers can further progress economically and socially. As Massachusetts' Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce indicated, the key to a community's success is rooted in its ability to "engage business and industry in the well-being and prosperity of the region."

info@chamberreview.org

on their business, anything else will simply take a back seat. As the same small business owner in the Chicago area said, "it is also tough to make the monthly meetings since 9 months out of the year we are out working, and it's tough to get away to attend the luncheons." Another Midwest business owner added, "attending these meetings just seems like a social hour. I have a business to run - this doesn't really take priority."

Obviously one has to remember that pleasing everyone is impossible, and while changing some current practices may attract more members, there is a very real chance not every business in the area will jump on board. However, if my years of sports have taught me anything, it's that when a goal is there to be achieved, the best way to reach it is to lead by example. Clearly not every business is pleased with how things are run.

From the commitment of time and money to the lack of face-to-face contact expressing interest, Chambers could be doing a better job of showing businesses what incredible things they have to offer. It might be time to take another good look in the mirror and then step up and really swing for the fences, because from the outside looking in, there are a ton of great things that Chambers are doing - the problem is, not everyone can see it yet.

info@chamberreview.org

Business is Good with the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce

CHASITY BEIKRICH
Staff Writer

In a time when the national debt, unemployment, and foreclosure rates are high, Utah has a list of accolades including being named the "happiest state" by MSNBC, a "Best State for Business" by Forbes, and "The Best Managed State in the Nation 2008" by the Pew Center on the States.

Despite the downturn of the national economy, Utah is thriving as the third fastest growing state in the nation, with a booming economy and young population. According to a recent article in Forbes, Utah's capital of Salt Lake City ranks fifth in the country in terms of both population and economic growth. Thumbtack.com, working in partnership with The Kaufman Foundation, gave Utah one of only four A+ ratings for small business environments in the country. Which begs the question: why is Utah doing so well when overall, the economy is struggling?

Marty Carpenter, Director of Communication for the statewide Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, ascribes the economic health in Utah to both a strong history of industry and an environment that is friendly to small businesses.

The Salt Lake Chamber plays a primary role in governmental policy and keeps a focus on working closely with elected officials to ensure that Utah business has fertile ground to grow on. Carpenter says the chamber keeps a close watch on policies in education, energy, transportation, and health care system reform. Utah Governor George Herbert's administration focuses on economic development, education and energy, which aligns with the values of the chamber. "It is our success in working with elected officials that is the reason that Utah has a reputation of being business friendly", Carpenter says, "We ask them to get rid of needless regulations in order to level the playing field." He also notes that while the Salt Lake Chamber is a state wide organization, there is also a focus on the capital with "Downtown Rising," a master plan for the continuing development of Salt Lake City.

The Salt Lake Chamber website proclaims the organization "stands as the voice of business, we support our members' success, and we champion community prosperity." Carpenter agrees, attributing some of the Salt Lake Chamber's success to partnering with regional and city chambers. "We take a proactive approach to agreements



Marty Carpenter, Director of Communications,
Courtesy of Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce

with other chambers to work together. Let us take on the policy work and we'll share that with you." Carpenter also suggests that larger chambers across the nation need to take on a larger role so that smaller chambers can focus on growth. "What we need to do is speak out with one voice as a business community and understand how can we all benefit each other."

By taking on the policy legwork, smaller chambers can continue to keep working on membership benefits and their regional business needs.

Carpenter says that while the Salt Lake Chamber does use various social media tools and stays on top of tech-

nology trends, it is "smart policy work and teamwork" that contribute to the healthy business community.

Chambers in struggling areas of the country may find that by banding together, they can help promote business growth in their own states.

If your chamber is in need of some inspiration, take a look at the Salt Lake Chamber website (www.slchamber.com) for more information on how the chamber successfully fosters growth across the state and demands business friendly policies from its elected officials.

info@chamberreview.org

Business of the Month: Northeast, South, Midwest, and West

Northeast:

1. Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Mystic, CT: Grossman's Seafood. The recently renovated and expanded seafood market has proven to be a vast resource for the community's nutritional needs. Grossman's humanitarian and educational efforts have benefited thousands of community members for years. April.

South:

1. Haywood County Chamber of Commerce, Waynesville, NC: Reece, Noland & McElrath, Inc. As an engineering design and consulting firm, Reece, Noland & McElrath's client-centered focus has proven to benefit a variety of educational, industrial and commercial clientele. May.

2. Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Greenville, SC: Worthwhile web, software, and mobile design and development. Worthwhile simplifies projects both large and small; tailored to the client and audience's needs. Worthwhile efficiently and economically generates a product that represents quality. April.

3. Venice Area Chamber of Commerce, Venice, FL: Bookkeeping Solutions by KLH, Inc. Bookkeeping Solutions by KLH ensures financial security among businesses and individuals alike in the Venice community. Their creative, knowledgeable and effective practices have earned them May's business of the month award.

4. Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, Navarre, FL: NavarreBeachToday.com. This informational publication keeps the Navarre Beach community involved and connected and has

maintained its reputation as the area's May "Business of the Month" winner.

5. Christian County Chamber of Commerce, Hopkinsville, KY: Equine Assisted Transitions. Serving a variety of clients and offering an array of services, Equine Assisted Transitions strengthens individual and group physical, social and personal skills by letting horses run the show; Equine Assisted Transitions uses horses to provide a fun and unique form of therapy to a variety of people.

6. Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, Gwinnett, GA: Mobile Communications. Mobile communications has been providing exemplary service since 1988. They serve as one of the area's primary resources for technological, communication and security needs. April.

7. Humboldt Chamber of Commerce, Humboldt, TN: Humboldt General Hospital. The ever-growing Humboldt General Hospital offers a variety of medical practices in order to optimally serve the community's health care needs. Humboldt General Hospital has earned its reputation by providing well-rounded, patient-focused and the highest-quality medicine. May.

8. Easley Chamber of Commerce, Easley, SC: Cannon Memorial Hospital. Cannon's commitment to care and treatment earned their recognition by the community. Cannon General Hospital's dedication to quality medical care that can be expected qualifies this hospital as an outstanding organization. May.

9. Rowlett Chamber of Commerce, Rowlett, TX: Kyoto Japanese Steak House. Kyoto offers customers the utmost in quality and value while providing a unique dining experience. Rowlett recognizes this business as an integral part of the community by awarding it April's Business of the Month.

10. Sherwood Chamber of Commerce, Sherwood, AR: North Little Rock depends on The UPS store for all of its packing, shipping and printing needs. This business has worked tirelessly to provide resources for the community and it turn, has been named the Business of the Month. April.

Midwest:

1. Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Omaha, NE: Headsetters. Headsetters has earned their success through the talent of their employees, quality technological products and expertise in the field of telecommunications. May.

2. Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce, Dodge City, KS: Hampton Inn and Suites. Both locally and nationally, Hampton Inn and Suites has proven to be a community staple. The convenience, welcoming atmosphere and comfort of Hampton Inn and Suites is and will continue to be well-received by the Dodge City community.

3. Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce, Princeton, MN: Marv's True Value offers the Princeton community value and convenience with regard to construction and household needs. This business was honored for its quality, customer care and expertise. May.

4. Edwardsville/Glen Carbon Chamber of Commerce, Edwardsville, IL: Cork Tree Cre-

ative. As a marketing and advertising firm, Cork Tree Creative utilizes the convenience and security of in-house marketing. Clientele confidence and loyalty has been earned by ensuring that their approach is catered to the individual needs of every client. May.

5. Chamber of Commerce of Huntington County, Huntington, IN: Applebee's. Since its opening in the community, Applebee's has been a valued business in Huntington County. Applebee's has continuously demonstrated involvement and dedication to the families of Huntington. April.

West:

1. Richfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Richfield, UT: Jorgensen Ford. Not only contributes to the mobility of the community, but to Richfield's economy. Jorgensen's well-rounded service, economic involvement and attention to patron needs is valued by employees and costumers alike. April.

2. Myrtle Creek-Tri-City Area Chamber of Commerce, Myrtle Creek, OR: Ohana Builders. Ohana Builders' exemplary customer service and regional involvement define the quality of their craft. May.

3. Martinez Chamber of Commerce, Martinez, CA: California Pacific Federal Credit Union. The California Pacific Federal Credit Union has earned the Martinez community's business and loyalty by providing banking and credit services fairly and efficiently. The union's outstanding relationship with the community and professional service exemplify the value of this business. April.

info@chamberreview.org

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

(Continued from page 3)

JOEL STOJKOVIC
Staff Contributor

they are willing to put their reputation on the line without knowing the returns on the investment.

One Sacramento business owner asked, "what if I gain no business from this membership? Could I have used that money elsewhere?" That initial financial commitment is what seems to be holding many of these businesses back.

What if the chamber sent representatives for personal, face to face meetings, all the while showing that the investment of membership would return results? Would small businesses be more apt to join? While a personal meeting may improve the chances of a business joining the chamber, the same businesses interviewed cited the chamber's monthly requirements as something that would hold them back. One of the most famous athletes in Philadelphia history, Allen Iverson, once made reference to the fact he felt daily practice sessions were far less important than the game. Some small businesses feel the same way about the monthly meetings for chamber member businesses. When a small business owner feels his or her time could be better spent

CHAMBER CONFERENCES WORTH ATTENDING: W.A.C.E. 2012 REVIEW

CHASITY BEIKIRCH
Staff Writer

With annual conferences being offered at the state, regional, and national level, in addition to business summits, Chambers can find it difficult to decide which portion of the schedule and budget should be allocated for attending events outside their regular chamber happenings.

Regional and national conferences can be expensive and time consuming to attend. For smaller chambers, attending a state or national conference may seem cost prohibitive. Although there are often scholarships available, the chamber must qualify, apply, and then wait to hear the results. On top of the registration fees, there are the hotel, travel, and other costs to consider.

Then there is the question of the sessions being offered. Will they focus at all on smaller chambers? Will there be valuable information that can be taken back to the chamber? All in all, it may not seem worth it for a smaller chamber to attend. Larger chambers may see trade shows as another obligation on their time and finances. Again, there is the question of who is available to attend and can be spared for a few days, and whether or not there will be any new information presented.

These factors seem to beg the question: are annual conferences, at the state, regional, or national level worth attending?

The Western Association of Chamber Executives (WACE) annual conference was held in February of 2012. Despite being in Las Vegas, a city known for its distractions, attendance at each session was packed. The sessions covered a wide range of chamber-centered

issues, including legal sessions, advice on expanding membership, trending technologies, and staying relevant in a changing world. Most sessions included handouts that could be taken back to chamber meetings and discussed fully.

One of the more entertaining sessions at the 2012 WACE conference was led by Beth Ziesenis, the self-proclaimed "nerdy best friend" (www.askbethz.com). Beth covered a range of low-cost technologies that would be useful for chambers and small businesses alike, including virtual business cards, cheap design sites, email services, and receipt tracking services. By including her audience, using fun examples, and keeping her information incredibly useful, Beth was able to keep the audience captivated.

The most popular session at the conference was the "round table" discussion. Chamber members were divided up to network with various sized communities. Each table of five was asked to share their most successful initiative of the previous year with each other and then choose their favorite one to share with the larger group. The room was buzzing as people discussed their various problems and came up with possible solutions; people were taking notes and applauding one another. The opportunity to discuss chamber issues with people familiar with the industry, but outside a particular circle, offered new insight, clarification, and even resolution. Although the sessions, education, and networking are the core of these conferences, there is also the entertainment aspect. A few days away from the office, an interesting location, good food, and a chance to relax allowed attendees to de-



Image courtesy of Beth Ziesenis from www.askbethz.com

stress. There were moments of celebration as chamber members were honored for their services and wisdom. In addition, there were prizes, games, dinners, and of course, the slot machines. Not only did attendees bring home valuable information to share with their chambers, they returned relaxed and refreshed, ready to tackle further issues with a clearer mind.

For those chambers that attended WACE, there were definitely benefits that outweighed the budget constrictions and concerns of being out of the office for a few days. If your chamber hasn't attended a conference recently, consider either your next state association conference or even a larger conference, like the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Convention (www.acce.org), which has been referred to

as the "chamber professional's premier event."

It is important to keep in mind that scholarships are often available to events, and even if there has to be some budgeting in order to attend, it can be worthwhile for chambers of all sizes. Networking and problem solving with peers who understand the pressures of working in a chamber can actually increase your chamber's success.

For scholarships and event information, check out your state association's website.

The next annual W.A.C.E. conference is February 6-8, 2013 at the San Francisco Airport Marriott in Burlingame, CA. Scholarship forms will be available in September on the WACE website: (<http://www.waceonline.com/>)

info@chamberreview.org

Chicagoland Chamber

(Continued from page 1)

ROBYN JOHNSON
Staff Writer

and real estate; in turn, Chicagoland's chamber has benefited in a variety of ways from employing the Community Video Network as an instrument for conducting efficient business.

The Community Video Network (CVN) is a service that hosts videos pertaining to communities and the resources they have to offer current and potential residents. Similarly, the network harbors videos that provide viewers information regarding businesses and industries in a particular area. The network strives to illustrate the unique and individual character that defines communities and businesses across the country.

Like the CVN, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce is interested in providing an opportunity for small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow. The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce website has expressed that "in the advent of internet marketing, video has become an extremely valuable tool" and chambers, especially, can see the benefits of the initiative.

The success of the chamber's businesses is rooted in the use of innovative programs and tools, such as the CVN, that offer opportunity and resources that aid in the growth of small businesses. Because more than half of the chamber's members are small businesses and drive the chamber's agenda, the exposure the CVN and video sharing provides local businesses through the chamber's website and social media sites generates

significant publicity.

Furthermore, other sources of success for the chamber's businesses include the hundreds of networking events offered to members, the chamber's extensive referral program, and the nearly unlimited access members have to local officials and representatives.

One Chicagoland Chamber member claimed that when compared to Chicagoland, there is "no better place in the Midwest for business, civic and government leaders to gather" - due in part to employing innovative services that reflect the needs of small and large businesses alike.

The chamber's newsletter explains that among other services, "video testimonials can have a big impact," and the Chicagoland Chamber and member businesses are evidence of this "marketing secret." Another benefit offered by the chamber is increased visibility; one of the ways in which this commitment is upheld is, again, through the CVN.

The CVN has been described as "groundbreaking" and "powerful" while the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce has been characterized as "valuable" and "tremendous" - it is no wonder this teamed effort to promote and encourage business has been so successful.

As the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce continues to embody success, members and leaders proudly reflect on the celebration of being an integral part of the area's business community for over 100 years. The chamber now looks forward to further improving the economic climate - and continuing to bolster a member-proclaimed mantra: "It's all about our members".

info@chamberreview.org

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY? GOT AN OPINION TO EXPRESS?

LET US KNOW.

Submit stories and ideas to:
submissions@chamberreview.org

You could see your words in print - and so could thousands of chambers across the US

Are Chamber Product Lines Obsolete?



Photo by Tim Epner

JOEL STOJKOVIC
Staff Contributor

Living in an age that embodies progression, speed and constant change can complicate the preservation and relevance of traditional organizations like chambers of commerce.

Many chambers use conventional approaches that detract from demonstrating the importance and contribution of a chamber in the affairs of local businesses. While chambers are undoubtedly critical in local and small business growth, it is important that a chamber's practices and products compli-

ment contemporary technological and social patterns.

Chambers provide their members a variety of services and products that aid in generating business for local and small companies. The benefits members see are usually derived from advertising, discounts, educational or informative programs, opportunity for political involvement and networking events. Typically, there are an array of events and activities offered to chamber members that serve as the driving networking, communicating and promotional forces within a given business community.

While these are efficient

and effective (and certainly among the best ways to find a business its patrons), a modern communication supplement can generate an appeal that revitalizes the accessibility and popularity of chambers as an economic resource.

In terms of effectiveness, it cannot be argued that chambers do not benefit small and local businesses. However, businesses could further benefit from the modernization of the chamber's approach. For example, The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Google to help small businesses that do not have websites develop pages. While Chicago-

land's is a progressive avenue, many chambers offer business cards or company inclusion in a community brochure, which seems slightly outdated. There are a tremendous amount of resources that chambers provide their members, but it seems that the presentation and transmission of the benefits could be revamped.

Although most chambers have detailed and accessible websites, they are often aesthetically outdated and in turn, chamber member businesses receive the same quality of product. This is not a statement intended to discredit the quality of services offered by any chamber of commerce, but there is something less appealing about utilizing the services of an organization that lacks modernity versus those that reflect contemporary style and convenience.

The use of videos, imagery and audio is especially important not only to foster progress, but if the incorporation of younger audiences is desired. Current is synonymous to fast and accessible. The present use of "modern" media for advertising chamber services and chamber members is sparse.

One chamber pointed out that a common event among chamber members is a bi-weekly gathering that offers opportunities to network, share ideas and practice the "30-second elevator speech." The speech refers to the concise information a business owner would relay to an interested or questioning party when time is a restriction in, say, an elevator.

Upon reading this, my immediate thought was, "why not just give someone a web address they can look up on their phone right then and there, or pull up a video about the business and show it to the person asking?" Because our pocket technology is equipped to instantly gratify our curiosity, businesses and chambers should be expected to be just as available. Let's face it, the national attention span is dwindling and the way we access information has transformed, so a video may be more operative than a business card or half-minute conversation.

Chambers that offer videos and other technological resources are more practical; our culture demands that visual evidence of what is being displayed is present - in this case, the businesses and communities sponsored by the chamber. Sim-

ilarly, a strong internet presence is important today, and the strength of the presence is typically indicated by the use of innovative marketing methods.

Relocate.org's approach makes contemporary sense. Their Community Video Network offers communities, chambers and businesses an opportunity to showcase information (to be viewed quickly and simply) via video. Many chambers and businesses have taken advantage of this method of advertising which is exciting in terms of keeping a chamber's product line fresh. If building a business's (and the community's) confidence in the area's chamber is a priority, organizations should demonstrate novelty in doing so.

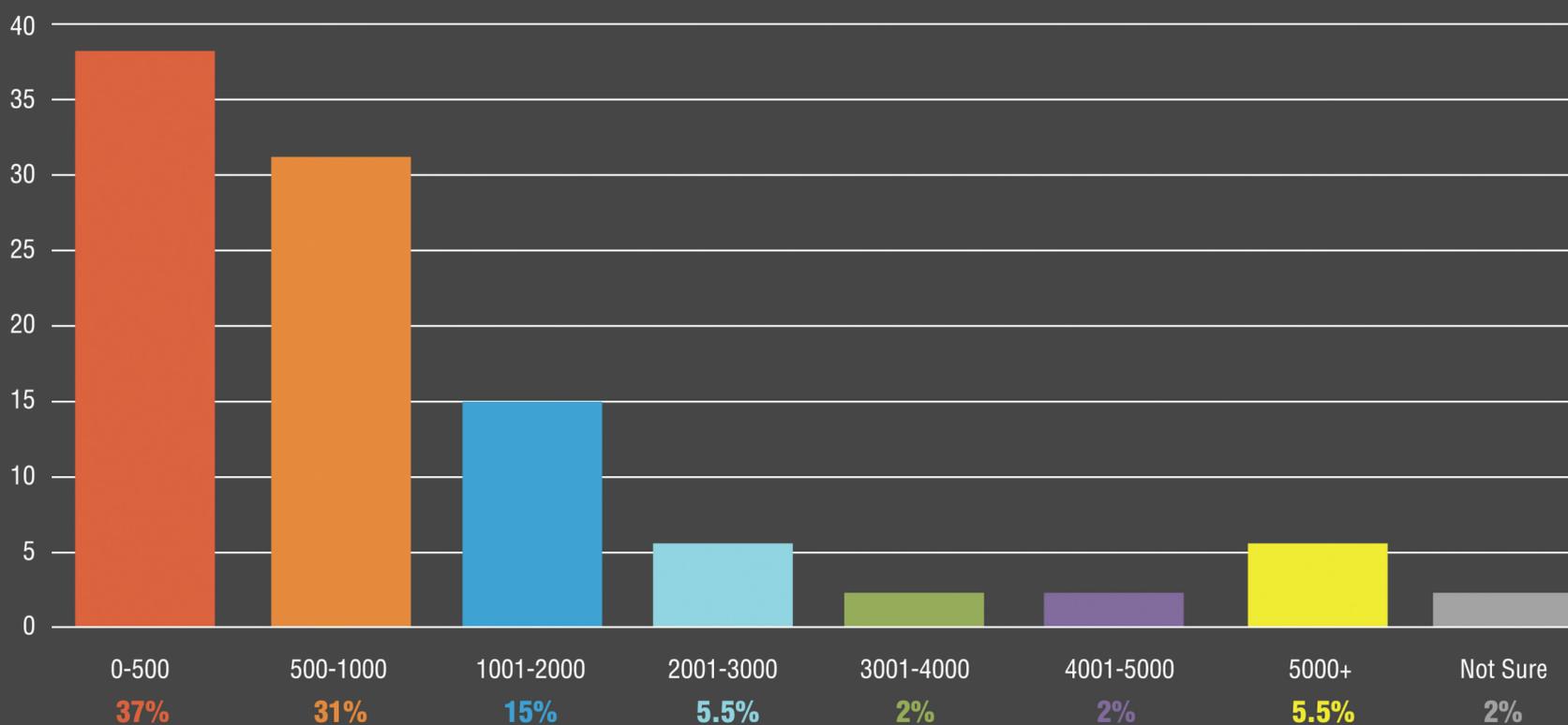
Chamber product lines are not obsolete, but they could use a modern enhancement. The common benefits chamber members find, those which include weekly mixers, conferences, legal and political resources and directories, are certainly valuable and functional; but why not offer something different - a new way to help businesses advance? Chambers and businesses, show us what you have to offer and let us see it from anywhere in the world.

info@chamberreview.org

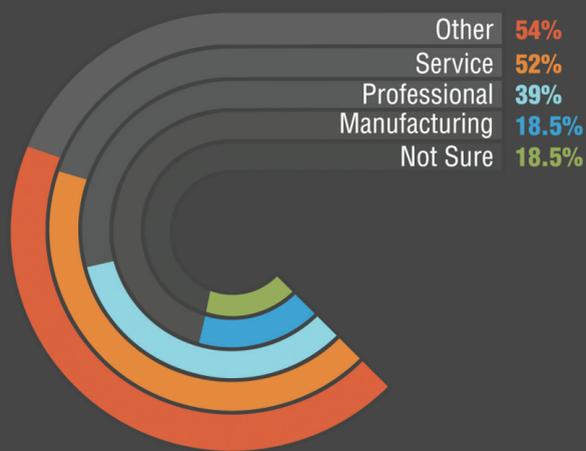
Chambers of Commerce

In their own words

Membership Numbers



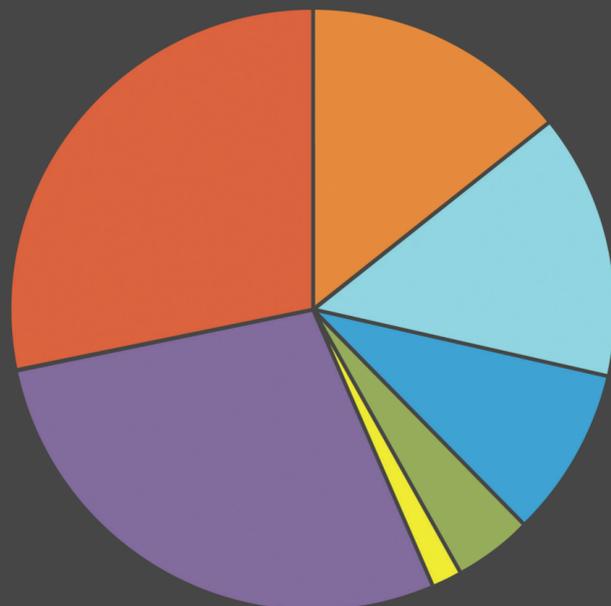
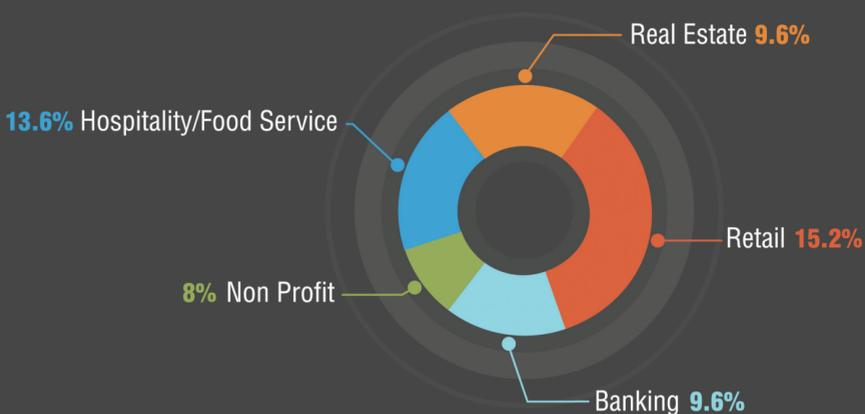
In what fields do your members work?



IYO what is the most valuable tool your chamber provides?



Top Industries Included



*Information based on June 2012 survey conducted by *The National Chamber Review*

Designed by Joshua Doty

CGCI
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Online Showcases

A way to get you noticed.

Enhancing small businesses.

Ahead of the curve.

SmartConnect™
A Division of CG Communications, Inc.

Next! AD AGENCY

Bringing it all together.
For more information visit cgicompany.com

relocate.org™

The Other Guys

13,000+ Videos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
80,000 Satisfied Clients	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 Years of Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive Video Programs for Chambers of Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Network Branding for all Partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a Website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Having a website doesn't make you an authority. Relocate.org has the largest library of informative community videos in the nation. **The CVN is the only platform of its kind**, and it's free. Find out how your Chamber of Commerce can join our network by going to relocate.org/learn or emailing us at partners@relocate.org