



Mobile Video Marketing On the Go

Look Inside!

Read Through Our Pages For Other Great Articles!

Page 2: AchieveHERS Women in Business; A Cautionary Tale About Staying Safe in New Surroundings; How to Cope With Both Good and Bad Days

Page 3: Why Your Organizational Struggles May Be All Communication; Social Media: When and Where to Use It; The Art of Appreciation

Pages 4: Chamber Spotlights: Carson City, NV, Glenwood Area, IA & Oshkosh, WI

Pages 5: Chamber Spotlights: Forks, WA & Bar Harbor, ME

Page 6: Tips to Increase Membership Renewal; Chamber Job Board; Power Up the Board Retreat!

Page 7: How to Engage Extroverts; Endorsements & PACs: The Basics; 1,000 Members in 1,000 Days; It Never Hurts to Ask

Page 8: Businesses of the Month for April, May, and June & Upcoming Events for July, August, and September!

Page 9: Social Media: How and Why to Use It; Chamber Film Festival; Women's Chamber of Commerce



Patrick McCabe
Editor

I want to give you a choice between two restaurants: the first restaurant got a great deal on a bulk shipment of ground beef. You go there for the first time and have the best burger you've ever tasted. It's juicy, flavorful, everything you look for in a burger. You go there a week later, excited to try another amazing dish, and are met with the same burger from the same shipment of beef. This time, it's OK. It still tastes alright, but you're kind of disappointed. You go back a third

time a couple weeks later, and you know what? They're serving what's now old, rancid meat; but it's really the same thing they've always served! Now let's check out the second restaurant: they don't have any deals on bulk meat. You go there and see that tonight's specials are sirloin steak or a nice tilapia. You make your choice (tilapia) and the meal is delicious. Next week you go back to try the steak, but surprise! That night's specials are pork and chicken. Again, it's delicious. You go back again in a few weeks, and boom! Steak. You love this restaurant. Not only is the food

good, but it's always different. Guess what? Your website is that first restaurant, your competitor's is the second. So how do you keep people coming back to your website? Get rid of the old beef and bring in something fresh...all the time. That picture from your Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony six months ago that's still on your home page? Old beef. That photo from the Ribbon Cutting a few weeks ago? Old beef. Fresh content is the key to remaining relevant. It's the only way you'll continue to appear in search results; the (Continued to Page 6)

National Chamber Review
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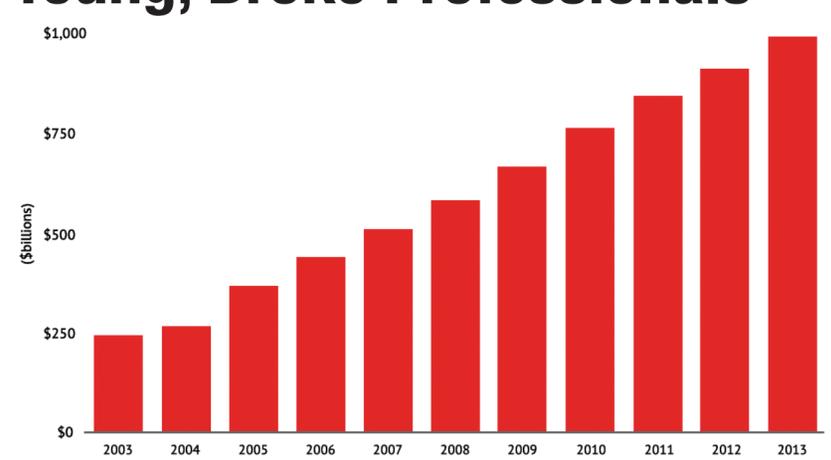
The Color of Business is Green Young, Broke Professionals

Brianna Clegg
Staff Writer

The efforts of minority chambers to help minority businesses prosper is a struggle fundamental to the entire country, and even more significant than I had anticipated. The number of minority-owned businesses and the size of those businesses is consistently smaller in comparison to non minority-owned businesses. Lack of trust and its unexpected consequences seem to be at the heart of the problem, and education is the key to solving it. Chambers of commerce can play a key role in helping to educate their members on the value of trust, and the Black Chamber of Commerce in Oklahoma City is an excellent example. What caught my eye about the Black Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Oklahoma City was the April event they sponsored designed to improve the plight of unemployed women of color. The unemployment rate in Black communities is consistently and significantly higher than the national average. In the case of the Black community in OKC it is roughly 11-13% unemployment, compared to the overall city rate which regularly falls under 5.25%. The event, called the Women of Col-

or Expo, was designed to expose minority businesses to potential clientele as well as provide classes and seminars on various aspects of business. The Black Chamber of Commerce held a class designed to help educate participants on how to navigate the application process. I had the pleasure of speaking with Sharron Glover, president of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma City, about the struggles that the members of her community and her chamber face in the world of business. While I was initially drawn in by the Women of Color Expo, and indeed it sounded like a beautiful and inspirational event, my conversation with Ms. Glover highlighted an even more shocking issue. Ms. Glover detailed the ways in which a lack of trust by minority business owners continuously stalls the growth of her community. In the business world, a lack of trust keeps you from being able to effectively partner with other business owners. While being a self-assured and independent business owner is essential to running a successful business, so is realizing that other businesses in your community and beyond are an essential resource for development and growth. Ms. Glover has found that people in her community don't want to partner with each other in business

deals because they seem to have a fundamental lack of trust in other people, including members of their own community. Often this comes after negative partnership experiences. In an effort to combat this, The Black Chamber of Commerce asked Kalan R. Haywood Sr., President Vanguard Group LLC, to speak at their annual February meeting to discuss his experiences with community development. Moving from his experiences they looked at ways that Chamber businesses could develop their own community, NE Oklahoma City, by partnering together. NE Oklahoma City, which happened to be a primarily Black part of town, had been neglected and fallen into disrepair. The goal of the Black Chamber of Commerce was to create a group of minority owned businesses that, at the end of an eight session educational curriculum on how to work together, would be able to follow a development project from start to finish. Education and experience are essential in learning how to successfully partner businesses, and the Black Chamber of Commerce's educational program for development does just that. However, beyond community partnership, the lack of trust found in her community has a much more unexpected consequence (Continued to Page 2)



Big Debt on Campus

Student loan debt has nearly quadrupled in the past 10 years

Credit: MotherJones.com via Stats from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Olivia A. Viterna
Staff Writer

It's FINALLY here. The day you've worked so hard for all these years. Those sleepless nights of cramming for finals and drinking unregulated amounts of caffeine are over. College graduation is here, and you've successfully crossed over into adulthood. Now you're ready to find your dream job to match that shiny, new degree hanging on your wall. Sure, this means you'll have to start paying back those annoying student loans you've been accumulating for four years, but you'll get a job. I mean, you're a college graduate, right? Before you know it, you'll have that college debt paid off in no time at all. A few months go by...summer vacation dwindles away, and you find yourself dreading the walk to the mailbox and that unavoidable moment when you discover a thin white envelope containing your first student loan bill. For some college grads, the

reality of paying back student loans doesn't take effect until their six month grace period has ended. This delusion may spark from the fact that many, if not all, students are encouraged by high school counselors, teachers, and parents to attend a four year college in hopes of earning a degree that will land them a job and set them up for a financially comfortable future. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, close to 20 million Americans attend college each year, and nearly 60% of them borrow annually to cover the costs of tuition. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported that during the first quarter of 2012, the under 30 age group had the most borrowers at 14 million while the 30-39 age group came in second at 10.6 million. Borrowing money to pay for college has now become a social norm. And somehow the fear of debt, high interest rates, and bad credit have gotten lost somewhere in-between the "college experience" and

the "now what" aftershock. Although recent grads are given a variety of payback options, each offers an unsettling, if not impossible, solution to an ongoing problem: Choose our Standard Plan and enjoy living with your parents until your thirties. Select the Extended Plan and maybe you'll have those pesky student loans paid off by 50, then you can really get serious about paying off that mortgage too. Got a job, but you're making less than your degree suggests you should? Why not try the Income-Based Plan or Pay As You Earn Plan and pay smaller fees, but watch out for those high interest rates. CNN Money reported that student loan debt has risen at an average rate of 6% per year from 2008 to 2012, in addition to private lenders taking on these loans and then charging high interest rates, making it almost impossible for students to pay their loans off before retirement. The truth is our young professionals are in trouble. They (Continued to Page 3)



President Sharron Glover Poses with Chamber Members Credit: Black Chamber of Commerce of Metro Oklahoma City

Don't Let the [Wo]man Get You Down The Pigeon or The Statue?

Andrea Mosher
Staff Writer

The stereotypes surrounding women and how they interact with each other are often negative. An article posted on theguardian.com in 2010 discussed the book "Twisted Sisterhood: Unraveling the Dark Legacy of Female Friendships" by Kelly Valen. This book was based off a survey conducted with over 3,000 women participants, and a large percentage revealed that they endured fake friendships and torment at the hands of other women. Author Kelly Valen says, "These secret, social battles are waged, in many cases, by the very same women singing the praises of girl power, feminism, and female friendship in their lives." These negative relationships

woman who takes control is a harpy, while a man who does the same is a good leader. Women are punished for their success.

These stereotypes hurt women more when other female coworkers feed into them. Valen talked about this problem in her book: women act like they are in a sisterhood, but treat each other terribly. It is already a man's world in business, women should not have to overcome the obstacles constructed by other women as well.

Some women are working to change the way they interact with each other in business. A group of successful business women has formed a group called the AchieveHERS, in association with the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce in Florida. This group is

light issues faced by women in the local community—the majority feedback indicated assistance was needed on how to shatter the 'glass ceiling.'

This ceiling has always been a challenge for women, preserving the wage gap and keeping them from their true potential. Karla Jo Helms, CEO of JoTo PR and one of the founding members of AchieveHERS, took the time to answer my questions about the AchieveHERS organization. When asked if there have been any problems with negativity or judgment between members, Helms replied, "...women wanted a support group of like-minded women in business that would share their wisdom with each other and be supportive....the women that join our group are the ones that ARE

in business. "Right now it is education through our events, support through our network of being able to connect with women of all ages, success, industries, etc. Women sharing women is our purpose." AchieveHERS hopes that by sharing knowledge, experience, and support their members will attain even greater accomplishments than on their own.

The Clearwater Chamber benefits from its relationship with AchieveHERS by increased membership and utilizing it "to help women overcome obstacles as they vie for top leadership roles and increase their competitive edge as entrepreneurs." AchieveHERS is creating stronger, more powerful business leaders who will make the community stronger and



Kerry Robertson, IOM
Contributing Writer

Have you ever had a bad day? Of course you have. Have you ever felt like the world was dumping on you and that nothing was going your way? So how does one deal with the indignities of being the pigeon instead of the pigeon? How do you brush off the negative onslaught that life brings from time to time and come out smelling like a rose? The answer may seem trite and simple, but it's true and it works. It's called a positive attitude. Now stay with me here. I can hear you groaning.

So what is a positive attitude? On the surface, attitude is the way you communicate your mood to others. It shapes your personality. Inside your head, where it all starts, attitude is a mind-set. It's the way you look at the world mentally. A positive attitude is that state of mind which can be maintained only through conscious effort. It's a choice and takes practice.

Everyone encounters setbacks that can jar their attitude into a negative direction. When this happens, the challenge is to quickly employ an attitude adjustment that allows you to bounce back. You can dramatically change things in your life with an effort to develop and maintain a positive attitude. Positive thinking can turn challenges into opportunities and concern into hope. It's kind of like going fishing for Moby Dick and taking along the tartar sauce. Even though many thought it was impossible, Captain Ahab knew he could hook that whale so he was prepared! And you can do it, too!

In the work environment, as in your personal life, it's your attitude that makes the difference. Building and maintaining healthy relationships among superiors, co-workers, and cus-

tomers is the key to success in any organization. Your attitude is expressed before you say a word. It shows in the way you look, stand, walk, and talk. An optimistic and upbeat attitude acts like a magnet. You not only attract others, but they are friendlier toward you because they sense in advance that you already like them. A positive attitude also enhances creativity and triggers enthusiasm. You either contribute or subtract from a better work environment through your attitude. There is no way to remain neutral.

So, do you face life with a positive or negative outlook? Is it time for a checkup from the neck up? Here are a few ideas to help you retain or restore your positive attitude.

-Develop your sense of humor. When a "negative" enters your life, immediately look at the "flip side" of the problem to find whatever humor may exist on the other side. Laughter is therapeutic.

-Build stronger relationships by becoming a respectful and sensitive listener.

-If you don't look for the best in fellow workers, you are less apt to find it. As a result, you will not become the kind of team player management expects.

-Attitudes are caught, not taught. The attitudes of followers reflect the attitudes of their leader. The first responsibility of any leader is to maintain his or her positive attitude.

-Find ways to release stress and negativity. Exercise, journal, play, do anything that increases your happiness factor!

-Abraham Lincoln's quote "People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be" is a reminder that you can choose your attitude.

Whether it's a pigeon day or a statue day, a consistently positive attitude can enhance your career, build better relationships, and help you reach your life goals. You win in all directions.

Kerry Robertson is a professional speaker, trainer and coach specializing in presentation and communication skills. She has been honored as one of "Oklahoma's 50 Women Making a Difference" for her training and 18 years as a news anchor and talk show host. As a faculty member of the Institute of Organizational Management (IOM), she instructs on Speaking with Confidence, Customer Service Inside and Out and Managing the Media. Kerry can be reached at 405-840-1777 or email: Kerry@KerryRobertson.com.



The Twelve Founders of AchieveHERS: Kathy Rabon, Krisit Cheatham, Doreen DiPolito, Suzy Sofer, Karlo Jo Helms, Stephanie Schlageter, Carol Hague, Tina Tenret, Sheryl Conrad, Brenda Jacobsen, Ernestine Bean, Diane Stein Credit: Karla Jo Helms

exist in the business world as well, and may be more detrimental in this situation. An article by April Dykman, posted on getrichslowly.com in March, stated, "studies show that when a woman negotiates her salary, both men and women are less likely to want to work with or hire her—the negative effect was more than 5.5 times greater for women who negotiated than for men." It is a stereotype that women do not try to negotiate their salaries, however the evidence in Dykman's article suggests that women do try to negotiate a higher wage or position, but that they are disregarded more than their male counterparts.

There are many double standards in the world between men and women. Among them is the idea that a man who pursues his career instead of staying home with his children is a good provider, while a woman who does the same is a bad mother. Another is that a strong business

dedicated to bringing women in business together to support and learn from each other. One of their first meetings was an event where the founding members shared their personal experiences with adversity and hardship. Whether these experiences were stories of abuse at home or discrimination in the workplace, the members opened up and shared with each other.

AchieveHERS is a group full of women who support each other, instead of competing. The membership is made up of both women who are established leaders in their industries and women who wish to enter the business world.

The Clearwater Regional Chamber has a long history of women serving as chairperson for their board of directors. In June 2013, AchieveHERS was created to fulfill the Chamber's desire to further include businesswomen. A study conducted by JoTo PR "brought to

and PLAN TO BE supportive of other women in business—this has been one of the pivotal points of our group. The enthusiasm for this group has been overwhelming because of this."

Helms reminded me that it is not a case of "Men vs. Women", as evidenced by the many men who play leading roles in the Clearwater Regional Chamber and are very supportive of the AchieveHERS organization. Frank Dame, COO of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and chamber board member, was quoted as saying, "During my career, women executives have proven to be exceptional managers with sound leadership, high ethics, and a desire and willingness to make a positive contribution within their company."

There are both men and women who are not supportive of businesswomen and impose barriers to their success. AchieveHERS is helping their members overcome adversity

more prosperous. "This project is the most significant initiatives that the CRCC has undertaken in the past 15 years," stated Bob Clifford, President and CEO of the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce. "AchieveHERS will be a regional leader providing support and opportunity to established women in business and those aspiring to lead."

Together the Clearwater Chamber and AchieveHERS are working to change the experiences and treatment women receive in business. It is not just men who pose obstacles to a woman's success, other women are also to blame. Relationships between women are supposed to contain understanding and support. Instead, women are tearing down the accomplishments that other women have already achieved. Organizations like AchieveHERS are helping accomplish that.

Conventions: Staying Safe in a New City



Lou Figueroa
Contributing Writer

Conventions are a great place to learn and relax. We often head to conferences in unfamiliar towns. We get a false sense of security because we feel safe with a large group of other attendees.

Just the other day I was in a city and noticed a well-dressed man stumbling and disoriented on the sidewalk. His attire made him look like

as if he was a conventioner. He could have been sick or drunk. I noticed him stagger towards four lanes of oncoming traffic.

I approached as he was headed towards the street. Trying not to startle him I asked if he was okay and he drunkenly said, "I'm lost, I can't find my phone and I don't know which hotel I'm staying in." I offered to help and escorted him back to his hotel and made sure that he was safely in his room.

A similar situation happened to myself. I was at a social event in the downtown district of Denver when my unguarded drink was tampered with an unknown drug. I left the bar and wandered nearly two miles in the dark, having no awareness to my surroundings and unknowingly walked into the rail yard of Union Station in Downtown Denver where I was run over by a locomotive train - resulting in the loss of both my legs.

There was a big question mark as to how this happened.

The investigation led them to believe that I had encountered a drink that had been tampered with and became disoriented and separated from my group of colleagues.

After my accident I realized that my experience could help others understand the significance of staying safe at conventions and being aware of our surroundings. Use these tips to stay safe at your next conference.

Study the Area - Know the safest route before you go (driving or walking) and identify areas you don't want to encounter. If unfamiliar with the area ask the hotel front desk, bell staff or valet.

Remove Convention IDs - Remove your name badge and ribbons. Similarly, leave the convention totes back in the room. These are signs you are from out of town and might be an easy target.

Scan the Environment - Look for well-lit streets and areas you feel safe. Select routes that are the shortest be-

tween your destination and hotel or conference center. Be leery of people who are overly friendly in wanting to be of help or offering you a deal.

Buddy System - Walk with friends. If you're in a social setting, let them know you want a buddy—don't let them assume you left on your own and should not worry about you. In my case, I wandered for over an hour and my friends assumed I'd simply left and went home. Periodically check on each other and agree on departure times.

Guard Your Drink - If you leave your drink on the table or bar unguarded even a few minutes, say the time it takes to hit the dance floor or visit the bathroom, throw it away. There are people who look for opportunities to spike anybody's drink just for kicks.

Backup Identification - Be careful leaving valuables, purses and especially IDs in meeting and hotel rooms. Travel with a second official government issued ID such as a passport stored in a separate location. At a minimum, make a copy

of your driver's license so if it were lost officials could use the information to check databases.

Escape Routes - Whether in the meeting room or guestroom, notice the nearest exits. In an emergency you want to be the first out the door heading for the exit. Remember an emergency could occur at the most inopportune time and in the dark. Consider leaving your shoes and clothing next to the bed if you need to run out the door. It can't hurt to grab the blanket and pillow since you don't know how long you may be forced to stay outside in an emergency. Keep the room key accessible.

Hotel Door - Don't let anybody in the room without knowing they are expected and wearing a uniform or badge. Think twice about hanging a breakfast order on the exterior door knob that identifies your name and room number for a stranger to pick up. In a fire emergency, be sure to check the door for heat and smoke before exiting.

I travel to conventions every week and see the risks that meeting registrants take. I don't want

what happened to me in a train yard to occur to anyone else.

Lou Figueroa is an inspirational speaker who speaks on topics relating to finding balance in his life, overcoming crisis, and implementing change effectively. He shares messages of hope and inspiration to help empower others for personal success.

Lou's passion is encouraging people to think creatively. He delivers influential speeches related to addiction and recovery that inspire others to think outside the box. As a life coach he helps people overcome any preconceived thought patterns that may be holding them back. He speaks about implementing tools to help transform their lives.

Lou is an author and writes articles related to balance and finding your mental reset button. He teaches techniques to improve quality of life and is invited to speak at chambers of commerce and business associations across the country.

At age 27 Lou was involved in a train accident resulting in the loss of both legs. His knowledge and perspectives on transformation have made him a powerful coach and guide. To schedule Lou at your next conference or meeting, contact him directly at 720-285-7904 or through email at lou@inspiredbalance.org.

Business Is Green

(Continued from Page 1)

quence. Ms. Glover told me of a conversation she had with a young business owner looking to expand his small business. Due to a lack of trust he had not been properly reporting his taxes in an effort to keep the government from, in his mind, stealing his hard earned money. Not only are these actions illegal, but they also hinder his

ability to expand, because he cannot show lenders proof that his business is growing. Even though he has the money to back any necessary loans, he has no tax documentation proving that he can indeed pay it back. According to Ms. Glover this is not an isolated incident. Since speaking with Ms. Glover this young man has begun properly reporting his taxes and is on track to grow his business.

A deep lack of trust is hold-

ing business owners like him from growing their businesses to their full potential. It also creates the potentially more dangerous threat of the discovery and prosecution for tax evasion. It is important to note that this deception in tax reporting is not done in an effort to steal from the government, but rather out of fear of being deceived by the government, and that fear isn't totally misplaced. Distrust of the government by a

group of people who have been consistently slighted through individual and institutionalized racism is not surprising. Despite this, the community must come together to ensure a stronger voice in their community, and to allow their businesses to grow to their full potential.

Ms. Glover and chamber leadership are hoping that by encouraging community business leaders to work together they can recognize the value of

partnership for both their businesses and their community. When they have realized their own potential in the community, they will realize that partnering and trusting is essential, and that trust must extend to the government. Of course, the government must work to show that trusting them is beneficial.

The Black Chamber of Commerce leads by example. While they are the only Black Chamber in Oklahoma as far

as Ms. Glover was aware at the time of our interview, they have partnered with other minority chambers in the state as well as the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. Hopefully they can not only be an example to the businesses of their community, but to minority chambers across the country as well. In the words of Ms. Glover: "When it comes to business and money, the only color that matters is green."

Turn Organizational Goals into Communications Goals



Melynn Slight
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Do your employees understand—we mean really understand—the business goals of the organization? We're not talking about understanding short-term activities or project goals, but rather having a strong comprehension of what's behind the core strategic goals that are in place to guide the organization's direction and processes; the goals that set the groundwork for operating your business?

If your organization is like nearly 40 percent of those in the U.S., the answer is probably no. In a poll well-publicized by Stephen Covey in *The Eighth Habit*, Harris Interactive (originator of the Harris Poll) surveyed 23,000 U.S. residents who worked full-



time in key industries and key functional areas about their employer's goals. The findings, among other things, were: 1. Only 37 percent have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why. 2. Only 1 in 5 was enthusiastic about their organization's goals. 3. Only 1 in 5 said they have a clear "line of sight" between their tasks and their team's and organization's goal.

Staff who don't understand (and embrace) the organization's goals are at a huge disadvantage. They can't possibly communicate well about how the chamber delivers on these goals. They fall short in connecting with members about how the chamber's value affects the member's business.

Narrow the focus to en-

courage big picture thinking.

The truth is that on a day-to-day basis most of us are inclined to narrowly focus on our individual areas of responsibility. We want to tick things off our to-do list. It's human nature. Strategic goals are challenging because they are typically cross-functional. While big goals are useful for the board and executive committee, most are impossible to take action against without first breaking them down into bite-size, area-specific activities.

Staff executives can chip away at this challenge by working with their team to turn organizational goals into communication goals. Along with helping staff to make a meaningful connection between their work and the big picture, your staff—particularly your communications staff—will have more confidence in their work and be more effective in contributing to achieving the chamber's organizational goals.

Five steps to link organizational goals to day-to-day communications.

Consider this five-step process for making your strategic goals more meaningful (and embraceable) by breaking them down and turning them into communication goals. This also makes it easier for staff to implement on a daily basis.

Step #1: Begin with a general overview of organizational

goals. Get out the white board and list them so your staff can see and talk about them. Discuss how communications can support the goals. Make sure everyone understands the general concept and value behind the each goal (WIIFTM: what's in it for the member).

Step #2: Focus on one main chamber goal. Choose one that directly touches current or prospective members today. Some of your goals won't fit this criterion; such as creating a new program or making improvements to your building. These are organizational goals, but may not immediately touch a member directly. Look for a goal that involves getting a member to do something, or improve something, like recruiting non-members or a new education delivery process. These are goals where member action is part of the measurement. For illustration purposes, let's say the goal is: Increase new member recruitment.

Step #3: Brainstorm how you can put your communications to work to achieve the goal. Then list one to three communications goals that will help achieve that one big organizational goal. Getting the communications goals right will help staff communicators think about the larger organizational goal—and their contribution to achieving that goal every time

they sit down to write. We call this organizational alignment.

Continuing with our example...The organizational goal is to increase new member recruitment. Specific related communications goals might sound like this: 1. Use the Chamber's value proposition to convey clear and relevant benefits to the prospective member. This is measurable. You can see if this is happening or not in your communications (Learn more at www.MemberValue.org). 2. Use readability statistics to make sure communications are simple and scan-able. This is also measurable. You can spot check your communications and make improvements on the fly (Learn more at www.readability-score.com). 3. Link communications to what we identified as non-members' biggest needs and to answer their identified objections. Using your list of previously identified needs (grow business) and objections (costs too much) you can make sure you are focusing on the benefits meeting and/or overcoming objections.

Step #4: Measure adherence to the goals. In the examples above, adherence and progress against each goal can be confirmed. Strike a balance of trusting but verifying your team's follow through on agreed upon goals. Also, look for examples of how implementing your communication goals are paying

off. It's not always easy to connect these two, but worth the effort when you identify success.

Step #5: Reward the good stuff! Find staff making the right link between communication and organizational goals and make your staff examples of progress for other staff.

Now try it for yourself. Help staff make the connection between their work and the chamber's organizational goals by turning those big picture goals into communication goals. Make your goals easy to understand, implement, and measure. Doing so will help you tap into greater potential to build confidence, commitment, and job satisfaction among staff while creating stronger and more meaningful connections between your members and the chamber.

Melynn Slight speaks to and works with local, state, and national associations across many industries and chambers across the country on projects that help to strengthen the connection between organizations and their members. Learn more at nSightMarketing.com or contact Melynn at Melynn@nSightMarketing.com.

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The Art of Appreciation



David K. Aaker, IOM
Contributing Writer

of your character and is also reflected in your reputation. With no minimum daily requirement established, you are your own author of the privilege to express appreciation when appropriate.

Chambers of commerce, non-profit organizations, associations, public and private sector all provide the social interaction of communication on a minute-by-minute basis. It also provides those moments when someone goes above and beyond, and out of their way to be a part of your success.

How often have we let that split moment slip by to recognize and acknowledge someone who has contributed to our success? Tell Judge Judy I plead "Guilty" myself.

In the rush of multi-tasking, managing your organization, supporting your staff, informing your board members, an-

swering countless questions from the public, and at the same time amplifying your attention to your members, one does have a few key moments slip by.

The opportunities to share sincere appreciation will be brought to us, like questions that need answers, on a daily basis. In our haste to feed that Type A personality of serving others, those golden moments are not the priority that they could be.

Each walk-in, phone call, email, text, and personal conversation could be the highlight of that person's social interaction for the day. To us we may just have that "next please" thought in our minds.

How many life-long impressions have you made on others because of what you may have considered a seemingly small or insignificant conversation, but to the other person it could critical contribution to their success, safety, or health?

Giving thanks and express-

ing thanks take two different actions. Giving thanks is that quiet voice inside of us that acknowledges the action. Expressing thanks takes the initiative to alter, or interrupt the flow of the communication and verbalize and sincerely transfer your words and feelings to others within a few seconds when that person is in front of you, or on the phone.

That is when the appreciation is best sent, and best received. We can all review just within the last 24 hours a few, or several, moments when we could have shared our appreciation to others. The next day, business continues, calls are returned, meetings attended, and those moments yesterday when you could have shared your appreciation to someone are now evaporated.

What impact did it have on you when the last time someone shared their appreciation for you? Did you reflect on it, did it surprise you, did it alter your impression or opinion of that person?

In many of my Keynotes over the years, I have invited folks to consider thanking three more people today than they did yesterday. This is not hard to do, and could produce endless benefits to both of you.

With the leadership position you have in your career, and in your life, appreciation is already part of your DNA as a leader. Take it to the next level, and invite this conversation at your next staff meeting. It could be a topic that will surprise some, instead of the topics of membership, committees, goals, etc.

To refresh the "privilege of sharing appreciation" might just create a great topic with your team; and how could that not shine a bright light on your leadership, your team, your organization, and your success?

It is no coincidence that my thank you cards are print-

ed: "We appreciate you thinking of Aaker & Associates".

Not a new topic, but I hope this plants the seed to express appreciation in areas you had not considered yesterday.

The harvest of your expressions of sincere appreciation will extend far beyond your intention.

After a 20 year Successful Chamber Management career, Aaker & Associates was put in full motion in 2004. A Nationally known Speaker, Trainer and Author on Customer Service, David offers his seminars as serious fundraisers for Chambers and Associations nationwide. He was recently named "Among America's Best Speakers" by Sky Radio and featured on 42,000 flights worldwide in 2009. David is available for Keynote and Breakout programs for your local, regional and state conferences David can be found at www.davidkaaker.com, and invites your personal call at 760-323-4600.

Ready, Aim, Fire



Frank J. Kenny
Contributing Writer

Strategy, Tactics, Tasks:

Recently, we gave away a social media checklist for chambers. You can get yours at FrankJKenny.com/checklist.

More than one person contacted me after downloading the checklist with concerns.

Young Broke Professionals

(Continued from Page 1)

are the first under 30 group to experience what is quickly becoming the generation of young, broke professionals. Perhaps the problem is we're so concerned about getting students into college that we tend to forget about what happens after.

Chambers across the U.S. are working to create programs specifically designed to help high school students receive scholarships and financial ad-

vice prior to entering college. Although this constitutes a stepping stone, it's unfortunately not enough. Although these scholarships provide some type of financial support for college freshman, many of these scholarships only cover a very small amount of college costs. Especially since obtaining a scholarship in the first place takes a lot of dedication from the student: essay writing, recom-

mendations, volunteer experience, etc. Sadly, many scholarships do not produce enough compensation for the work that is being put into them. So the questions remains. How can chambers help their young professionals pay off their loans and get out of this mess?

J.P. Morris, Chairman for the Young Professionals program for the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce in Texas, says that although his chamber does not have a program specifically designed to help recent college

grads pay back their loans, they do offer programs and seminars about financial planning, budgeting, and the benefits of reducing interest. Furthermore, the chamber's affiliation with local school districts allows them to work closely with high school students and discuss with them the options of choosing vocational school or a dual credit program instead of spending a fortune at a university: "We have a good partnership locally between our community college and university systems. We're

cutting out Instagram and Pinterest while focusing more on LinkedIn and Facebook.

The same goes for the tactics section. Go through the questions and you may find your platforms and activities narrowed further.

Warning: If you, like most people, start out with the tasks without having clear goals, benchmarks, and a roadmap to success, you will always feel under the gun and unsuccessful. How could it be otherwise? You wouldn't know if you are succeeding or not if you don't have a goal and a way to measure against it.

Don't fall for the 'one platform' trap:

Some people will tell you to focus on one platform and be great at it. I strongly disagree. Putting all your eggs into one social media basket is very risky. I know a chamber with 5,000 Facebook friends. One day, that profile will be shut down because it is violating Facebook's terms of ser-

vice (TOS). It has happened to pages too often. Poof. Gone.

By focusing on one site, you will be missing important members and prospects. Suppose you only did Facebook. You would be great at reaching your local small business. But chances are, you wouldn't become familiar to the important regional business executives who are using LinkedIn.

Consider this analogy. You move to a new town. You only attend the monthly chamber luncheons for your networking. It would take most people months to get familiar with you. On the other hand, let's say you join Rotary too. And your kids are active in local sports. You would become familiar with people, and they with you, much quicker because they would see you more often. The same strategy applies to social media. Be everywhere. Be ubiquitous.

You simply have to be on multiple platforms. Limiting your reach isn't the answer.

Now, how can you

do this and not go crazy?

You need a smart phone and all the social media apps. Shoot photos around town and at your events every chance you get. Shoot 30-second videos. Interview the mayor. Interview your members. Take photos of the tourist traps and sunsets. Post these to Instagram while getting your oil changed. Sit for five extra minutes and share a post on LinkedIn. Respond to notifications on the fly, not from your desktop or laptop.

I call this stealing moments. It gives you back your time. You look like a dynamo. Plus, things don't pile up on you so the stress is less.

Do this well and consistently and you will build huge awareness among your members and prospects. You will build relationships. You will appear to be everywhere and Johnny on the spot, too.

Leverage the tools at your disposal:

Face-to-face time with your members is important.

I get that. But you can touch dozens and dozens of people a day online. Those are real touches. You are relationship building. You are building your professional brand at the same time, which is critical today.

By using social media well, you aren't stealing time away from your members or yourself. You are leveraging the latest tools to do what you already do—only better.

Frank J. Kenny is an internationally recognized author, professional speaker, and business consultant. As a faculty member for the Institute for Organization Management (IOM), Frank instructs on Integrating Strategic Technology Solutions, Technology Tools and Trends, and Using Data to Grow and Sustain Your Organization. He is the founder and host of the Chamber Focus Show. As president/CEO of a countywide Chamber, he led a team in doubling the membership of that 45-year-old organization over an eighteen-month period, primarily through strategic social media solutions. Free Chamber resources can be found at FrankJKenny.com.

young professionals avoid and/or get out of debt. If you have any ideas concerning this issue, or your chamber is already instituting programs designed to help recent graduates, please contact me at oliviavncr@gmail.com. If we truly care about our young professionals and want to see them succeed as our future leaders, we need to do something about this growing epidemic. We need to get our under 30 generation out of debt.

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT: 5 DIFFERENT CHAMBERS, 5 UNIQUE COMMUNITIES

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Glenwood Area COC

— Glenwood, Iowa

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

Glenwood, Iowa is a town of about 5,200 people, just east of the Missouri River. The Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce serves not just the Glenwood community, but all 15,500 residents of Mills County, right in the southwest corner of the state. “We consider ourselves the front door to the community,” says Executive Director Linda Washburn. “Our number one priority is making people feel like this is a good place to come, and that they’re always welcome, and that we are a good resource for the community and for the county.”

Running a chamber of commerce in a place like Glenwood, Iowa poses some unique challenges. For instance, as Washburn explains, Glenwood is a bedroom community to the Omaha-Council Mills Metropolitan Area, meaning that many of the residents who live

in the former, commute to the latter for work. “I think people tend to shop where they work,” Washburn explains, “so it’s important to us, and I think it’s important to our membership, that we do everything that we can to help promote [area businesses], and encourage people to shop locally.”

Traditionally, bedroom communities (also called “commuter towns”) like Glenwood do not offer much in the way of commercial activity, but Washburn and the rest of the Glenwood Area Chamber staff hope that their work can help counteract some of the potential detriments of being characterized as such. “We’re not a big retail hub...[but] we probably have about 20-25 retail stores,” Washburn says. “We do our best to promote them, [and] that would probably be the biggest thing that our businesses look for us to do...It keeps [our community] vibrant, and it keeps it growing.”

New infrastructure developments in the Glenwood area

just might make such efforts all the more effective. The Mills County Economic Development Fund, of which Washburn is also the executive director, is currently working on developing an interstate corridor that would include four lanes of highway and a bridge over the Missouri River, and would serve as another connecting point between Iowa and Nebraska.

Washburn believes the project could have a very positive impact on businesses in the area, many of which already benefit from interstate traffic, as Glenwood is located a mere four miles off of the interstate. “We are anticipating and preparing for growth out at that interstate exit. There’s about 5,000 acres of undeveloped land out there that could be developed, so we have a master plan for that land,” Washburn explains. “We do anticipate that there’s going to be increased traffic, and when there’s increased traffic there’s always demand for more amenities. So we anticipate that that area will grow.”

Washburn adds that while certain service industry busi-

nesses are kind of a given—people will need places to stop for fuel and food, for example—she and the rest of the chamber hope to see some growth in other sectors of business as well. Washburn says that she even hopes to see expansion from some warehousing or distribution businesses at that interstate exit.

One major event on the horizon for the Glenwood Area COC is the town’s first-ever Fourth of July celebration. Hosted by the Keg Creek Brewing Company, a local Glenwood brewery, the aptly titled Blues, Brews, and Barbeque will feature live music from five local bands, Iowa craft beer, and a Farm Bureau Cook-off Contest, all culminating in a fireworks display.

On any given day at the Glenwood Area Chamber, Washburn says that she likes to have a plan, but that plan or no plan, one must always remain extremely flexible. “We get people that walk in. We get people that call. We get emails. We have lots of meetings,” she explains. “We need to be flexible because we just never know what the day will bring.” Washburn also likes to spend as much time as possible out in the community. “It’s my job to be visible and to get out and visit with people [and] attend events,” she says. But what all of this has in common—from fielding drop-in visitors, to making over-the-phone referrals, to getting out and interacting with business owners as much as possible—is that it all gives the Glenwood Area Chamber countless opportunities to do what they do best: to make people feel welcome.

For more information on the Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce, visit www.glenwoodia.com.



Glenwood, Iowa

Credit: Dr. Warner (Flickr)

Carson City Chamber of Commerce

— Carson City, Nevada

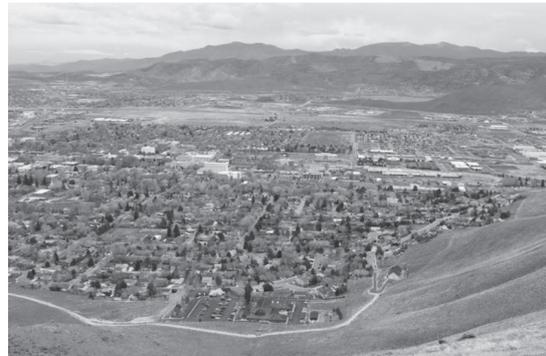
Patrick McCabe
Editor

Chambers of commerce located in state capitals are in a unique position. Being so close to local and state decision makers allows the chamber to play an increased role as an advocate for local businesses. At the heart of where all these decisions are made, the chamber is in perfect position for forming committees and getting out awareness regarding local policy. For the Carson City Chamber of Commerce in Carson City, Nevada, ad hoc committees are the lay of the land.

“We do things as needed,” says Ronni Hannaman, Executive Director of the Carson City Chamber since 2006. In terms of local legislation this means forming ad hoc committees to address current events and issues. This happens most notably when the Nevada State Legislature is in session every other year, the chamber forms a Legislative Committee to address the concerns of their membership and the general business climate of Carson City. However, there are also unexpected committees that need to be formed.

The biggest issue currently facing the Chamber is the proposal of a state margin tax. Proposed by the Nevada State Education Association in a measure they call The Education Initiative, they suggest a 2% gross

margins tax on every business in the state to be allocated for public schools K-12. The opposition comes from the fact that this would cause Nevada to go from one of the lowest taxed states to one of the highest, and would be detrimental for local businesses, especially small



C Hill Trail, Carson City, Nevada

Credit: Patrick Nouhailor

business owners. “We don’t have a lot of taxes here on businesses and we don’t have personal taxes here that most states have,” says Ronni. “So a lot of businesses have been looking at Nevada or have located here, like Microsoft and Apple, because of the lower taxes. And if we have this 2% margin tax it’s gonna kill a lot of small businesses, and we’ll be one of the highest taxed states in the US...We have been fighting this and recently had a seminar on what this

will mean for small business.”

This is an on-going issue for the Chamber, and will be until the election on November 4. But the Chamber’s penchant for creating committees at a moment’s notice extends beyond politics as well. This ad hoc mentality also applies

to major events and functions. “If we see an opportunity...we help, we promote, we get sponsors,” says Ronni. In particular she mentioned an opportunity for bringing a major event to the capital. “This year is Nevada’s 150th Anniversary,” she says, “so we are helping with what we hope will become the State Fair in Carson City... We’re hoping this is going to be an annual event. We will be sponsoring the major evening act, and we are helping to get [additional] sponsors.”

There was also an instance when the need for help sprung up once, and then interest increased to the point where a whole new stream of non-dues revenue could be gained: the chamber travel program. It has made a big financial difference. “For the members that we don’t have anymore as a result of the recession, [the chamber travel program] has more than made up for it. Plus, it’s fun. We don’t have travel agents in our community, so we’ve become the travel suppliers.”

In the last four years they

have sent groups to China, Cuba, England, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Peru, and more. With a mailing list of over 600 interested people, the events are growing. She recommends this to other chambers as well. “For those that do not have travel agents in their community, this is just a wonderful way to get people together. And it’s not just members that go. We open this up to the community at large. I have one person that’s done nine or ten trips with us, and I have made her our official traveling mascot who promotes the program locally.”

It’s this kind of enthusiasm that makes the chamber so vital to Carson City. As a small town with a lot of small business, they strive to provide a lot of bang for their members’ buck by featuring them on their website for free. “For example: if you are a restaurant and you have catering, barbeque, whatever, we’ll give you as many listings as you want under the various categories,” says Ronni, “so we don’t nickel and dime our members to death. One fee, and they get all of our services.”

Between working with members, the local government, and local residents, what does Ronni’s best day as a chamber executive look like? “Every day is an interesting day...It’s never boring, that’s what I like about this job. And when I see projects that we do, we just go with the flow. If something works, that’s fine, but if something doesn’t work we don’t keep it.”

For more information on the Carson City Chamber of Commerce, visit www.carsoncitychamber.com.

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Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce

— Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

“There’s two parts of our business: one is the association, membership piece of it, and the business of what we do, and then there’s the role of being the voice and the advocacy for the business community.” That’s according to John Casper, President and CEO of the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. “Somebody has to be here to be armed and ready to serve when [our members] need it,” he adds, further expounding on the nature of the relationship between him and his staff, and the 1,090 members of the Oshkosh Chamber.

The Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce, situated right in the heart of northeast Wisconsin in Winnebago County, is accredited by the United States Chamber of Commerce as a five-star chamber, and is one of only four USCOC-accredited chambers in the state of Wisconsin. According to the USCOC’s website, such accreditation is awarded to chambers that demonstrate “high quality, expertise, and strong leadership.”

One way that the Oshkosh Chamber has proven itself worthy of such an honor is with its social media presence. Ranked among the Top 100 Most Social Media Friendly Chambers of Commerce in the US by OnlineMBApage.com (Oshkosh is number 76), it is also the only chamber in the state of Wisconsin to be recognized for social media which, according to Casper, “demonstrates our mission of being about our members.” The Oshkosh Chamber boasts a Facebook page with more than 2,000 likes, a Twitter account with 3,240 followers, even a LinkedIn group that currently has nearly 700 members. “When social media started becoming more en vogue, we were [among the] early adopters,” Casper explains. “[We] didn’t really have a strategy going into it. We just knew we needed to be there.” And so they got there, adopting an approach to cultivating a social media presence that could be helpful in virtually any business setting: they outsourced.

By hiring a specialist, the Oshkosh Chamber was able to bring some expertise to the equation that many chambers

that the Oshkosh Chamber is always working to do, particularly through Propel Oshkosh. The Oshkosh Chamber website characterizes Propel Oshkosh as a “group for young professionals [that] aims to attract and retain young individuals for local businesses in the Oshkosh area.”

Each month, the Oshkosh Chamber holds an event for potential future members, ranging from professional development programs, to membership mixers at local establishments, to educational seminars on things like buying your first house or how to start investing. Quarterly, the chamber hosts either a breakfast or lunch that gives young professionals a chance to meet with a local CEO. According to Casper, this allows the aspiring entrepreneurs to talk to someone who has already been in their shoes, and can answer questions about how they got their start, and how they got to be where they are. “We use it as a way to do some mentoring,” Casper says.

Frequency and variety are two of the main factors in planning events for Propel Oshkosh. “The psychographics around that group [i.e., young professionals], [there] isn’t necessarily one that are joiners, so you need to engage them early and often,” Casper explains. “As they go into their own businesses or as they move into key leadership roles in their current organization...we want to make sure that they have a high degree of familiarity with what the chamber of commerce is and what we do.” Casper later adds, “We’re all getting grayer and older, so we need to be...making sure that we keep the talent that we have so we can recruit more talent to the area.”

In the midst of all of this—recruiting young talent, maintaining a nationally-recognized social media presence, and generally serving the business community—the Oshkosh Chamber is also preparing for one of its biggest annual events: the summer concert series. “It’s called Water Fest. We’ve been doing this for almost thirty years now,” Casper says. “It started off as a weekend festival, and then became an every-Thursday-night festival. It got so successful [that] we had to build an amphitheater specifically to hold it in.” With last year’s line-up in-



Annual Economic Outlook Breakfast

simply do not have in-house. Given the rapid evolution of social media platforms and the associated trends, it really is a job unto itself to not only keep track of the changes, but to continually adapt to them. The Oshkosh Chamber enlisted the help of a local marketing firm in developing its social media strategy, as well as throughout its first year of implementation. “I thought we were doing really well before that, when we had a several hundred followers on [different platforms],” Casper says, “and all of a sudden we got into several thousand.”

A strong social media presence can prove helpful under many different circumstances, but one area in which it is perhaps particularly advantageous is in attracting younger demographics—something

cluding names like REO Speedwagon and Kenny Loggins, Water Fest is no minor happening: each week, anywhere from three to seven thousand concert-goers turn out for what Casper says is probably the best community concert series north of Milwaukee. This year, on July 17, Oshkosh will host the Under The Sun Tour, which features much of the stuff of 90s kids’ dreams: Smash Mouth, Sugar Ray, Uncle Kracker, and Blues Traveler. The nostalgia is almost palpable. “I never thought we’d be in the concert business,” Casper says, “but we are.” Just add that to the list of things this chamber does, and does well.

For more information on the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce visit www.oshkoshchamber.com.



Carson City Chamber Building

Credit: Carson City Chamber of Commerce

Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce

— Bar Harbor, Maine

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

Just off the coast of Maine, situated on Mount Desert Island and surrounded by Acadia National Park, sits Bar Harbor. A seasonal community, Bar Harbor has only about 5,000 people living there year-round, but over the summer, the population grows to nearly 40,000. Such major discrepancies from one season to the next certainly pose unique challenges



Sand Beach Milky Way

to a chamber of commerce, but Chris Fogg, Executive Director of the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, has figured out how to make it work: "We're traditionally a pretty tourism-focused chamber," he says, explaining that the Bar Harbor COC is more of a convention and visitors bureau. His goal, then? "Do that and do it well."

Of the many characteristics distinguishing the Bar Harbor COC from other chambers, perhaps one of the most compelling is their work on sustainable tourism initiatives. Fogg says that

Bar Harbor sees about 2.5 million visitors every year, which is literally 500 times greater than the community's base population. In an area known for its natural beauty, numbers like that may seem like a death sentence. "Often times conservation and visitation are at odds," Fogg explains. "But we try to look for ways that we can still have a lot of visitors come and positively affect our economy, but really mitigate the impact that those visitors have here."

It's a unique role for a chamber of commerce to fill, but Fogg and his five year-round staff members (as well as the extra 15 hired every summer to help with the tourist influx) are willing and able to do so. "We're adjacent to [Acadia] National Park, and that really is the feature attraction here," Fogg says. "We [at the chamber] recognize that we have a responsibility to maintain and sustain our business here." So far, the Bar Harbor Chamber's sustainable tourism committee has gotten recycling bins for downtown and set up a pick-up program for them.

The chamber is also playing an integral role in repairing the road on and off the island. Working in conjunction with town government and the state department of transportation, the Bar Harbor COC is rebuilding the road using "context-sensitive solutions." Fogg says that people come to Bar Harbor expecting to find a "very rural destination," so the last thing the chamber wanted to do in repairing the road was forge a clear and straight path through the middle of the land, and lose any of the character of the natural surroundings. By employing "context-sensitive solutions," Fogg says, "we're going to repair the roadway...and we're going to keep all the great natural features while improving shoulders, bike lanes, things like that."



A Crowd Gathers on Frenchman's Bay to Watch the Fireworks

Credit: Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce

Another chamber effort made relevant by Bar Harbor's unique location is the 2007 ordinance, supported by the Bar Harbor chamber, that limits the amount of light that can be emitted into the night skies. Measured in "lumens," limiting these emissions reduces light pollution, and allows Bar Harbor to protect one of its greatest natural resources. "It was one of the first things I noticed moving here from Vermont," Fogg says. "The night sky is incredible."

Which is why it's so central to one of the Bar Harbor Chamber's annual events, the Acadia Night Sky Festival. Now in its sixth year, the Acadia Night Sky Festival is planned around the new moon in September, and will run from September 25th through the 29th this year. By planning the event around the moon's cycle, stargazers are guaranteed the fewest possible light interferences during the chamber-organized "star party."

When the sky is at its darkest, visitors are invited to go to the top of Cadillac Mountain—at 1,500 feet, the highest

point on the east coast within 25 miles of the coastline—and, with the help of telescopes and local astronomers, get "oriented with the night sky," as Fogg puts it. "We do a night photography workshop. We have keynote speakers. We've had a gentleman who worked on the Hubble telescope. We've had astronauts. All kinds of things," Fogg says. "But really, [we're] just trying to educate people and let them enjoy our beautiful resource."

Another major event for the Bar Harbor COC is their Fourth of July celebration. And don't let Fogg's modesty fool you—it's a pretty impressive event. "We do the Fourth of July, which is a huge event here, but a lot of people do the Fourth of July," Fogg says. "It's our biggest event, but not really unique." Sure, a lot of places do the Fourth of July, but a lot of places are not recognized as having one of the best small-town Fourth of July celebrations in the country. A quick Google search turns up mention of Bar Harbor's two day-long Fourth of July celebration by Policy Mic, ABC News, and USA To-

day. With a concert series leading up to the main event, the Bar Harbor Fourth of July celebration also features fireworks shot off over Frenchman Bay. It may not be inherently unique, but the two day-long event suggests that Bar Harbor just might have a certain proclivity for turning the "routine" into something really worth noticing.

Fogg says that the hardest part about running a chamber in a place like Bar Harbor is the area's remoteness: it's a five and a half hour drive from Boston, and flight service is very limited. "It's a huge accomplishment for me that we get two and a half million people to come up here [and] enjoy this great destination with a lot of history and a lot of great natural resources," Fogg says. "And we have a huge repeat clientele," he adds. "We hear it all the time—'Oh, I've been coming here for thirty years.' And that's really gratifying."

For more information on the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, visit www.barharborinfo.com.

Forks Chamber of Commerce

— Forks, Washington

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

In Forks Washington, surrounded by the Olympic rainforest and nicknamed the Logging Capital of the World, live approximately 3,500 people. The Forks Chamber of Commerce acts as the city's tourism representative, operating the year-round Visitor Information Center which, according to Executive Director Lissy Andros, saw 40,978 guests last year alone.

"But those are just the people who came in our visitors' center and signed our guest

in tourism numbers? To understand that anomaly, we need not look any further than Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series.

That's right: Bella Swan first fell in love with her sparkly vampire boyfriend, Edward Cullen, in Forks, Washington, and since the October 5, 2005 publication of the first book in the Twilight series, the city of Forks has seen some seriously big tourism numbers. And those tourism numbers are reflected in chamber membership: the Forks Chamber of Commerce boasts 244 members, a whopping eight percent of the city's entire population. "One of the rea-

in hand and went around and found the places that best match the descriptions in the books... and they made a Twilight tour."

And even though the movies were not filmed in Forks (filming took place in Oregon), fans still flock to Forks to see real-life versions of Bella's and Edward's family homes. Other sites of interest include Forks Outfitters, where Bella worked; the City Hall, where Bella's father Charlie Swan would have worked as Chief of Police; even the little Italian restaurant where Edward treated Bella to mushroom ravioli on their first date. (Edward abstained from dinner that

popular: "They usually stay totally booked throughout the whole summer," she explains, adding that people have traveled to Forks from other countries just to go on this tour.

The Forks COC also uses tourism to the area as an opportunity to educate people on what Andros knows can be a contentious subject: logging. "I think logging gets a really bad rap," she says. "[But] that's what we do up here...We grow trees." So, the Forks Logging and Mill Tour "educates people about what's going on out in the woods. You know when you're driving down the road," Andros says, "and you might see an area where a bunch of trees that have been cut down, and it just looks bare and you're like 'What the heck is going on?'" The guides talk about [that].

Andros explains that loggers will plant three trees for every one they cut down. Sometimes they're cutting down trees to thin the area out and make it so other trees can get more light, allowing them to grow even bigger. On the tour, people get to "see up close and personal what's going on in logging." Andros says that the chamber facilitates the tours, "but [we] could not do it without the help and cooperation of the logging outfits, the mill, [and] all the companies involved in logging." She believes that the transparency required by businesses in order to operate these tours shows how proud the chamber is of the relationships it has with its member businesses, and that the chamber members "have the confidence in us to let us come out there and be where they are and show people what's going on."

The Forks area is also home to the new National Geographic series, The Legend of Mick Dodge, which Andros says more and more people seem to be asking about when they show up at the Visitors' Center these days—and the Forks COC is happy to answer them. "We want to not just linger on the Twilight phenomenon, because

we know that that is something that's going to last for a long time, because new generations will read the books," Andros says. "We appreciate that and we value it, but we want to continue to give the fans an experience of things that are coming up, too, like Mick Dodge."

Of all the tourism in recent years, Andros says that it feels like Forks has finally "been discovered." "We've always been beautiful," she explains. "[But] for a little town of 3,500 it's

been a pretty amazing last few years. [It's been] really good for our economy. It's kind of been a boost for our self-esteem that people are now really happy to come to Forks. They're not complaining when it's raining; they're complaining when it's not raining." After all, as anyone who has read the Twilight series knows, vampires can't come out when the sun is shining.

For more information on the Forks Chamber of Commerce, visit www.forksww.com.



Welcome to Forks, Washington!

Credit: Forks Chamber of Commerce

book," she adds. "Obviously not everyone signs the guest book." If the name Forks, Washington does not ring a bell for you, that's maybe not too surprising. Unless, of course, you happen to be a teenage girl. "In 2006, we had 6,386 people in our Visitors' Center for the whole year," Andros explains. "In 2009 we had almost 70,000." For a town the size of Forks, even the numbers for 2006 seem inexplicably large—what small town attracts nearly twice its own population

sons we probably have so many members is because we are a tourism destination, and so we have a lot of hotels, motels, restaurants, recreation places, that kind of thing," Andros says.

The Forks Chamber of Commerce also plays a role in helping the hordes of fans in search of traces of their favorite vampires have a real Twilight experience. According to Andros, her predecessor at the Forks COC and the Visitor Center manager "took the book

night, on account of the restaurant not serving actual blood.)

But one of the biggest mistakes anyone visiting Forks could possibly make is to think that Twilight is the most interesting thing about the city. On the contrary, one of the area's biggest events is the series of Forks Logging and Mill Tours. The tours are free, funded by donations, and staffed by volunteers, and run weekly throughout the summer. And according to Andros, they are quite

Masthead

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10 Tips to Increase Member Renewal Rates



Cathi Hight
Contributing Writer

For those who use a calendar-based membership term, December and January can be the scariest months of the year. A few years ago, a Chamber CEO called me in February and she said in a panic-stricken voice, "25% of our members did not renew! How can that be when just several months ago members gave us a 95% satisfaction rate?"

High satisfaction rates don't guarantee renewals or long term loyalty to an association. Satisfaction has more to do with the "rear view mirror" than it does with the "windshield" or the future. No one gets too far driving while using past success indicators. Although most associations employ a fiscal year based membership based on the join date, similar panic attacks can still occur. What can you do to ensure higher renewal rates in 2012?

The first 5 of these tips are ways you can increase renewal rates by changing the process or payment options. The other 5 require more commitment to focus on proactive, long term retention strategies. Consider using all or some of these tips to increase member renewal outcomes:

1.) Allow 24/7 online renewals—Send out renewal reminders via e-mail with a link for members to renew online through a secured shopping cart. Allow members to update their profile and their preferences.

2.) Offer renewal incentives—Some members are enticed with getting something extra by acting with a sense of urgency. Offer a free seminar or webinar, small ad in a future publication, or an enhanced listing on the web site if renewals occur before a stated deadline.

3.) Enclose postage paid envelopes—Make it easy for members who want to mail in their renewals by providing an easy way to do so. You'd be surprised what stays on someone's desk top because there are no stamps readily available!

4.) Offer multiple year memberships—Rather than hit members up for a renewal year after year, consider offering a discount on a 2 or 3 year membership. It could provide a needed tax deduction for the year and gives members an incentive to "lock in their rates" for the next few.

5.) Allow for automatic credit card renewals—Whether it's done annually, quarterly or monthly, this is the age of the "pleasure to forget" and "use it or lose it" society. If fitness and wine clubs, prescription refill plans, and fundraising pledges can all take place with an initial consent to charge our credit cards, why can't we do it for membership dues? Offer members the ability to pay their dues on a pre-defined term and cancellations can occur with a minimum of 30 days written notice. If the transaction occurs monthly or quarterly, members may not question the "value" of membership since they only see an incremental cost each time.

6.) Use a touch plan to reach out to members on a meaningful basis—A "touch plan" is a pre-designed template of interactions that is implemented over a period of time. For instance, you can employ a 1st Year Member Touch Plan that

includes a welcome letter, orientation invitation, mid-year survey and face-to-face visit. Some "touches" may be virtual while others require time invested for staff and volunteers.

7.) Increase engagement levels through multiple platforms—Studies show that higher levels of engagement result in higher renewal rates. Engagement is more than attending events—it includes open rates on e-mails, response to feedback mechanisms, interactions on social media or list serves, and volunteer participation. Make a point of having staff and volunteers post on members' Facebook pages, and start and respond to conversational threads among members. Contact members who are not highly engaged and find out why. Some members may enjoy being observers and not have a high need to interact with other members to receive value.

8.) Realign your programs and services with members' changing needs—Take the time to seriously evaluate what you offer, the real usage rates by members, and gain feedback from members on how to enhance their benefits. Use a rating system to honestly determine how well each program and service aligns with the mission, its real costs (time, staff, and financial resources) to provide, its ROI for the organization, and how many unique members are being served. Create task forces of members to provide key insights on current and emerging needs and don't be afraid to "kill the sacred cows" that no longer serve the members or the organization.

9.) Target members with specific benefits based on past behavior or current preferences—Amazon has perfected this strategy by using its membership software to monitor, track, and target offerings based on customer demand. Depending on what you purchased over the last couple of years, which products you clicked on and the length of time you viewed specific web pages, and the items on your Wish List, Amazon targets you with similar opportunities. Consider allowing members to indicate their preferences on their profiles and use these "tags" to send them special offers. Monitor member activity and learn who's interested in what and target accordingly.

10.) Develop a real retention plan—A retention plan shouldn't be reactive tasks based on delinquent renewals. A real retention plan involves identifying retention trends, setting retention goals, developing strategies and tactics, and dedicating resources to implementing and managing the plan.

I hope these tips help you increase your membership renewal rates for the upcoming year. Don't assume the renewals and take time to employ these tips to ensure they occur. Next year's budget depends on it!

Cathi Hight is President of Hight Performance Group. Considered as the Membership Guru and the developer of The Member Retention Kit, Cathi helps associations meet the expectations of their members. The Kit provides in-depth support to implement retention strategies. Learn more by visiting www.hightperformance.com/products and clicking on "retention".

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Video on the Go

(Continued from Page 1)

only way you'll register interest from those that visit; and the only way you'll keep those visitors coming back for more.

Today, the number one most marketable content is video. According to a report by The Content Marketing Institute: -On-line video has increased 800% in the last five years. -Video will constitute 55% of all internet traffic by 2016. -By 2016, video on demand availability will triple. -By 2016, mobile video traffic will increase by eight-fold times from 2011.

Woah. Video is the best way for you to have total control over your content: how you tell your story, persuade visitors, and impress everyone. Video is inherently more interesting than images and text, and far more likely to hold your audience's attention. It's easier for your audience to retain the information conveyed in a video, and much more preferable to hoping they can pay attention long enough to read your 1,000 word blog post.

Let's talk user-generated content: it's everywhere. The YouTube empire was created by people like you and me recording short videos on their web cams (and now smart phones). And today, user-to-user video sharing is massive with mobile apps like Instagram, Snapchat, and Vine. But how do these help your chamber and your members? Well, they don't...not unless everyone you (and your members) want to reach is following your social media accounts. So in order to get new users to see your fresh, awesome content every day, you need to persuade them to follow you first. You have to create that connection with them before they're even able to see all of your content, which sounds a bit like putting

the cart before the horse.

Back that cart up a second, because the best way to really connect new users with your fresh content is exactly what you've been hearing the last few years: SEO. Search Engine Optimization thrives on constant updates, and video updates in particular will rocket you to the top of search results. By constantly updating your website with video, you'll ensure that you are visible to the audience you want.

In your chamber office, you might have a person capable of recording a video, uploading it to YouTube or your own server, writing a little code, and embedding it to your site no problem... if you're lucky. The reality is most people can't do that. I know I can't. So how does the average chamber consistently upload video to their site on their own?

GoCast is a new mobile app that allows you to record videos on your smartphone and upload them to your website immediately. Imagine taking a video of that ribbon cutting and having it go live on your website within 90 seconds. The next day one of your members comes to the office to thank you for helping them with some advertising, so you record a quick little testimonial and that's on your site immediately. Later that day you visit one of your regular networking luncheons and record a portion of the speaker, you want that on your site until the next scheduled luncheon, so you set it to go live the next morning and run it for a week.

Each Cast goes up on your site when you want it, and for as long as you want it to be seen. The primary set-up is having one Cast on your homepage that features the video you most recently recorded. Every time you record a new video and upload it, it automatically overwrites the previous Cast and plays the video you just recorded. However, you are capable of having several Casts go to several dif-

ferent pages on your website. You are also able to post the Casts immediately or at a specific time, and you can set them to be up for as long as you want.

Maybe you want your Young Professionals director to have their own Cast. They get a unique log-in to the GoCast app that allows them to Cast videos directly on the YP page. You can do this for as many people and departments as you like, making your website capable of having multiple video players updated daily with new content. That's SEO gold.

GoCast is available from CGI Communications, which has fully produced over 20,000 videos for municipalities, chambers of commerce, counties, and associations across the country in the form of website video programs. The difference now is that the power to create your content is 100% in your hands, allowing you to show anything and everything you want.

Imagine posting regular video updates on a major upcoming event, or friendly greetings during the holiday season. On a more serious note, think about how valuable it would be to keep the public informed on impending natural disasters and the ways they can keep their family safe. Information on shelters, clothing drives, and more can be shared immediately from your smartphone.

You can also customize your video player with a graphic overlay for your chamber's or member's business name or logo, and you can also include a time stamp to tell viewers, "Yeah, we just uploaded this video ten minutes ago." Since the whole process is automatic, there's no need to ever edit or update your site code at all. That's an attractive idea to anyone, tech savvy or not.

What about your members? As good as GoCast is for chambers, it might be even better for businesses. As a res-

taurant, wouldn't it be great to post a mid-day video of your chef preparing tonight's special? Or think of it this way: you can have your fun, attractive staff record videos of every special for the week on Monday, then set each video to Cast day-by-day as those specials occur. You have the Cast up for Monday's specials from noon-midnight, then on Tuesday the Cast for the new specials is uploaded automatically, again running from noon-midnight.

If you have bar owners as members, wouldn't it be cool for them to be able to post a Cast of the busy bar, showing people laughing and having a good time to encourage other people to come down? "Come down to Mickey's on 5th! The place is jumping and happy hour goes for another two hours!"

The applications are endless for your members. A real estate agent can post open houses and video tours; car dealers can post up-to-date announcements of daily deals; investment bankers can provide real-time stock tips; schools can announce sport scores, celebrations, and more.

Video is just beginning to truly dominate the Internet landscape. The fact that almost everyone carries a video camera around in their pocket ensures that this isn't going to go away any time soon. Video allows you and your members to clearly communicate your product or brand, and can also provide a look into the inner-workings of your organization which can only help build a trusting relationship. The authentic, personal nature of GoCast videos puts you and your staff right into view for new members and the community at large.

For more information on GoCast and how you can get your chamber and members involved, contact Vice President of Marketing at CGI Communications Nicole Ron-go at 1-800-398-3029 x203.

Job Board Spurs Collaboration

Geoffrey Toomey
Staff Writer

Do your members need young, hard-working, eager, fresh faces? Have they considered the students that walk the halls of your area schools may be the perfect candidates? If your chamber has a website, this can be an easy fix.

The Solon Chamber of Commerce in Ohio has done just that. In under a two month period, they realized a problem and created a plan to fix it. Since the launch of their online student job board, the chamber has gained one internal summer intern and assisted two seniors with senior project positions. They also helped the city hire an intern, and helped numerous member businesses find new interns and, as well as summer and full-time employees.

"It's a great collaboration between the city, the chamber, and the school," President/CEO of the Solon Chamber, Jennifer Natale says, "it's just just a win-win for everyone. Our main thrust is keeping the great young people and the talent here in Northeast Ohio and Solon."

What started as a routine check-in with their members became a reality in less than two months time. "It stemmed out of our business visitation committee, where Solon Chamber committee members visit area member businesses and see what we can do as a chamber; what they like, what we can improve," Jennifer says passionately. The chamber already had a job board for members, "then during our committee visits a member said they would love to post jobs for students," she continues. From there the ball kept rolling. "We thought: wouldn't it be great to not just post student jobs, but senior high school project jobs, summer jobs, internships, and employment opportunities? We wanted to offer this as a member benefit for our Solon Chamber members. So,

we let our members know, 'as a benefit for your membership we are going to create this job board on our website, please post employment opportunities for students, such as summer jobs, internships, part and full-time employment.' We knew that all of those benefits could greatly help our 520 current members."

Moving the idea forward, the chamber decided that this would be their first phase: to reach out to the Solon High School first while also getting the city on board. "Literally after we met with the high school, within the week we launched it," says Jennifer, "they were just thrilled for this opportunity for their students and they bent over backwards to make this happen so fast." The success was immediate with members posting positions and students applying for the available jobs, internships, and senior positions. Their second phase will be reaching out to member colleges and universities in hopes to con-

tinued the added benefits to their chamber members. "It's just been an unbelievably positive experience and it shows the value added benefits that the Solon Chamber can do for their businesses, as well as keep the talent local. I'm really looking forward to talking to our colleges and universities next," Jennifer says.

Working together as a community the Solon Chamber, City of Solon, and Solon Area High School have created an opportunity that will continue to expand. Their efforts directly help their members as well as assist their local students to complete necessary senior projects, all the way to opportunities for their futures after high school. Jennifer says, "It's a partnership that will continue to grow and create more jobs for our students." If your chamber is thinking about assisting your local youth, think about creating a bridge between your members and local schools.

For more information on the Solon Chamber of Commerce, visit their website at www.solonchamber.com.

Power Up the Board Retreat

Bob Harris, CAE
Contributing Writer

Organizations plan an annual retreat to empower the board of directors with information and inspiration. The meeting is designed to transfer information to the leadership. The schedule often includes time for recreational activities or team building.

While every retreat is well-intentioned, when volunteers are asked what they expect to gain, they reply, "I hope we get to know each other better." Their expectations are low.

When asking executives how prior retreats went, I hear, "It seemed to be a session for the leadership to come up with new projects rather than a high level discussion of how to improve our organization," said Crissy Hancock, Executive Administrative Specialist at the Midland Chamber of Commerce in Texas. Volunteers may view the re-

treat as a social function mixed with an opportunity to make suggestions. In fact they feel compelled to offer new projects. Their sentences begin with, "I have a good idea..." The result is a to-do list that creates work for the staff and officers.

Heighten Expectations: Improve the retreat by setting higher expectations. Build anticipation by announcing it as a forum for visionary leadership. Schedule time for orientation and social functions but focus the most attention on discussing the mission and goals.

Try not to let conversations fall below the level of visionary leadership. Explain that board discussions should stay above the 50,000 ft. altitude. Committee work is at 25,000-30,000 ft.; and the staff implements the decisions at the 10,000 ft. level. Anything below that can be characterized as "in the weeds." The Executive Director at the Montana Society of CPAs,

Jane Egan, said, "When our board really focused on our five goals, everything ended in alignment. From the mission, vision and value statements to the projects, committees and budget, we left our retreat with a road map that energized our staff, board members, and volunteers. The outcome of a retreat that thinks long-term is rewarding for the leadership, staff, and the organization."

In Bartlesville, Oklahoma, the President of the chamber, Sheri Wilt, IOM, stated, "When we plan our retreat to focus on outcomes for the organization and community, and not just telling directors about their duties, everybody leaves motivated and with an understanding of how the current and future years should play out."

Tips for Successful Retreats: Advise attendees that the desired outcome is strategic discussion and visionary leadership. Focus on the existing

strategic plan—not adding new initiatives.

-Provide information about leadership responsibilities or a board notebook.

-Find an environment that is comfortable and avoids the temptations of office or other distractions.

-Emphasize outcomes: "How can our organization improve results and fulfill its mission?"

-Schedule fun breaks and social events to offer a breather from the high-level thinking.

-Take notes. What is documented is more likely to be achieved. For good ideas that don't fit in the current program of work, move them to the "parking lot" for future consideration. The retreat should result in an inspired team ready to govern—not just a list of new projects.

Bob Harris, CAE, offers free governance and management tools at www.nonprofitcenter.com

Endorsements & PACs: The Basics



Penny Maynard, IOM
Contributing Writer

Among the many services a Chamber of Commerce is expected to provide for their members, working to bring about a more business-friendly environment in the community is paramount. When in-

fluencing and educating decision makers, whether elected or city staff, there is no one way.

Chambers in smaller communities, 30,000-50,000, should get their feet wet by supporting issues important to their members, rather than jumping in to endorse certain candidates or creating a PAC. Often, some members of the Board of Directors and membership are reluctant to go full force endorsing and/or creating a PAC lest the City Council or City Manager, in smaller communities, be offended.

A good way to begin is by sponsoring a candidates forum. When we first approached candidates about this, a few were cautious as to our intent. Some expected skewed "gotcha" questions and different questions for each candidate. But all accepted, albeit a few reluctantly.

Our procedures included the same questions for all candidates making certain there were only questions dealing with issues affecting the business community. Also, questions from the audience, if time permitted, were screened to meet our criterion for fairness and avoided partisan questions from any candidate's supporters. We recorded the forum and uploaded the video to our website and social media platforms. It was a success and promoted good will even from candidates who didn't support our issues. This enabled us to maintain good relationships no matter who was elected. One candidate who had been a reluctant participant came up to me afterward and said, surprised, "you asked the same questions of all of us." He went on to be the top vote getter in the election and was selected Mayor by the City Council.

Another method of obtaining candidates' position that

worked out well for us, prior to the forum format, included providing five questions to each candidate on various issues important to our membership. There was a word limit and we informed them we would publish their unedited responses through our newsletter and online. We did this for a couple of years, then went to a Candidates Forum.

Although we never created a PAC, one year we endorsed candidates for the City Council. After our forum, a committee was formed to select candidates to recommend to the Board of Directors for endorsements. Because of various personal relationships, the two candidates selected were not the most pro-business. One pro business candidate who had sought the Chamber's endorsement unsuccessfully was the same top vote getter who became Mayor for a one year term. Needless to say, it was a difficult year for

our organization. This Chamber has not endorsed a candidate since, but continued a Candidates' Forum for every city election for the next few years.

Another Chamber in a larger community has had a successful PAC for many years. Recently they not only endorsed two pro-business candidates that included one incumbent, they also donated to their campaigns through the Chamber's PAC as they had done in the past. Both of them lost the election. One of the successful incumbent candidates became Mayor during a time when the Chamber's lease was being negotiated. The Chamber owned the building but the City owned the land and the Chamber had been paying a very nominal annual rent somewhere around \$100 per month or per year. Things did not go well and the outcome, after lengthy negotiations, was that the Chamber had to leave their building after about 50 years in

that prime, highly visible location. They relocated to a new location, off the beaten path, a business park with no visibility and there is a tourism component to this chamber's services.

The moral is that endorsements of candidates for local office and creating a PAC to support these candidates can be very successful in larger communities. But in smaller ones, it is best to endorse regional and state-wide candidates who support your issues, rather than local City Council members. And always remember to respect the office and support local elected officials when they take positions benefiting the business community. Keep the lines of communication open by reminding members to attend local elected officials' fundraisers or events; and that the Chamber may disagree, but on issues only.

Contact me at pdanabeach@gmail.com or by cell phone at 949-370-6520.

Giving Extroverted Members Opportunities to Shine



Marcy Weaver
Contributing Writer

Extroverts can get a bad rap, being called out for being loud and narcissistic. But many of those who are classified as extroverts aren't obnoxious show ponies. There are plenty of extroverted members in every group who are social and engaged, yet not boisterous in the least. In fact, many extroverts have said that at certain times, they are shy, depending on the situation and environment. With three

quarters of our population being more extroverted, it makes sense to harness their skills within your chamber network and nurture their desire for stimulating social interactions.

In fact, Indie rocker Alex Kapranos stated, "Just because you can leap off a drum kit doing a scissor kick while hitting a chord, people expect you to be an extravert socially. But I'm not always comfortable with the idea of small talk at a party."

True extraverts are simply seeking ways to connect with other people. Besides simply encouraging each member to keep an up-to-date profile on your website in order to share about themselves, it's critical your chamber gives extroverts opportunities to connect in a variety of ways.

Facilitating Interactivity: At your networking events, be sure to offer a blend of free-for-all visiting along with intentional mingling activities with a purpose. Structure can go a long way to allow extroverts and introverts the opportunities to meet several people

comfortably by describing the parameters up front. Try hosting a speed networking event at which members form two lines, face each other, and visit for pre-determined time periods (2 minutes) before everyone switches. This type of event takes the pressure of never-ending small talk out of the equation and provides an atmosphere that not only allows—but even encourages—making multiple connections in an atmosphere that doesn't diminish the value of true networking. Extroverts are less likely to be bored and it provides a foundation for meaningful discussion instead of endless small talk.

Encouraging Mentorships: Ask some of your outgoing members with gentle personalities to help welcome a new member a few times a year. Extroverts thrive off new activities and people. Keep mixing up who they connect with, they feel more engaged as their connections grow. Prior to the new member's first meeting, give their contact information to the mentor and ask them

to reach out to the new member before the gathering, either through an invitation to coffee ahead of time or even a simple phone conversation to say welcome. The mentor should let the new person know that they will watch for them at the entrance at the first gathering and show them the ropes. All new members, regardless of personality type, will appreciate the follow through, but it will especially make an impact on the introverts or more shy extroverts. After that first meeting, have the mentor reach out to the new member again and ask how it went, then offer to sit with them for the next few meetings and to introduce them to others in the group.

Providing Opportunities to Be Featured: Your members have joined your chamber for a reason—to expand their professional network and build connections. Consider providing a variety of options for featuring members, allowing them to share professional and personal information. Some chambers highlight a new member

on their website each week, complete with a link to the featured member's LinkedIn page, website, and contact information. Many chambers also hold a round robin at the beginning of the meeting, asking each member to move into a large circle, then take turns spending 30 seconds introducing themselves, their company, and the rest of their elevator speech.

Connecting Inside and Out: Your extroverted members will appreciate when you offer multiple opportunities to connect throughout the month. Your regularly scheduled meetings are important, but they are not the only way for members to network. Establish activities outside of your regular meetings in which members can participate. For instance, when you notice a group of members talking about attending an upcoming concert in the park, approach them and ask if they will host other members if you extend an invitation to the rest of the membership. From happy hours and concerts to museum visits and service projects, you don't

have to personally participate or host each of these events for members—simply facilitate the deepening of the connections they have established through their chamber connections.

If you reach out to your membership with a broad array of ways to be involved, they will certainly engage in the opportunities that resonate with them. By valuing your extroverts and offering them a variety of ways to participate, you will give them plenty of opportunities to shine. And by welcoming the positive light they bring to your organization, you will in turn add value for all your members.

Marcy Weaver is the Vice President of Sales & Marketing at MicroNet, Inc., providers of membership management software and website solutions for nearly 1800 Chambers of Commerce and associations. Her background is in membership management and she is passionate about using technology to make sales and marketing more efficient. Marcy can be reached at Marcy.Weaver@micronetonline.com.

1,000 Days, 1,000 Members

Patrick McCabe
Editor

I was emailed a story this past January about a man who for 700 consecutive days made a purchase or other monetary transaction at a business or organization that is a member of the Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce in Illinois. Every day, for 700 days, this man would patronize a chamber member to thank them for being community-minded, dues-paying members of their local chamber. They didn't all have to be unique, just all chamber members. At that point over 100 different chamber member businesses had been patronized.

As a former staff member of two Chicago-area chambers, Rich Bysina knows the importance of the local community's support. The Western DuPage Chamber, consisting of the cities of Warrenville and West Chicago, and the

Village of Winfield, is a representation for all western suburbs in the Chicagoland area.

Rich initially emailed to see if I knew of anyone who had ever accomplished a similar streak of making purchases at chamber member businesses, and I had to admit that I have never heard of anyone even trying something like this.

Rich's streak began on February 17, 2012, with no real goal for how many days it would last or what exactly he wanted to accomplish. Around the time that I received that first email, however, Rich had decided to extend his streak to 1,000 days and leave it at that. That date is fast approaching. On November 12, 2014 Rich Bysina will make his 1,000th, and final, consecutive daily purchase at a chamber member business.

This streak has featured some recent milestones. For his 700th day Rich was joined by Warrenville Mayor David Brummel for a drink at Buf-



Rich Bysina with March Merchant Madness Basketball

Credit: Tim Morris

falo Wild Wings. For 750 he was with Village of Winfield President Erik Spande at Oakfield Restaurant, and for 800 he was with West Chicago Mayor Ruben Pineda at La Alianza Mexican Restaurant. "This is an impressive achievement

that shows his dedication to the Chamber's cause to promote local businesses and give them every advantage that they can," said President Spande.

Rich's streak has also hit some territory outside of Chicagoland. In March, 2013 Rich

was with his son in Indianapolis to watch Duke in the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, and made two purchases at members of their local chamber. This was also Rich's busiest month, as for 31 days he visited 31 different businesses to keep

his streak alive. He called it March Merchant Madness, and brought a basketball with him for all 31 business owners to sign.

Over this past winter Rich was in Durham, NC (once again to see Duke), and made two more purchases at members of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce. While the intent was to keep the streak as local as possible, Rich didn't want normal travels to get in the way of continuing the streak, so he found local chambers and got recommendations on whom he should see while he was in town.

After all is said and done Rich will approach nearly \$40,000 in chamber member purchases over the course of 1,000 days. This is an impressive and inspirational run for those that champion the cause of buying local. Rich is eager to learn of anyone who would like to attempt to break his streak. If you or someone from your chamber wants to attempt a similar streak, please write and let us know. As Rich says, "Records are made to be broken."

Why Leigh Was So Nervous About Sending This Email to Marie



Glenn Shepard
Contributing Writer

Here in Nashville, country music wannabes are a dime a dozen. Last year when a young

singer named Leigh wanted to ask another young singer named Marie to sing a duet with her, there was just one problem.

Leigh was so nervous that she couldn't send the email. She said it was "Like I was writing to someone I had a crush on and you don't want to mess it up."

She finally got the nerve to send it, and was devastated when she got no response. She told her husband, "She hates me and she hates the song. She's probably going to change her email address."

Marie finally responded a few days later with, "I think it's awesome. Let's do it!"

But Leigh's jitters didn't stop there. When they got together to record, she told her husband, "I'm in over my head. I don't know what I've done!"

You'd expect this from a country music wannabe, but Leigh's far from that.

"Leigh" is Grammy Award winning superstar Miranda Leigh Lambert, who has won the ACM Female Vocalist of the Year award five consecutive times, the most in country music history. Her husband is Blake Shelton, who's had 24 hit singles of his own, and is a judge on the hit TV show "The Voice."

"Marie" is Carrie Marie Underwood.

Even after having achieved more success than most people could ever dream of, Miranda was still nervous about asking Carrie to do the duet.

As cliché as it sounds, not having the nerve to ask costs people more than failure ever will. This principle

applies in every area of life.

Because my beautiful bride knows what a music lover I am, she made my 50th birthday extra special by getting the members of Toto, Motley Crue, K.C. and the Sunshine Band, Huey Lewis, Heart, Steppenwolf, Twisted Sister, and The Marshall Tucker Band to send me birthday cards.

One of our friends was envious and asked how she had enough clout to get them to send the cards, but she had no clout with any of them. She simply found their addresses online, mailed each a pre-addressed card, and asked each to sign it and mail it directly to me.

In order to get the 8, she sent cards to 70. No response was received from the 62 others, including Bon Jovi, Kiss, Tom Petty, Aerosmith, The

Rolling Stones, Jimmy Buffet, Pat Benatar, Steve Miller, Bob Seger, Cheap Trick, Peter Frampton, Van Halen, ZZ Top, Billy Idol, and Ted Nugent.

But what mattered wasn't how many didn't respond, it was how many did. She asked, and she asked big.

This same principle of being willing to ask and ask big also applies in Chamber World. I can't begin to count how many chamber execs have told me of the day they first got up the nerve to ask for a \$25,000 (or larger) sponsor for an event, and someone said "Yes".

The Miami Beach chamber got a local car dealer to donate a 13 month lease on a new \$93,000 Jaguar. The arrangement was so successful that the dealer is now donating mini-leases on several

cars, all because the chamber exec thought and asked big.

No matter what it is that you want, you have to be willing to ask. The worst thing people can do to you is say no. The worst thing you can do to yourself is never ask.

Glenn Shepard is a professional speaker recognized as a national leader in fighting the declining American work ethic and expert on motivating employees. He's the bestselling author of six books and over 400 published articles. His company provides accredited management seminars at no cost to chambers. For more, go to www.glennshepard.com.

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESSES OF THE MONTH: 2nd QUARTER, 2014

Let us know about your Businesses of the Month for July, August & September, 2014. E-mail submissions@chamberreview.org today!

April

-Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce, South Fulton, Tennessee/Fulton, Kentucky: Park Terrace Village. A new spin on senior living, Park Terrace Village (in South Fulton, TN) offers residential assisted-care living and independent living as an alternative to premature nursing home care. There are 22 apartments, cottages, and houses available for rent, and residents have the option of personal care and assistance in their daily lives.

-Port Angeles Regional Chamber of Commerce, Port Angeles, Washington: Murray Motors. Since 1934, Murray Motors has been an excellent resource for the Port Angeles community. Over three generations, Murray Motors has built a reputation of experience and exceptional ability in maintaining and repairing cars and trucks, while also providing great products at great prices.

-Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, Navarre, Florida: Santa Rosa Medical Center. A modern hospital facility with 129 beds and 100 physicians at its disposal, the Santa Rosa Medical Center seeks to provide the best local healthcare in the community. Last year, and for the second year in a row, it was recognized The Joint Commission as a Top Performer, making it one of only 244 facilities nationwide to receive the distinction for the last two years.

-Adrian Chamber of Commerce, Adrian, Michigan: Tallman and Sons. Since 2001, DJ and Vanessa Tallman have been the owners of Tallman and Sons, a family owned and operated business that raises cattle. With the help of his three sons, DJ Tallman works to ensure qual-

ity meat, particularly by paying close attention to what the cattle are fed. The family has both commercial and individual clients.

-Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Greenville, South Carolina: Talent Management Solutions. Talent Management Solutions serves clients with a comprehensive array of staffing, recruiting, and consulting solutions in the areas of management, engineering, sales and marketing, finance, accounting, and information technology services. Additionally, the company offers ongoing follow-up and employee retention coaching.

-Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce, Merrill, Wisconsin: River District Development Foundation. The RDDF is a group of volunteers responsible for creating the three-phase plan for the River Bend Trail, a project that began in 2011 and is currently underway. The group was awarded a National Parks planning grant from which the concept for the River Bend Trail was born.

-Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, Las Cruces, New Mexico: Gift Baskets By G. Georgia Lane opened her business in 2009 after retiring from her career in education. At her shop, customers can find unique gifts for virtually any occasion—holidays, birthdays, new additions to the family, weddings—you name it; Baskets By G has something to help celebrate.

-Greater Rostraver Chamber of Commerce, Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania: Heart Centered Counseling Services. At Heart Centered Counseling Services, the staff of five counselors is both experienced and compassionate, specializing in many di-

verse areas and able to work with many different demographics.

May

-Hitchcock Chamber of Commerce, Hitchcock, Texas: Bulldog Bistro. The Bulldog Bistro is the new site of the culinary arts program at Hitchcock High School, part of the Hitchcock Independent School District. A newly renovated cafeteria, The Bulldog Bistro will be periodically staffed by culinary students from surrounding areas starting in the 2015-16 school year.

-Perry Area Chamber of Commerce, Perry, Georgia: Mobley Furniture. Owner Patrick Mobley opened the Perry location of his business in 2006 and has been a member of the Perry Area COC ever since. Mobley Furniture currently employs 32 people and serves not just the Perry community, but also delivers products to customers throughout Georgia and in surrounding states.

-Valley Center Chamber of Commerce, Valley Center, Kansas: Emprise Bank. The roots of Emprise Bank reach back more than 100 years, but the Michaelis family has been running the show since 1965. Over 25 years, the Michaelis family acquired banks in communities all over Kansas, and in 1989, merged them together to form Emprise Bank, which now has 40 locations and assets exceeding \$1.5 billion.

-Vernal Area Chamber of Commerce, Vernal, Utah: Petersen Medical. Since 1968, Petersen Medical has been providing high-quality home medical equipment and dedicated professional service to Utah residents. Though it started as a small organization serving only

those in the Utah Basin, Petersen Medical has since grown to include nine offices and 250 employees throughout the state.

-Stillwater Chamber of Commerce, Stillwater, Oklahoma: Total Energy. Total Energy is a diversified energy products and service company providing a broad range of specialized services to utilities and industrial clients. The company boasts the world's largest inventory of ASME storage tanks.

-Sylacauga Chamber of Commerce, Sylacauga, Alabama: Alabama Childhood Food Solutions. ACFS provides food to as many children as possible for the 178 days a year that they are not in school, and therefore not receiving free school breakfast and lunch. Currently, ACFS is serving children in 17 schools. Over the summer, the company sets up distribution centers where children can go for food.

-Kernersville Chamber of Commerce, Kernersville, North Carolina: Amanzi Marble and Granite. One of Amanzi Marble and Granite's promises is that when you come to look at their countertops, you will be pleased with every aspect of your visit. They offer the highest quality product and their commitment to customer service means they "leave no stone unturned - literally - to help you with your purchase."

-Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce, Morton Grove, Illinois: MB Financial Bank. MB has been serving Chicagoland customers for over 100 years. Their banking centers and employees are in the communities they serve, allowing them to provide professional banking solutions to privately held, middle-market busi-

nesses with personal attention and quick turnaround times. They also serve individuals and small businesses with the same attention they've come to expect from their local bank.

June

-Grand Terrace Area Chamber of Commerce, Grand Terrace, California: Precious Cargo Meidcal Transportation, LLC. Founder Anthony P. Cortez started serving local clients in 2011 (then called Precious Cargo Transportation) as a sole proprietor with one wheelchair/gurney van, and has since grown his business to include a second van and five employees.

-Logan County Area Chamber of Commerce, Bellefontaine, Ohio: A New Leaf Florist. Since the 1998 inception of their business, owners Bill and Jennifer Miller have focused on making A New Leaf Florist "Bellefontaine's freshest and finest provider of floral products." The team at A New Leaf Florist delivers to several nearby counties, but will send flowers anywhere in the country, as well as to many international locations, through their wiring service, Teleflora.

-Plainfield Chamber of Commerce, Plainfield, Indiana: Plainfield Short Term Offender Program Facility. This re-entry program works to provide integrated and holistic individual treatment to the offender population. The Short Term Offender Program puts its 161-person staff to work helping offenders develop the skills and mindset necessary to re-enter society as productive members upon release. The Plainfield Chamber of Commerce calls the business "a unique and valuable community partner."

-Phelps Chamber of Commerce, Phelps, New York: Phelps Hometown Pharmacy. Owners John and Toni Tompkins once worked as pharma-

cists in the Rochester area, but ultimately decided that they would rather provide more personalized service to a smaller community. So, in October, 2010, they opened the Phelps Hometown Pharmacy, where their business model can be better in keeping with their desire "to know you, your family, and even your pet by name."

-Rexburg Area Chamber of Commerce, Rexburg, Idaho: Rexburg Vision Center. Current owner, Dr. Scott Mortensen, bought the business when its original owner, Dr. Barton Jensen, retired in 1991. Since then, Dr. Mortensen has been joined by two other doctors (one of whom is his son) in his effort to provide quality eye care to the Rexburg community. The Rexburg Vision Center offers contacts, glasses, and pre- and post-surgical treatment, and even has an on-site lab to produce glasses.

-Kearney Chamber of Commerce, Kearney, Missouri: Hidden Valley Funeral Home. Funeral director John McCollum says that when it comes to the funeral business, his motto is, "Take care of the families, and the money will take care of itself." Being a small, family-owned funeral home, Hidden Valley is able to afford each family the personal and individualized attention it deserves.

-Hermon Chamber of Commerce, Hermon, Maine: The Sports Arena. The Sports Arena opened twelve years ago and is owned by Len and Shelly Cole. The facility offers 20 ten-pin bowling lanes, 17 pool tables, and 60 arcade games, and is the perfect location for birthday parties, corporate parties, and family gatherings.

-Ottumwa Area Chamber of Commerce, Ottumwa, Iowa: The Bridal Cottage. A full service bridal and prom shop, The Bridal Cottage has a staff of seven who travel to Chicago and other major cities to hand-pick each and every dress in their shop. For 22 years, The Bridal Cottage has been dedicated to making every customer's special day a memorable one.

3rd QUARTER 2014 UPCOMING EVENTS:

If you have important events coming up in October, November & December of 2014, e-mail submissions@chamberreview.org to submit them for our next issue!

July

-Nisswa Chamber of Commerce, Nisswa, Minnesota: Lakes Area Artists Fine Art Show and Sale (July 9-12). Lakes Area Artists will exhibit their artwork at their July show and sale Wednesday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm each day. You'll be able to find everything from paintings to pottery to jewelry. Art demonstrations will be held throughout the show dates.

-Greater Ocean City Area Chamber of Commerce, Ocean City, Maryland: 25th Annual Greek Festival (July 11-14). Four full days & nights of delicious Greek cuisine, coffee, and pastries—dine in or carry-out! Live Greek music, and nightly Greek dance performances by the Demetrakia, and many unique art and jewelry vendors.

-Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce, Walla Walla, Washington: Athena Caledonian Games (July 12-13). Athena Caledonian Games is a Scottish heritage festival featuring Scottish piping, dancing, sheepdog trials, athletic competitions, vendors, food, and friends. Festival-goers can visit the Knight of Knight Time in Scotland to see his armor and try on his helmet. There will also be games for children. Admission is free.

-Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Scranton, Pennsylvania: Wilderness Survival Camp (July 14-17): Children ages 9-14 will be provided opportunities to learn survival skills, increase self-confidence, and gain a new-found respect and sense of responsibility for the world around them. Activities include plant identification, fire by friction, shelter building, and animal tracking. Cost: \$100. For more information or to register, call 570-842-1506.

-Emporia Area Chamber of Commerce, Emporia, Kansas: Twinkie Festival (July 19). Celebrate the sweetest come back in history with an eating contest, a song contest, a costume contest and (most importantly) a Twinkie recipe contest. There will be fried Twinkies and other treats to enjoy.

-Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, Flagstaff, Arizona: 5th Annual Prescott Film Festival (July 23-27). Over 80 of the best independent films, shorts, features and documentaries from all over the world including the best from Arizona filmmakers. After parties with live music, panel discussions, and a wine tasting event. For more information go to www.prescottfilmfestival.com.

-Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Richmond, Kentucky: Christmas In July Gift and Craft Market (July 26). It may be the hottest time of the year, but it's the best time to shop for a great your fall birthday and anniversary gifts, as well as your Christmas gifts. You'll find interesting, hand crafted, and boutique-like items from right in the Richmond community.

-Keizer Chamber of Commerce, Keizer, Oregon: Great Oregon Steam-Up (July 26-27, August 2-3): One of the best family events in Oregon, most everything at the Antique Powerland Museums (a 62-acre heritage museum complex) is up and running for this two-weekend festival. Kids under 12 attend for free, and special events run throughout both weekends. For more information go to www.antiquepowerland.com.

August

-Kalispell Chamber of Com-

merce, Kalispell, Montana: Huckleberry Days (August 8-10). A celebration of the native purple fruit, the annual wild huckleberry harvest is the theme for music, entertainment, and an art fair. The event also features crafts, a pie-eating contest, a treasure hunt, sidewalk sales, and lots of family fun. Restaurants offer signature huckleberry flavored drinks, entrees, and desserts in honor of the grizzly bears' favorite food.

-Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce, Amherst, Massachusetts: Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Summer Conference (August 8-10). Conferences on Friday, with 150+ adult workshops on Saturday and Sunday on organic farming, gardening, sustainability, nutrition, food politics, activism, and more. With music, games, rides, and workshops for kids, this is an event for the whole family! For more information go to www.nofasummerconference.org.

-Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce, Petoskey, Michigan: 4th Annual Chalk & Chocolate (August 16). Area sidewalks are the target of artists young and old for this annual chalk art celebration. Artists of all abilities—from the beginner to experienced chalk artist—are welcome. For more information go to www.crookedtree.org/chalkchocolate.

-Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce, Ruidoso, New Mexico: Ruidoso Antique Show (August 22-24). Now in its 21st year of being one of the best high-end antique shows in the West, the Ruidoso Antique Show will feature some of the best antiques, collectibles, and decorative arts selected and presented by many outstanding an-

tiques dealers from all over the U.S. There's something for everyone and in every price range!

-Atascadero Chamber of Commerce, Atascadero, California: Staycation Wine Camp (August 23). Head to the Merrill's Estate for a day full of yoga, swimming, wine seminars, live music, and more! This 21 and over event proves that summer camp isn't just for kids any more.

-Sycamore Chamber of Commerce, Sycamore, Illinois: Discover Sycamore's Block Party (August 23). Enjoy Sycamore's premier "street dance" with live music and great food from local restaurants. Event will be held on Somonauk Street, between State and Elm Streets, from 3 to 11pm.

-St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, Canton, New York: 48th Annual St. Lawrence Co. Rock and Mineral Show (August 22-24). Friday night at dusk will be the children's fluorescent mineral hunt. The event, which is free to the public, will also include a large indoor/outdoor show with vendors selling jewelry, minerals, crystals and fossils. Free mineral kits for kids and wire wrapping lessons.

-Destin Area Chamber of Commerce, Destin, Florida: Baytowne Wharf Art Walk (August 29-31). Welcomes the fresh fall season with a weekend of world-class art and live music in the Village Events Plaza. Exceptional artists featured in the area's leading galleries from across the southeast will gather for this three-day festival featuring the best of the best in the world of art.

September

-Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, Jackson, Wyoming: 30th Annual Jackson Hole Fall Arts Festival (September 3-14).

Widely recognized as one of the premier cultural events in the Rocky Mountain West, this festival draws thousands of art enthusiasts each year. Visitors will get to see the works of nationally and internationally acclaimed artists all while experiencing an array of art, music, cuisine, and wine. More than 50 events round out this eleven-day festival.

-Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Denver, Colorado: Dinosaur Days (September 5-6). A fun family event celebrating the days of the dinosaurs! Put on with help from the Dinosaur Journey Museum and the 5K Pteranodon Trot race, the weekend will feature food and craft vendors, dino face painting, live music, and much more.

-Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce, Rockland, Maine: Harvest Hoot Family Festival (September 6). The 5th annual Harvest Hoot festival is a day of fun for the whole family at the Camden Snow Bowl. Children's activities, games and entertainment, live music, and local food vendors on site.

-Hudson Area Chamber of Commerce, Hudson, Ohio: Case Barlow Farm Fall Harvest Festival (September 14). This event features old-fashioned games, mazes, a music garden, hay wagon and horse rides, a cakewalk, and plenty of crafts. Also on hand will be food, live entertainment, square dancing, antique cars, petting animals, alpacas and donkeys. Come enjoy and learn the handcrafts of generations past.

-Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce, Panama City Beach, Florida: 24th Annual Lobster Festival & Tournament (September 18-24): With huge local lobsters on

the weigh-in scales, fresh lobster prepared every way you can imagine, and the 14th Annual Schooners Sand Sculpting Contest, this event draws thousands of divers and lobster fans from all over the Southeast. Proceeds benefit the Florida Aquatic Marine Institute and the Toys For Kids Foundation.

-Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce, Wilmington, Vermont: 7th Annual Vermont Wine and Harvest Festival (September 19-21). Set against the world renowned Vermont fall foliage, the Vermont Wine and Harvest Festival is a weekend of tastings, dinners, culinary demonstrations, shopping, and entertainment. Come discover, experience, and enjoy all that Vermont has to offer.

-Dunn Area Chamber of Commerce, Dunn, North Carolina: Lillington Fall Festival 2014 (September 20). The event runs from 10am to 4pm and features vendors selling food, arts, crafts, jewelry and more, along with music throughout the day and activities for children.

-Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, Dandridge, Tennessee: 8th Annual Scots-Irish Music Festival (September 27). Come enjoy pipe bands, Celtic entertainers, athletics and dance demos, food & merchandise from the British Isles. Right in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, the Scots-Irish Festival is an old-time Main Street music festival honoring the town's earliest settlers in 1783.

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#HowToDoltRight

Andrea Mosher
Staff Writer

The position that chambers once held is being replaced by social media, but this does not mean the end for these institutions. Instead this occurrence affords a new opportunity. While everybody is jumping on the social media bandwagon, many people do not know how to properly utilize this method of networking and communication. It is not enough to have accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. It is not enough to post the upcoming events to these accounts, and then post pictures of the event after it has passed. Your chamber needs to play an active role in the development and growth of your social media presence. It's also a new opportunity to provide value to your members.

Social media is not about increasing revenue; not directly at least. Social media is about making connections and growing relationships. Once your following has grown and people realize that you value them and also add value to their business, you will see your cham-

ber benefiting and revenue increasing. Your followers have to benefit from their online relationship with you. Forcing your presence on your followers is the surest way to lose them and give you a bad reputation. If your chamber becomes an authority on social media, your members will benefit not only from your increased web presence, but will also be able to learn from your example.



Credit: mkhmarketing (Flickr)

A successful navigator in the social media scene is the Turlock Chamber of Commerce in California. The Chamber's Director of Communications, Development, and Events, who also operates the social media accounts, Tasha Van Santen, agreed to answer a few of my questions about their practices. When asked, Van Santen said, "Of course the Turlock Chamber of Commerce is always interested in growing our existing social media sites as well as venturing into new vehicles to reach our target market."

That's why one of their ongoing projects is to establish more of a presence on YouTube. The Chamber "has been currently working on a video campaign to showcase our events/programs as well as member testimonials and will be launched soon."

The Turlock Chamber seems to be the exception in a world full of organizations who are having problems establishing and utilizing their social media to its fullest potential. There are some very important guidelines to follow when it comes to interacting on social media platforms. The purpose of this "do's and don'ts" list is to help make it worthwhile for people to check out your handle, page, or profile.

DO:
-Actively post on social media accounts. This not only helps you spread the word about what is going on with your chamber, but also keeps you in the minds of your followers.

-Tailor content. This must be done for the intended audience as well as the platform on which it's presented. Twitter posts must be kept short and sweet, while Facebook allows for more information to be presented. Van Santen said, "we find a business demographic using Facebook and a younger, non-business demographic using Twitter."

-Make your posts interesting and relevant to your audience. If you find something important, ask yourself if it applies to the audience you are trying to reach. Focus on content that has

to do with your industry, business, community, or followers. The Turlock Chamber works hard to "make each post, tweet, and pin unique and organic to catch our target market's eye."

-Use social media symbols to help get your content out to the appropriate audiences. Tag people on Facebook and use hashtags on Twitter; this helps target your content to interested parties.

-Involve your audience; start discussions, reply to comments, share and comment on other posts, ask for opinions, and give shout outs and acknowledgments. This will get your audience invested in your relationship and will encourage people to visit your page often.

-Post about chamber events and happenings, the same for businesses (both members and prospective members), and provide success stories using different techniques and marketing methods. This will give people ideas for their own businesses, and establish the chamber as a knowledgeable resource.

-Include quotes, links, and pictures in your posts to catch people's attention.

DON'T:

-Post constantly on your accounts, as this will overwhelm your followers and may cause them to unfollow you. Posting more than five times on Twitter in a day is too much unless there is a lot going on.

-Post solely about the events of the chamber, this is boring and not valuable to your members. Offering the same information the members probably already received is not necessary.

-Post without a point. You are an institution, not a high school freshman. A post should be informative and helpful, or at least thought provoking, to your followers. This does not mean you cannot have fun with it, but keep it on task.

-Make it too personal. This goes hand-in-hand with the previous point. Unless your children started a charity event, or your chamber hosted a family day, it is unnecessary for their pictures to be anywhere on the chamber's page.

-Be long-winded. If you want to include a link to an article or study then go ahead, but do not summarize the whole thing in a post. Social media is like fast food, quick and easy. People cringe when they see huge blocks of text and it is not obvious why they should care.

-Tag someone just to get their attention or promote yourself. Unless they requested the information it is more likely to annoy them and they may unfollow you.

While everyone recognizes the value of social media, not a lot of people know how to properly utilize its function. Instead of letting virtual networking take over for the chamber, become the expert and offer new value to your members by teaching and helping them make the most of it.

For more information on the social media success of the Turlock Chamber please visit www.turlockchamber.com, or follow them on any of their social media sites.

This article used information from the following sources: inboundmarketingagents.com, pammarketingnut.com & socialmediatoday.com.

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Rolling...Speed...Mark It...Action!

Lucas John Potter
Staff Writer

Everyone loves movies. There is positively no doubt about that. People in the United States spend billions of dollars every year at movie theaters, on DVDs and home entertainment, and on film memorabilia. People spend so much of their disposable income on films that it seems like it would be such a simple opportunity for chambers of commerce to take advantage of their popularity. However, it is not as common as you might think. Although, some chambers are catching on.

One chamber that continues to have a strong tie to film and film history is the Bodega Bay Chamber of Commerce in Bodega Bay, California. Bodega Bay was the setting and primary filming location for Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 classic *The Birds*. Being such an integral part in a film as iconic and influential as *The Birds* still has an influence on Bodega Bay and the Chamber today. Last year, to honor the film's 50th anniversary, the Chamber hosted its First Annual Alfred Hitchcock Film Festival. Visitors flocked from around the country to celebrate.

The event was such a huge hit that the Chamber hosted its Second Annual Alfred Hitchcock Film Festival last March, screening three of Hitchcock's best films and hosting a black tie gala to raise money for art programs in Bodega Bay schools.

Drawing people into town for such a large event is great for chamber members. Restaurants, hotels, and gift shops (to name just a few) all stand to benefit from the influx of people with disposable income to spend in a short period of time. And if that event can also manage to foster culture, entertainment, and the artistic expression of young people, I would certainly call it a success.

But where fostering an environment of culture, entertainment, and artistic expression of young people is concerned, it is tough to outshine the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce in Doylestown, PA. The Central Bucks Chamber began hosting the Bucks Fever Film-

exposure offered by the Bucks Fever FilmFest is invaluable for aspiring filmmakers. Speaking as an aspiring filmmaker myself, I am very familiar with the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes along with creating and screening a film at a festival. This is something that really should be encouraged by communities and

(hopefully) increased business. But in addition to increased business for individual sponsors, events like this can greatly improve the business climate of the community as a whole. FilmFest is just one part of "Bucks Fever," a program started over 30 years ago by the Central Bucks Chamber to celebrate the artistic, historical, and cul-



Bucks Fever FilmFest Marquee

Credit: Cental Bucks Chamber of Commerce

Fest in 2000 and has been holding the festival every year since. What began as a simple screening of, and Q&A panel for, the Academy Award-winning film *The Buddy Holly Story* (whose producers, director, and Oscar-winning composer are all Bucks County residents) has since blossomed into quite a large ordeal. In the eleven years since it began accepting and judging submissions, the Bucks Fever FilmFest has received over 400 films, screened over 100, and has awarded more than \$15,000 in prize money.

Submissions come from all over the greater Delaware Valley area and are broken into three categories: High School, College, and Emerging filmmakers. It's plain to see that the festival is geared towards young people. The type of encouragement and

the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce is doing an excellent job of making that happen.

According to the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce representative I spoke with, the Bucks Fever FilmFest is funded completely by sponsorship from chamber members. They are the ones responsible for the festival even happening in the first place, thereby enriching the lives of, and giving opportunities to, the young artists in their community. However, the benefits are not felt by just the community of film lovers and up-and-coming filmmakers. The businesses who sponsor the festival can also benefit from increased revenue in the long run. Sponsoring such a large event can effectively act as advertising for the business in question, thereby gaining exposure and

tural legacy of the area. Bucks Fever and FilmFest augment the economic vitality of Bucks County by encouraging tourism to the area and engaging the community with fun events.

It is no secret that chambers of commerce exist to provide opportunities for their members that will ultimately result in profit. But if those opportunities also involve enriching the artistic and cultural atmosphere of the community at large, that is a wonderful bonus. Any chamber of commerce that hosts large scale film, arts, and culture festivals is performing two essential chamber duties: promoting economic well-being of members, and improving the overall quality of life for the people living within the chamber's boundaries.

Women, Chambers, and Our Gender Binary

Olivia A. Viterna
Staff Writer

When I first discovered that the Sacramento area was starting a new chamber for women, my original thought was an overwhelming flow of excitement: this is a chance for women to be heard, an opportunity for women to be respected, and an exciting step toward equality in the business sector.

Then it hit me. Why do women need their own chamber of commerce? Shouldn't every chamber be working towards the same goal of benefiting all its members, regardless of gender? Why should these women feel

er we're discussing business, healthcare, or economic development, women and men are different, and as long as gender norms continue to dictate our way of thinking, this will always be a gray area. Let's not forget that gender, like any type of binary, creates boundaries for one group while it benefits the other. Therefore, we create new chambers because we want to balance out the unevenness. When we see inequality, we see a need for a new chamber.

In Sacramento, California, Velma Sykes, President and CEO of the Sacramento Women's Chamber of Commerce, saw a need for a new chamber

in the community asking when and who is going to lead this chamber, demonstrating how the women in Sacramento felt driven to create a new, separate chamber where they could be themselves, make business personal again, and feel confident as they work alongside like-minded business women.

On March 27 2014, the Sacramento Women's Chamber of Commerce hosted their official kickoff event. With over 350 women attending, the inaugural was a complete success, as female business owners from all over the region met with one another, communicating, setting up meetings, and dis-

leadership development, relationship networking, and advocacy in private and public sectors." In order to achieve this mission and pave the way for future women leaders, the SWCC is implementing a mentoring program where women leaders from all over will speak to women business owners and offer insight into their experiences and successes. Sykes states "Many women have already signed on to come and help with our organization and in advancing our women business owners."

What we can learn from the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce is that although we are forced to adapt to societal expectations, we can simultaneously re-invent new ways to get our voices heard and our business noticed. The SWCC is actually proving how successful a chamber can be when its goals are designed, created, and reshaped by its members. Although the SWCC is a new chamber, and a minority chamber, it is already making major breakthroughs in business and leadership development, which is benefiting the community, particularly the other side of the binary.

Furthermore, although this is a women's chamber, it's membership is open to anyone who desires to do business with women, which demonstrates how the SWCC is actually working to bring equality to every gender, ethnicity, and race in their community. The continued success of the SWCC is a great example of how binaries do not belong in the workplace. Whether its personal or business, both women and men offer a different, yet equally valuable set of skills in business trade. Although there remains an unsettling imbalance between the two, chambers like the SWCC are working to break through this binary and create a new business sector where new voices are heard.



CA Assembly Members Cheryl Brown and Melissa Melendez, President/CEO UWCC Stephanie Bray, President/CEO SAWCC Velma Sykes, SAWCC Board Members Deidra Thorpe, Bonnie Singh-Allen & Tracy Saville. Credit: SAWCC

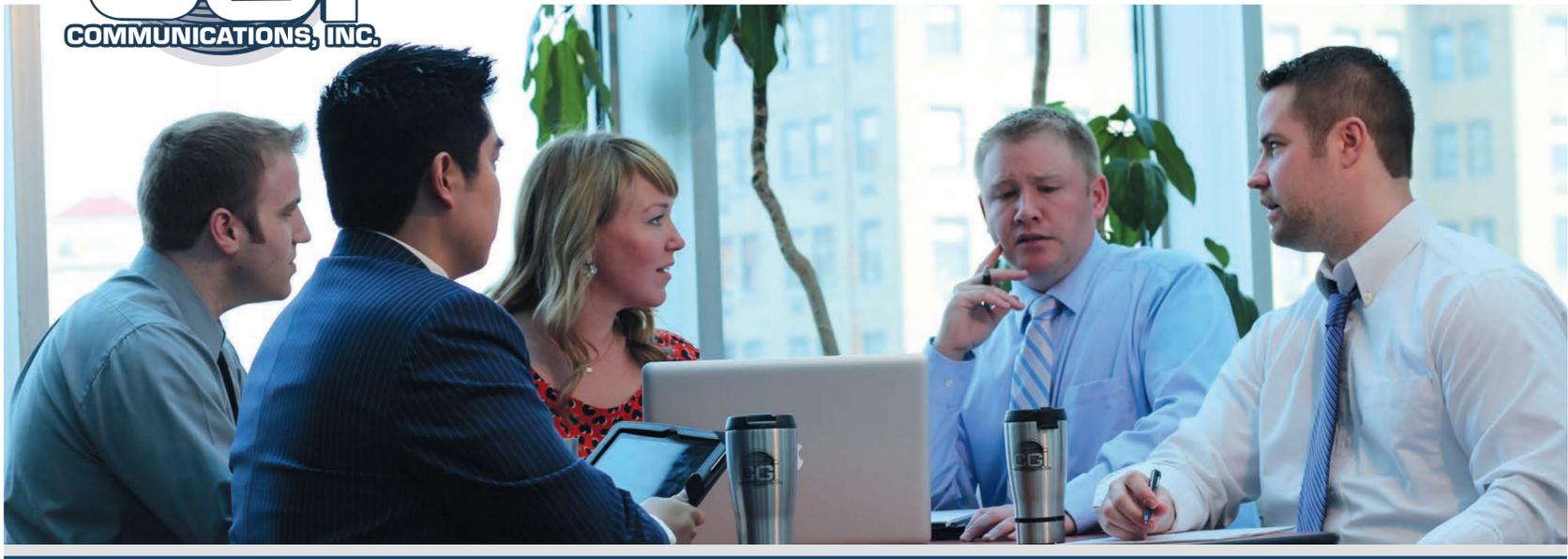
separate and required to form their own chamber to maximize their networking growth and receive the support they deserve?

The sad truth is, there really is no one size fits all chamber of commerce for every community. Sometimes diverse cultures, regions, and yes, even genders require different chambers to represent their interests, resources, and unique contributions to the area. Wheth-

er we're discussing business, healthcare, or economic development, women and men are different, and as long as gender norms continue to dictate our way of thinking, this will always be a gray area. Let's not forget that gender, like any type of binary, creates boundaries for one group while it benefits the other. Therefore, we create new chambers because we want to balance out the unevenness. When we see inequality, we see a need for a new chamber.

in her area: one focused on women and how they do business. Sykes states, "Women-owned businesses have always been of interest of mine because of the unique way that we do business, and the way that we do business with each other." Although Sykes didn't need any convincing that the Sacramento area needed a women's chamber, she was nevertheless approached by various women

cussing future partnerships. Sykes noted with excitement, "I could not get those women out of the room! They were talking about how they can do business together and support one another. It was amazing!"



Established in 1987, CGI Communications, Inc. continues to be a leader in digital marketing solutions. Proudly utilizing the endorsements earned from the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors, CGI's online video programs are backed by the most reputable entities in small-town government. Boasting more than 80,000 satisfied customers to date, CGI uses innovative technologies—from video tours, to reputation management, and tracking systems—to highlight our clients' best attributes and pave the way as the nation's premier community image marketer.

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