



CGI & WEBLINK WORKING TOGETHER Partnership Means Big Opportunity for Chambers

Look Inside!

Read Through Our Pages For Other Great Articles!

Page 2: Infographics: Your Visual Elevator Pitch; Reviving a Community Through Art; Festivals Help Chambers Boon

Page 3: Manufacturing a Magnetic Message; Living Well at the Glastonbury Chamber; Avoid Time Leeches

Page 4: Chamber Spotlights: Cody, Wyoming; Mesa, Arizona & Burlington, Vermont

Page 5: Chamber Spotlights: New Orleans, Louisiana & Jasper, Indiana

Page 6: The Right Leadership Ingredients; Keeping Checklists; The Importance of Rest; Choosing the Right Member Management System; Keeping an Open Mind

Page 7: Young, Broke Professionals 2; Chambers Lead on Green Energy; The Membership Life Cycle: Acquisition

Page 8: Businesses of the Month for July, August and September & Upcoming Events for October, November, and December!

Page 9: The Importance of Being Grammatically Correct (and why you should care!)



From Left to Right: Weblink President DJ Muller, CGI President & CEO Bob Bartosiewicz, CGI VP of Marketing Nicole Rongo, NEXT! Ad Agency President Frank Buono, Weblink CEO Terry Dwyer, and Weblink Director of Sales Joe Scaggs

Patrick McCabe Editor

Exposure and awareness, organization and management, recruitment and non-dues revenue...what could be better than that?

It's what every chamber strives to be: a highly organized, well-oiled machine of local business promotion, networking, and growth. For years, chambers have been on their own, cham-

pioning tried and true methods of local economic growth: membership directories, networking lunches, a sponsorship for the annual golf tournament.

Chambers of commerce traditionally operated in the print medium: directories, newsletters, and direct mailers have been a chamber of commerce's bread and butter for helping their members promote services (as well as obtaining that coveted non-dues revenue).

The landscape has now shifted to accommodate the rise of the Internet in the form of online directories, banner ads, and best of all: promotional video.

Despite the prevalence of text-based information, you and I both know when we visit a website, we'd much rather watch a video than read through pages and pages of information. Video is quicker, it's simpler, and it looks better. If this is something (Continued on page 10)

Chamber Networking 3.0: A Fairytale for the Digital Age

Frank J. Kenny
Contributing Writer

Once upon a time, there was an eager, young businessman who was ready to take on the world and be a success. The elders in his industry told him that he needed to go out and network to get clients and sales.

They taught him such Networking 1.0 strategies as, "Don't come back to the office without a lead," and, "Always be closing." Then they said, "Go to the chamber luncheon, introduce yourself to everyone, tell these people what you do (give your elevator pitch), hand out your business cards, get the cards of prospects, then come back here and work the phones. You are on your way!"

He called everyone on his list, offering his services. He networked until he was blue in the face. His phone hardly ever rang, nor were calls returned. He grew frustrated. And angry. He tried to think through his situation, asking himself, "What am I doing wrong?"

Pretty soon, the young man, tired and dejected, determined that networking doesn't really work. He decided that networking was a waste of time and energy. With no sales and no referrals, he began to look for other work.

Continuing on our story... In a community not too far away from this young man was another eager young man.

He, too, has been told by his elders to go out and network. Except they explained that he couldn't expect to get

anything without giving first. They called it Networking 2.0.

"Go to the chamber luncheon," they said.

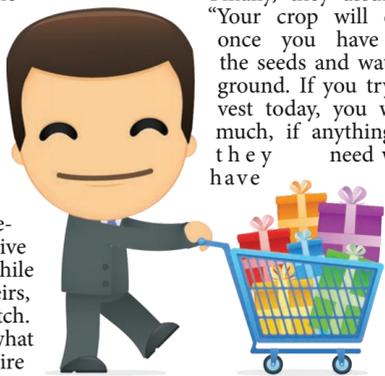
"Introduce yourself to a few people. Take a few business cards with you. If someone asks, give them one while asking for theirs, but don't pitch. Ask them what they do. Inquire on how they got into that line of work. Ask them about their latest family vacation. Let them talk about their kids." They told the young man, "Let your new acquaintances do most, if not all, of the talking. Be interested in them. Be earnest. Listen for ways you might be able to help them. Let the conversation develop. Maybe they will say they are working on fixing up their house. If you know of a good contractor, mention it. If not, don't worry about it. Just be present. Let them talk. Give them your attention."

They also said, "At the natural end of the conversation, if they ask, let them know what you do. If they are interested in learning more about it, they will ask. Try to turn the conversation back around to them and what they are interested in. Build a relationship.

Then excuse yourself and do it again with another new friend. "You are planting seeds today, not reaping. Pretty soon a lot of people will know you. They will like you. They will trust you." Finally, they assured him, "Your crop will come in once you have planted the seeds and watered the ground. If you try to harvest today, you won't get much, if anything. When they need what you have to sell, they will come to you. They will be loyal to you because you are loyal to them and the relationship. They will send you referrals. They will think of you first when your area of business comes up. You will have an army of people looking out for you."

This young man went on to have a successful career with many friends. Continuing in our story... In another town not too far away, an eager young lady is ready to take on the world of business. The elders tell her, "Attend networking events, get to know people, connect in-person and online."

Luckily, she loves social media and technology. Networking 3.0 comes naturally to her. She has read everything she could get her hands on concerning professional and personal branding. She knows how to use social media and digital marketing. She knows that if 1.0 networkers use social media at all, it is to talk about themselves. She knows they don't last long online. They soon decide that social media networking, just like in-person networking, doesn't work. Before too long, their online platforms are abandoned. She knows that networker (Continued on page 10)



Made in Brooklyn

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

In September of 2012, the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce had 723 members. Not bad, right?

What if I told you that today, just two years later, the Brooklyn COC now has more than 1,800 members?

Do I have your attention now?

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce has experienced immense growth in recent years, and that growth undoubtedly has something to do with the leadership provided by current President and CEO, Carlo A. Scissura. When Scissura came to the Brooklyn COC in September of 2012, membership was hovering just over the 700 mark. In the two years since, "we've almost tripled [our membership]," Scissura said. "It's wild."

Part of Scissura's method for membership growth has been reaching out to industries and types of businesses that had previously been underrepresented within the chamber. "For example, you and I are going to talk about food," Scissura said to me during our interview. "When I started [at the chamber], we really didn't have a lot of restaurants, food manufacturers, etc., as members. Now we have over 100, because they've realized the value of a membership here."

Scissura might be selling himself a bit short here, though: it's not just that the food industry came to realize the value of a chamber membership; it's that the Brooklyn COC made a point of imbuing a membership with greater value.

Consider Brooklyn Eats, for example, a long-standing food tasting event. Scissura saw an opportunity to reinvent Brooklyn Eats into something completely different, and perhaps far more useful to local businesses. "I wanted to get away from just the food tastings," he explained, "because everybody now does

food tastings all across New York. So we changed Brooklyn Eats into a manufacturing show." The chamber hosted the second annual installation of the newly revamped event on June 27.

"We had over 100 [Brooklyn] food and beverage makers [at the event], and really the show is about them making connections," Scissura said. Local manufacturers met with distributors like Fairway, Whole Foods, and Fresh Direct—sellers with whom distribution contracts would mean getting these locally made, artisanal foods on store shelves, and in the hands of more consumers. This year, the Brooklyn Chamber also set up a partnership with the Fancy Food Show, the largest specialty food and beverage event in North America, which also happens to take place in Manhattan's Javits Center.

The Brooklyn Chamber subsidized entry into the event for 15 Brooklyn food companies, since many smaller manufacturers find it to be cost prohibitive. "It just continues the whole thing about this Brooklyn made food," Scissura explained. "And then we added the final piece of the puzzle, which is the Brooklyn Made certification."

Which is precisely why I've called you all here today. Or at least, why I'm writing all of this.

The Brooklyn Made certification program was unveiled last June at the Brooklyn Eats trade show. According to a press release from the Brooklyn COC, the goal of the certification program is "to promote locally manufactured goods." Products will be labeled bronze, silver, or gold, depending on the

level of operations taking place in the borough. Scissura says to think of it kind of like a LEED certification on a building. The food and beverage industry is a thriving sector of the Brooklyn economy, accounting for 27% of all manufacturing activity in the borough. The certification does not, however, apply only to food; it can be for anything. "Design, furniture, clothes, whatever," Scissura said. "But the 'Made in Brooklyn' has to be really serious." Points of consideration in determining which level of certification for which a business is eligible include where research, design, and development takes place; whether or not the business employs Brooklyn residents; and where raw materials are sourced from.

Someone once told me that you can go just about anywhere in the world and people are likely to be familiar with at least one of three things about the United States: the White House, Michael Jordan, and New York City. Granted, Michael Jordan may not enjoy the same international name recognition that he once did, given his waning cultural relevance. New York City, on the other hand, has more of a timelessness about it. Brooklyn, however, was not always a part of this picture.

Most of the cultural icons associated with New York City are emblematic not of the city as a whole, but of Manhattan. When people think, "New York City," they might picture the Empire State Building, *Sex and the City*, or Times Square—famously known as "The Crossroads of the World," less famously known as the place with the (Continued on page 3)



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Infographics: Your Visual Elevator Pitch

Penny Maynard, IOM
Contributing Writer

Want a clear, direct way to announce your chamber's accomplishments to your members? A way that grabs their attention and keeps them from putting it aside to "read later"?

How about a marketing piece that quickly highlights all the benefits your chamber membership can offer? The answer is to create an infographic. When I first saw this format being used by various companies to show their services, I was blown away by the effectiveness and was determined to utilize this for chamber marketing.

We're in a communications era where sound bites, headlines, video clips, and "140 characters or less" are how we obtain our information as well as how we get it out there. I have heard from chamber executive traditionalists who have called this a "fad." They also called the iPhone a fad, and we all know what happened there.

What we see and how we see it is crucial to communicating. The infographic now provides us with limitless possibilities to express these ideas.

We as chamber executives are quick to organize groups of young professionals at our chambers, but often communicate

with them in the same old way. An infographic as a format for chamber marketing will speak their language, as it will for anyone interested in this more direct manner of communication.

Most of us have much less time in which to process more

and more information. Using infographics allows us to showcase the most important information we need to communicate to our members.

How often when we're marketing chamber services do we hear, "I don't have time right

now, send me something?" When you can provide a one-page infographic that includes all your benefits and opportunities, you're able to provide something that's difficult to refuse. If you are an organization that receives city funding, providing an infographic to the City Council for their meeting will go a long way toward answering questions before they are even

asked, and your request is much more likely to receive approval.

Distributing this to the public will show them all that a chamber can do, and a track record for what it's already done for the community. It's also a good step to transparency. It would be a good idea to see cities create infographics about their services. I've noticed a city in California is doing just that.

I have also seen some excellent examples of chambers of commerce using infographics. One has distributed its version to their membership as its annual report, and it is also included in the annual directory publication. Visualize a clean, simple one-page report with statistics to chamber members and the community to promote what you do!

Infographics are being used by all types of businesses, corporations, retail, non-profits, and the service industry. Even more remarkable is its use in personal branding. This past summer I even saw a great one of Lionel Messi and his many soccer accomplishments.

You need not have just one infographic. A chamber can create one specifically for government affairs, a street fair, their seminars, their luncheon programs, networking opportunities, and tourism. Individual ones can be created with stats from each of the categories included in the primary marketing piece, and used to cre-

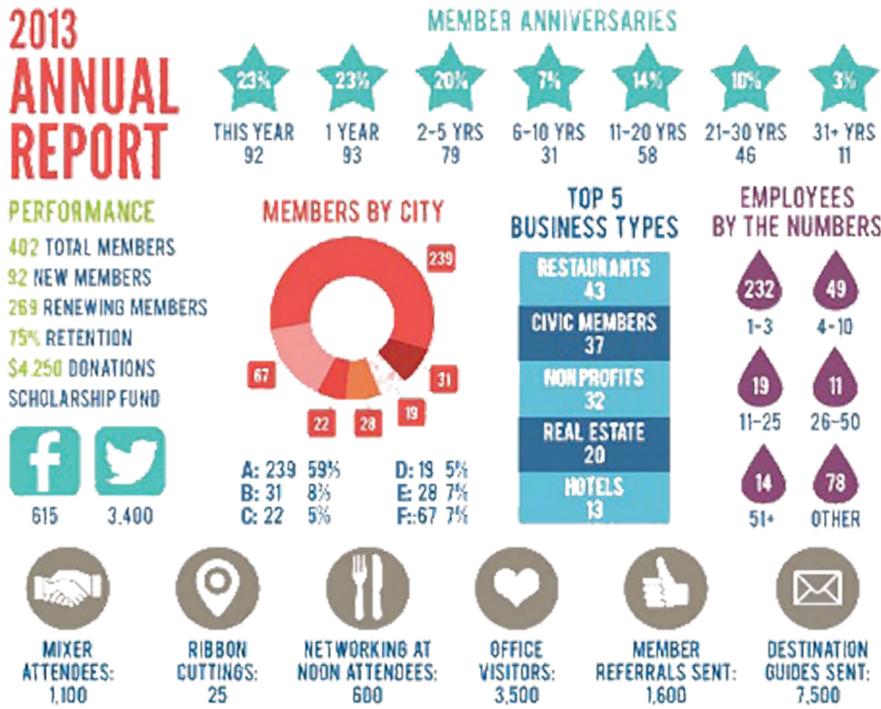
ate specific reports targeted to specific clients and entities. The possibilities are endless.

Find a high school student intern for five to ten hours per week, and this person can create and update any of your infographics. In California and some cities around the country, we have Task Rabbit. You can post a project with the fee you are willing to pay. A qualified person will be there for you. A website I've found that provides good tools and information is www.visually.ly, and there are many more out there. One chamber of commerce that has created a comprehensive infographic for self-promotion, which has a tourism services component, is the Half Moon Bay Coastal Chamber in California. Check it out for great ideas!

An infographic will introduce your members and the community to a new concept, a new way of keeping up with technological advances, and will create a marketing piece too appealing and effective for them to ignore!

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

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American Graffiti: Helping a Community Come of Age

Brianna Clegg
Staff Writer

What do you do when your neighborhood has historically been the environmental dump of the United States' most populous city?

Whether intentional or not, your neighborhood has been less than well-cared-for by the city, and you have had trouble gaining traction as a popular part of town. With garbage on the streets, it is hard to entice people to frequent your businesses, no matter how good the food and shopping. When your environmental history makes your neighborhood easily overlooked by visitors, you must take action to protect the environment and your businesses.

Greenpoint in Brooklyn, New York is the very real neighborhood that meets this description, and the Greenpoint Chamber of Commerce, which was reformed by Jeff Mann in 2012, is taking an active part in improving its community.

The Greenpoint neighborhood has several problems facing its businesses that pose potential roadblocks to success. These include pollution and unwanted tagging. Finding a way to promote awareness in the

community for something residents care about while simultaneously beautifying the area became essential to the well-being of the neighborhood.

The Greenpoint Chamber chose a somewhat unexpected way to combat these issues: murals, painted by youth artists in partnership with the Groundswell organization.

The most recent mural funded by the Chamber addresses the environmental struggles of the neighborhood by detailing its history, particularly that which left a large environmental impact. This includes their beginnings as an industrial district at a time when the environment was not at the forefront of anyone's mind, being the site of one of North America's largest oil spills, and the strong legacy of environmental justice that aimed to improve the neighborhood.

Partnering with organizations like Groundswell is a great opportunity for chambers. Groundswell empowers individuals to band together to improve their community in various ways, including collaborative art projects.

In this instance, youth joined the Groundswell organization and together they

planned and executed a community mural. The at-risk youth went from distrustful of the adults and other kids in the program, to actively engaging with their community and the issue of environmental activism.

The smile in Jeff Mann's voice was audible as he detailed the ways in which the kids in the Groundswell program blossomed as they learned to care for their own community.

The mural was a learning experience for everyone involved and it now serves to promote positive environmental practices in the future. Improving the environmental atmosphere of the town will make the air crisper, the sky clearer, and generally make the neighborhood more inviting. With an improved aesthetic, visitors will feel more inclined to take their time visiting and walking around. This will increase the exposure of various businesses to residents and visitors who would then be more likely to make purchases.

Graffiti is the other major aesthetic issue the Greenpoint Chamber of Commerce hoped to address and improve on with its mural project. While there are some beautiful examples of street art with profound and valuable meaning, the issue of

combat the unwanted spray painting, postering, and general defacing is a high priority. While it doesn't always work, the Greenpoint Chamber of Commerce hopes that the presence of an existing piece

it looks inviting, and people want to stick around and see what it has to offer. The Greenpoint Chamber of Commerce understands this, and has made the beautification and maintenance of their neighborhood



"Our Journey to Clean Water"

Credit: Tanay Warerkar

local culture, senseless gang and personal tagging makes for a less than attractive street.

Greenpoint is a destination for taggers; people have come from all over the country, and even the world, to tag and brag in Greenpoint. Being famous for graffiti tags is far from ideal for most communities, and finding a way to

of street art with an important social message will deter potential taggers. This will help keep the street beautiful while simultaneously educating residents and visitors on the importance of environmental stewardship.

"When you look good, you feel good." This phrase can be applied to communities as well as people. When it looks good,

as a form of advocacy and assistance a priority. Not only does the mural safeguard the community's future by promoting area businesses, but it also promotes a high level of environmental awareness to help safeguard the planet as a whole.

Festivals Help Your Chamber Boom

Lucas John Potter
Staff Writer

Hosting large-scale festivals and events often works wonders for chambers of commerce and their members. A surge of visitors with disposable income can help bring an immense economic boost to any community.

Sometimes, however, these events take on lives of their

bring in hundreds of thousands of people and millions of dollars to a small community that otherwise would have never brought in that much money on its own.

One such community is Sturgis, South Dakota. Sturgis is, for all intents and purposes, a rural, ranching community. With a population of roughly 6,700, it is not exactly a bustling metropolis. That

This is the week of the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. For this one week every year, the population of Sturgis explodes, experiencing anywhere from a 6,000%-9,000% increase in population! According to Heidi Kruse, Executive Director of the Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce, the city and chamber estimate that as many as 500,000 people attended the 2014 rally. That is roughly 75 times Sturgis' normal population, and more than half the population of the entire state of South Dakota. And what's more, they expect that number to skyrocket for next year's 75th Rally Anniversary, estimating over one million attendees.

So how does this incredible population increase translate into increased revenue for business and a more favorable business climate for the Sturgis Chamber and its members? Well, according to Kruse, the amount of money brought in is "astronomically higher." And, according to statistics from the Motorcycle Rally's official website, she is definitely correct. According to these statistics, the week of the 73rd Annual Rally in 2013 resulted in \$12 million of taxable sales within the city limits. The City of Sturgis (for which the chamber also doubles

as a visitor center) collected \$1.3 million in taxes and fees that same year. So, while some types of businesses may not benefit directly from the Rally (and, indeed, some business actually do worse business during the Rally), the city as a whole benefits from increased tourism and tax revenue, and those benefits are indirectly passed on to all businesses in the community.

According to Kruse, the businesses that receive the biggest boost in traffic and revenue are (predictably) hotels, campgrounds, restaurants, bars, and (perhaps less predictably) churches and medical facilities. Some of these businesses are actually only open the week of the rally and a few weeks leading up to it and immediately following it. According to Kruse, Sturgis has "whole campgrounds and venues that exist solely because of and for the rally." To deal with the great surge of people coming to town, all of these businesses hire temporary help.

On the flip side, there are other businesses that see less revenue because of the rally. For some businesses "that week is a week to close and leave town." These are businesses that are catered more towards locals, who are "not out doing their 'normal' business during this time."

One thing is for sure: there is no one in Sturgis that is unaffected by the rally. "Businesses are either incredibly busy with bikers and vendors," said Kruse, "or incredibly slow because the locals are avoiding the traffic." Some businesses actually have to temporarily move out of their locations to make room for the Rally vendors, "So though they are not doing business, it's a huge disruption."

Some Sturgis locals display a bit of ingenuity and charge for parking on their property. But what about the other businesses? The businesses that are open all year, but receive this boom in revenue because of the rally—how do they deal with the vacuum left after the rally? As touched upon earlier, they have to prepare for this huge week of business from half a million people, but how do they then adjust their business to cater to only 6,700? Is it tough to formulate a budget when such a large portion of your income relies on just one week?

Well, according to Kruse, it is not as big of a deal as one might initially think. Most businesses fall under this category and, according to Kruse, they "enjoy the boom that month but have built their week-to-week business plan around the

steady local traffic of the rest of the year." In essence, the week of the rally is just a bonus for most of these businesses, and it doesn't factor all that much into their long-term planning.

The Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce, its members, and the City of Sturgis all benefit hugely from the historic Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. It is an event that is steeped in tradition and has become very profitable for people and business owners in Sturgis. It is no easy feat to plan, coordinate, and execute an event of this magnitude. But creating, sponsoring, or becoming otherwise affiliated with an annual festival is the first step to success. It has taken the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally almost 75 long, arduous years to get to where it is, but now the chamber and its members are reaping the benefits. And other chambers can do the same. Hosting or sponsoring an annual event, no matter how small, can benefit your chamber. And who knows? Maybe some day, it will become the next Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.



Sturgis Motorcycle Rally

Credit: Sturgis Area COC

own. Some events are so large in scope that they can act as a centerpiece of the economy for the communities that host them. These events and festivals can

is, until the first week of every August. During that week, the streets of Sturgis are full of crowds of people, loud exhaust noises, and shiny motorcycles.

Eleven Elements to Manufacture a Magnetic Message

Ed Barks
Contributing Writer

We've all witnessed it: that presentation where the speaker never got to the bottom line. And remember that meeting when you wondered precisely what point your colleague was trying to make?

What's behind this inartful communication? It can often be chalked up to messy messaging. Some executives—perhaps a number of your chamber members included—fail to plan their remarks. Or they lack the self-control to deliver them as planned. As a result, they wander aimlessly through a verbal thicket.

How can you and your chamber escape a similar reversal to your reputation? By fashioning a magnetic message and rallying the discipline to stick to it. Consider these eleven elements as you work through your messaging efforts:

1. Construct four solid message points—or legs—for your message. These are the main principles you want your target audience to retain and act upon.

2. Decide upon the best way to structure your message. Is there a problem and solution involved? Or is it better to explain chronologically? How can you give context to an audience that lacks a complete understanding of your issue? What next steps do you want to encourage them to take?

3. Set limits on who is involved in your message development meetings. Some sessions might involve your top executives and senior communications staff. For others, you might need to include certain technical specialists such as your issue experts or lawyers.

4. Prepare for the look and sound of a message development workshop. If your issue is complex, putting together your

message may be an intricate, arduous affair. Choose an impartial and skilled external facilitator to aid in those situations.

5. Scope out the issues you need to consider when developing your message. Factor in such issues as your audience, goals, and objectives for your campaign; how to connect on an emotional as well as logical level; and your vulnerabilities.

6. Develop quotable sound bites to support your message. You can use stories, numbers, extremes (the first, the best), third party quotations, humor, and analogies to help you prove your contentions and bring your message to life.

7. Plan out how you can give your spokespersons the self-discipline they need to follow your message. By all means, hold practice sessions, both formal and informal. On a formal level, bringing in a consultant who focuses exclusively

on communications training can work wonders. Informally, lob questions to one another when passing in the hallway, and use those random (and often wasted) minutes between meetings for a quick Q&A drill.

8. Decide what to do when your internal team stops listening to you. This is going to happen at some point. I call it the "prophet in your own land" syndrome. When it does take place, it's time to call in an external authority—a trusted colleague from another organization or a consultant—to offer an influential voice.

9. Road test your message. Come up with all the hardball questions you can and pitch them at your message. If one or more of your message's legs responds appropriately, congratulations.

10. Memorialize your message. Always put it in writing, no matter how minor it may seem.

This ensures you won't lose your valuable work while also helping instill message discipline among all your chamber's spokespersons. Reevaluate that document regularly, for a message is a constantly evolving creature.

11. Decide which tools best help you broadcast your message. Among those at your disposal: remarks at your chamber's monthly meetings, speeches to industry associations, newsletters that reach your community, your chamber's blog, and member-only webinars.

Your chamber's solid reputation with your members and in your community is precious. Once tarnished, you can never get it back. Slipshod messaging is one guaranteed way to damage that good reputation.

Let your competitors be the ones who deliver those uninspiring presentations, offer lame quotes to reporters, and ruin their pleas to policymakers.

By shaping a magnetic message with four strong legs, involving the right people in its

development, instilling your executives with the discipline to deliver it, road testing it, and committing it to writing, you raise the odds significantly for helping your chamber—and your member businesses—attain your long-term business goals and public policy objectives.

This article is based on Ed's new position paper, "Eleven Elements to Manufacture a Magnetic Message: How to Tell Your Story to the Press, Policymakers, and the Public." Download your copy from the Research page at www.barkscomm.com.

*As a communications training consultant and author, Ed Barks' corporate and association clients hire him to provide them with the messages and communications skills their executives need on a daily basis. He is President of Barks Communications, author of *The Truth About Public Speaking: The Three Keys to Great Presentations*, and a member of the National Press Club's Board of Governors. Visit www.barkscomm.com to learn more, and contact Ed at ebarks@barkscomm.com or (540) 955-0600.*

Living Well at the Glastonbury Chamber

Taylor Garritt
Staff Writer

The obesity epidemic that has swept the nation is no secret. American citizens are well aware of just how sick our society has become. With new statistics being released daily regarding our weight, inactivity, and eating habits, it is virtually impossible to avoid this information.

Though we are well aware, it seems as if we have become jaded to the dire situation at hand. We know how awful fast food is for us, yet we eat it, preferring to sacrifice our health for convenience. We know we need to drink more water, yet we guzzle soda after soda, coffee after coffee, in order to get that jolt to keep us awake at work. We know we need more sleep, but there we sit, phone in hand, computer on lap into the wee hours of the night.

Why is it that we have an infinite amount of information literally in the palms of our hands, but we choose to keep our heads in the sand, to shield ourselves from making

changes we so desperately need? Despite this rut that many Americans are stuck in, one group of people has taken a stance against not only poor health, but against the ignorance that surrounds the issue.

The Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce in Glastonbury, Connecticut has created Living Well in Glastonbury, a health and wellness initiative that combats poor health with not-so-secret, but completely underutilized weapons like healthy eating habits, physical activity, and positive thinking.

The initiative began in 2007 as a small lunchtime walking group that created the slogan, "The Healthiest Chamber in Connecticut," a slogan that still defines the Glastonbury Chamber today.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Chamber President Mary Ellen Dombrowski, who explained to me the emphasis Living Well in Glastonbury has on physical fitness and the importance of simply getting up and making the decision to change your life. Dombrowski

ki said, "Our whole philosophy has been to get people to move even if it's raking leaves... just get up and do something!"

The Living Well in Glastonbury initiative has a council of more than 60 members who get together monthly to brainstorm and hatch ideas for health and wellness events, festivals, and challenges for the community. The council is made up of health- and fitness-minded individuals who want to spread their passions to the community around them.

One of these passionate people is Council Chair and Ironman triathlete, Atty. Joseph Jaconetta. I had the opportunity to speak with Jaconetta and learn more about how the council operates and what kind of events they put on.

A main event that Living Well presents is a Wellness Expo. According to Jaconetta, there are vendors in attendance with booths set up to showcase their health and wellness products, establishments, etc. The event also features a variety of guest speakers.

This event not only brings people together in the name of living healthier lives, but also exposes local shops and small businesses to the community, increasing awareness of these establishments which may not have much opportunity to advertise otherwise.

The most recent contribution from Living Well is a program called *Do a 180...Move!* According to Jaconetta, the "180" in *Do a 180...Move!* refers to making a 100 percent lifestyle change, as well as committing to 30 minutes of exercise, six days a week. Just by signing up and paying the low cost of \$25, *Do a 180* offers the chance for participants to sample 99 different fitness classes within the community during the eight week duration of the program—perfect for participants who desire a change, but do not know where to begin.

The goal of this program was not only to encourage Glastonbury citizens to improve their quality of life, but also, just like the Wellness Expo, to open the doors of the health and wellness small businesses of the community. According to Jaconetta, the mom and pop establishments

were more than happy to participate in the program. The Wellness Council plans to put on *Do a 180...Move!* again next year.

These are just two of the many events and programs that Living Well in Glastonbury has organized for the community. When I spoke with Dombrowski, she stressed how important the commitment and creativity of the Wellness Council has been to Living Well's success. "Just when I think we've hit a wall, someone comes up with something," she said.

The Wellness Council has organized everything from volleyball leagues to fitness festivals to dragonboat races. But even with such passion, effort, and creativity, participation within the chamber and community is still quite low. "It's a hard sell," said Dombrowski, "We've done so many different things and it is still so difficult to get people involved."

Jaconetta expressed a similar concern when we discussed the community's participation in events: "Understand, this is a Chamber of 500 members...we have great expectations, we want to get people involved, so it's a little bit of a disappointment."

In a community where, according to Jaconetta, people understand the benefit of a healthy lifestyle and are "above average" in terms of diet and exercise, the fact that it is still difficult to get people involved in health programs makes it easy to see why our country's health is so poor.

The fact that a healthy lifestyle is a "hard sell" is heart-breaking, and boils down to one simple fact: people do not want to change. The opportunity to improve a person's life in every way could be handed to them on a silver platter, but if a better quality of life means that a person has to change some aspect of their current lifestyle, they often decline.

Although the participation in its programs may not be all that high, Living Well in Glastonbury continues to offer its community opportunity after opportunity to get moving and change their lives for the better. Jaconetta summed up the commitment the initiative has to the community no matter the number of participants, "We want to keep creating initiatives even if two people show up."

Don't Let These Leeches Suck You Dry

Glenn Shepard
Contributing Writer

See if this sounds familiar: saying you have a lot of irons in the fire is an understatement. It's more like you're an octopus that has eight arms and still needs two more.

You often work twelve hour days and still don't have enough time to get everything done. You feel like George Jetson on that treadmill, and want to scream "Jane, get me off this crazy thing!"

If this sounds familiar, I've got good news and bad news. The bad news is that Jane isn't coming to rescue you. The good news is, you're not alone. More importantly, this can be remedied.

Start by answering two questions:

1. Do you have enough money to give to everyone who wants some of it?

2. If not, how do you decide who gets your money and who doesn't?

Your answer to question one is probably "No", and you probably have a good answer to question two.

Now answer two more questions:

3. Do you have enough time to give to everyone who wants some of it?

4. If not, how do you decide who gets your time and who doesn't?

Your answer to question three is probably "No" again. But if you're like most people,

you probably don't have as good of an answer to question four as you should. It's often more of a first-come, first-served basis, and that's a big problem.

This allows "Time Leeches" to latch on to you and suck you dry, a little at a time. One problem is that so many of the things that were supposed to save us time actually waste it.

Take the Internet, for example. It was supposed to make our lives so much easier and make the workforce so much more productive. But a survey conducted by America Online and Salary.com found the average worker wastes about two hours per day online.

That's more than the next eight categories of time wasters combined, which include

socializing with co-workers, conducting personal business, spacing out, running errands off-premises, making personal phone calls, applying for other jobs, planning personal events, and arriving late or leaving early.

If you have four employees, that's 40 hours per week. The next time you find yourself working on a Saturday to catch up, ask how much of what you're doing should have been done by them while they were goofing off.

Another time leech is people hanging out in your office. If your office has chairs for visitors, you might as well put up a sign that reads, "Come in and relax in my personal lounge." The surest solution to this is to remove the chairs, so that all visitors have to stand. If that's not doable, replace them with the most uncomfortable chairs

you can find, and position a clock on the wall facing all visitors, to remind them of how long they've been sitting there.

And then there's the needy, codependent employee who works hard, but couldn't make a decision if his life depended on it. He runs to you for a solution every time he encounters the slightest problem.

By solving his problems for him instead of teaching him how to solve them himself, you're conditioning him to get the monkey off of his back by dumping it in your lap. The next time he says, "We've got a problem," require him to come up with a solution, and a backup plan, in case the first one doesn't work. Eventually, he'll realize that every time he comes to you, he'll have to think twice as hard as he would if he

solved his problems on his own.

Just as you wouldn't hand over a blank check for your money, you shouldn't hand over a blank check for your time. If you're going to accomplish everything you need to accomplish each day and keep your sanity, you have to place clear and firm limits on how much time you're willing to allocate to everyone.

Great managers give their employees all the training and support they need to succeed, but they don't write them blank checks for their time.

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.

Made In Brooklyn

Continued from page 1)

most expensive cheeseburger I have ever consumed. (Thanks for that, Hard Rock Café.)

None of that is Brooklyn, though, which is just fine with Scissura. He says the appeal of Brooklyn is something all its own. "It's got something for everything. It's quality, it's craftsmanship, it's artisanal, it's ethnic. There's people from everywhere in the world living in Brooklyn. It's cool." To this list of merits, Scissura also added, with a hint of a chuckle, "It's not Manhattan. It never will be Manhattan."

In recent years, Brooklyn has become particularly chic. "Anywhere you go, people are fascinated with Brooklyn," Scissura said. "You can be in Amsterdam and they're selling Brooklyn hats. You can be in Italy and they're selling Brooklyn beer. I mean, it's got cachet

everywhere. Not just in the New York region, but everywhere." And, as Scissura pointed out, manufacturers all over the world are trying to capitalize on that cachet. "A lot of companies have 'Brooklyn, Brooklyn, Brooklyn' [as part of their branding] but have nothing to do with Brooklyn," Scissura explained. "We have thousands of companies that are making in Brooklyn, that are creating jobs in Brooklyn, that are doing everything in Brooklyn. We want them to be certified."

Scissura hopes the "Made In Brooklyn" label will come to carry with it the same significance as a "Made In France" label on a bottle of wine, or a "Made In Italy" seal on an olive oil label. Even though businesses with no relationship to Brooklyn capitalizing on the

Brooklyn brand is not ideal, it does mean that those actually producing in Brooklyn can be sure that the excitement for the Brooklyn brand is there, and that Brooklyn's cultural heft is enough to sell products halfway across the world. (Precisely what Scissura hopes to do when he travels to China with some Brooklyn manufacturers this October.) "We want the world to know that Brooklyn is more than a brand, but it's something that's real. It's creating jobs. It's creating revenue. It's creating products."

I asked Scissura if he thought an initiative similar to the "Made In Brooklyn" certification program might not be as effective in other communities, as many localities do not have the benefit of the name recognition that a place like Brooklyn, New York has. But Scissura says that all communities are bound to have something unique about them, and so they should

capitalize on that. "Every place is different," he explained. "In terms of the cachet, Brooklyn is unique. We're one of a kind. But you know, there are other cities, there are other small towns, that have their schtick. And they should run with it."

Scissura believes that the catalyst for the Brooklyn Chamber's recent growth has been the value of the services provided to members. "The programming that we do, the follow-up that we do, the connections that we have with various agencies to help [members] as they navigate the system," he explained, "all of this has allowed us to grow." Which is how any chamber should go about (to borrow a phrase from Scissura) "running with their schtick," no matter where they are.

Part of that might mean taking a page out of Scissura and the Brooklyn COC's book by taking a proactive approach in reaching out to, and forg-

ing relationships with, under-represented industries and types of businesses within your chamber. Lots of chambers have restaurants and hotels as member businesses, as tourism is a major priority of most any chamber of commerce. But what about the manufacturers providing supplies to those restaurants and hotels? Bakers and farmers, vendors at the public market, local florists and craftsmen—they could all stand to gain from the networking opportunities afforded by their local chamber, but may not see a membership as worthwhile.

If there is not incentive for these small businesses to join the chamber, then it might be time to institute such incentive. If that incentive already exists, then these people need to know about it, and it might be worth considering how effective your message is in reaching those not entrenched in the day-to-day happenings

of the business community.

What can your chamber do for the stay-at-home mom making jewelry in her kitchen and selling it online? How can your chamber get the attention of the self-employed college graduate trying to find a market for his screen-printed t-shirt designs? Or the bored restaurant line cook who has some great ideas for pickled vegetables and fruit preserves but doesn't know how or where to sell them?

Good business is good for the whole community, and part of a healthy and thriving local economy means reaching out to those who may not be aware of some of the opportunities available to them. These are the people that could help your chamber grow, and help your community tap into its own "local schtick" in the same way that the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce has helped Brooklyn manufacturers tap into (and capitalize on) theirs.

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT: 5 DIFFERENT CHAMBERS, 5 UNIQUE COMMUNITIES

Every Chamber of Commerce has a unique story to tell. In Chamber Spotlight, we take an in-depth look at 5 Chambers across the country and tell their story. Want to be considered for a Chamber Spotlight? Tell us why at info@chamberreview.org

Cody Country Chamber of Commerce

- Cody, Wyoming

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

If the name William Frederick Cody doesn't ring a bell for you, well, you're not alone. Buffalo Bill, on the other hand, might be more recognizable as an archetype of Americana, whose association with the American Wild West is so strong that the cultural memory of one is nearly inextricable from that of the other.

William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody founded the city of Cody, Wyoming in the 1890s, officially incorporating it in 1901. Scott Balyo, Executive Director of the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce, says that Cody has remained a quintessentially Western town ever since. "We very much have retained our Western flavor and character," Balyo said. "We've got a rodeo every night from June 1st to August 31st. We've got a gunfight performance in front of the Irma Hotel at 6:00 every summer evening... There's a lot to do here beyond people just spending a night on their way to and from Yellowstone."

Which is precisely why Cody, Wyoming gets as many

visitors as it does: Cody is one of five gateway cities to Yellowstone National Park, one of the most popular national parks in the country. Cody's proximity to the park means that their community of just under 10,000 people sees between 500,000 and 600,000 visitors annually. "Cody plays a large role [in park tourism] because not everybody who comes to the park can stay in the park, or chooses to stay in the park," Balyo explained. "Gateway communities like Cody... provide visitors with a place to stay and additional things to do." Balyo said that among the great attractions in Cody, there's river rafting, hiking, a trolley tour, and the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, which is a network of five Smithsonian-affiliated museums dedicated to Western arts and culture.

The Cody Country Chamber of Commerce staffs a visitors center to provide this kind of information and to assist visitors in making the most out of their stay. The visitors' center is open year-round, but in the busy tourism months of May through September, they bring in about seven additional staff members. "We get anywhere from 60,000 to 75,000 visitors a year, mainly in the summer,

who come through our visitors center," Balyo said.

Even during softer economic times, people are often still willing to make the trip out to Yellowstone, but the challenge then becomes that they may not be as willing to buy more than just the bare essentials: gas in their car and a place to stay. "Especially for restaurants and retailers, it can be a challenge, because while [tourists] may still make that trip, they may not be spending as much going out to eat or buying souvenirs, things like that." Balyo said that one of the main goals of the visitors center is to let people know all that the area has to offer and to encourage visitors to spend as much time in Cody as possible.

One challenging component of Cody's role as a gateway community to a national park is that economic opportunities may seem fewer in the winter. However, according to Balyo, the local economy is becoming increasingly more diversified as new and different businesses move to the area. "It's great from an employment and year-round economic activity standpoint," he said.

Eleution Technologies, for example, provides online English instruction to people in



Cody Chamber Building

Credit: Cody Chamber of Commerce

other countries who want to learn English. Their headquarters are in Cody. Cody Labs, a pharmaceutical manufacturing company, is another major player in Cody's diversification process. "[Cody Labs] has been a homegrown company that's gone from ten employees to over 100, and will likely be at 250 in a few years," Balyo explained. "So, for us, that's pretty big." Also, to help drive tourism, Cody has year-round jet service to and from Denver, Colorado and Salt Lake City, Utah.

They have also recently added summer weekend service between Chicago O'Hare, allowing for an easy flight connection for those traveling from outside of the country. Balyo's hope is that this flight's popularity will mean expanded service in the coming years.

Because Cody is so close

to Yellowstone, and so much of that land is federally owned, the Cody Country COC is in constant close contact with several government agencies: the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. "National park and federal land issues are a consistent challenge," Balyo said. "Not always negative, but just always a challenge."

For example, just last year, federal budget sequestration meant that the park was in danger of not being able to open on time—there was still snow on the ground, and the roads in the park needed to be cleared. The Cody Country COC took it upon itself to collaborate with the Jackson, Wyoming Chamber of Commerce, the National Park Service and the state of Wyoming to raise money to have Wyoming

snow plows go into the park and clear the roads, allowing the park to open as scheduled. Balyo named this as one of his prouder moments as Executive Director. "It was a really unique solution between a national agency, a state government, and a local community to overcome sequestration," he explained.

The Cody Country COC focuses on what Balyo calls their "three primary areas of work: member services, visitor services, and events." With over 600 members, the Cody Country COC sponsors year-round networking events (the annual banquet will be in its 115th year next year) as well as local community events (like the birding and wildlife festival in the spring) all while maintaining and operating a visitors center.

Balyo feels that one of the best parts about his job is the variety. "I enjoy helping businesses. I enjoy helping visitors make the most of their vacation," he explained. "We're in a unique position because of the type of chamber we are. We can help literally thousands of visitors throughout the year, and that's pretty gratifying."

For more information on the Cody Country COC, visit www.codychamber.org.

Lake Champlain Regional COC

-Burlington, Vermont

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer



Lake Champlain, VT

Credit: Lake Champlain Regional COC

"Speaking both languages." That's how Tom Torti, President of the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce in Burlington, Vermont, characterizes one of his chamber's most important roles in advocating for the local business community. With 2,500 members, the Lake Champlain Regional COC has everything from large, legacy employers like IBM and General Dynamics, to new start-ups and IT businesses, to traditional banks, insurance agencies, restaurants, and retail shops—some locally grown, and some national chains.

It's the diversity of the local business community that necessitates Torti and his staff understanding the needs of small and large businesses—i.e., speaking both languages.

"We're able to articulate what's needed for a thriving private sector economy because we channel both large and small employers," Torti said, adding that 83% of his chamber's members have fewer than 25 employees. This often puts the Lake Champlain Regional COC in the position of having to negotiate between member sets in order to reach a collaborative solution. Torti acknowledges this as a challenge, but feels that "the challenge makes us a little crisper when it comes to our particular advocacy position at the statehouse."

The Lake Champlain Regional COC's approach to its advocacy work is purely issue-based, and the chamber never endorses political candidates. According to Torti, this is due, in large part, to the size of the community. "Everybody knows everybody," he explained, noting that Vermont's entire population is only 632,000. "Every politician is separated by two or three degrees from somebody in the state. They're our neighbors; they're our friends [and] family; they're friends of friends."

Which means Vermont is perhaps not the most appropriate environment for political stridency. "Unless you can pick them right 100% of the time, I say, don't pick 'em," Torti chuckled. "In a state this small, I don't need to make enemies unnecessarily." Instead, the Lake Cham-

plain Regional COC focuses its political advocacy on statewide social issues. Torti believes this to be a vital component of the chamber's role, though he admits that wading into the political waters of social issues can sometimes get a little messy. But, messy or not, he and his staff are of the opinion that many social issues are business issues as well, and so their involvement is all part of helping the business community perform at its highest capacity. "We want the best and the brightest to want to come here," Torti said. "Civil liberties, civil rights, these are issues that are woven into the fabric of [Vermont's] DNA. And it's good business."

The chamber has been particularly vocal in its support of statewide healthcare reform. Torti said this did upset some of his members—again highlighting part of the difficulty of serving as the advocate for such a diverse business community, as certain issues hit smaller businesses disproportionately compared to larger businesses. It is important to Torti that the chamber's political advocacy is never based on party lines, as he believes that there is usually value in both sides of any argument. "I've upset people on the left, right, and center. Equal opportunity," he said. "We fight tooth and nail with our friends."

What the Lake Champlain Regional COC's brand of political advocacy boils down to is the belief in what Torti calls the "inexorable bond" between business and community. "If you have healthy businesses, they reinvest in the community and the community becomes healthier," he explained. "If you look around the country, where businesses have failed, communities have failed. Where businesses have invested in the com-

munities and communities have invested in businesses, you have robust, healthy communities."

One way that the Lake Champlain Regional COC works to help ensure a thriving business community in the state of Vermont is through its annual business plan competition for young entrepreneurs—something Torti says is one of the chamber's accomplishments of which he is most proud.

Each year, the chamber receives between 50 and 70 business proposals from young entrepreneurs all over the state. The proposals are screened by a panel of judges made up of local business owners and entrepreneurs, past and present. From the first batch of proposals, five to seven are selected to move on to the next round of the competition, which culminates in an actual business pitch. In between, however, candidates undergo a three-month training process with seminars, classes, and mentoring from someone in the Vermont business community. Ultimately, one winner is chosen by a separate panel to receive \$25,000 in cash and \$45,000 in expense coverage (e.g., rent, marketing and advertising, legal counsel, etc.), though various supports also remain in place to help those who didn't win still get their business off the ground.

"The idea is, one, to support young entrepreneurs, our next generation of business leaders," Torti said. "But also to reinforce [the idea] that there is a culture and a climate in the Burlington area that can support a start-up community." It's initiatives like the business plan competition that Torti hopes will help maintain a hub of entrepreneurship in the Burlington area.

For more information on the Lake Champlain Regional COC, go to www.vermont.org.

Mesa Chamber of Commerce

-Mesa, Arizona

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

Sally Harrison hasn't been the president and CEO of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce in Mesa, Arizona for very long: she was made interim president in March 2012, and became the official CEO the following August. But in the time that she's been there, she's turned most everything on its head—in the best way possible, of course.

Even though the Mesa chamber is more than 100 years old, Harrison says it feels fairly new to many in the community. The staff has completely turned over in the past two years; they moved to a new building; even the chamber's logo got a fresh, new look. Among the most notable innovations Harrison has brought to the Mesa COC, however, is their morning talk show, *Mesa Morning Live*.

"We had another event called Good Morning East Valley. The old chamber staff had been doing that event—it was like a morning breakfast—for something like 15 years," Harrison explained. "And it was nice. You know, the food was good. It was always at the country club." She hesitated momentarily before adding, "But, I mean, I was even bored."

So, about two and a half years ago, Harrison spearheaded a re-imagining of the monthly event. Good Morning East Valley featured regular guest speakers, and while Harrison did want to continue that tradition, she also knew that if the crowd wasn't engaged, it didn't matter who the chamber brought in. "We'd have these cool guests, but who wants to listen to someone stand behind a podium for a half an hour or so, just kind of droning on?" Harrison said. "Even the best topic, if the speaker's not great, you kind of lose that."

Harrison describes the show as a spin-off of *Late Night With David Letterman*. Hosted by Mark Cordes (one of the most requested corporate comedians in the country, incidentally), *Mesa Morning Live* even does its own Top Ten List. The show is a fun, engaging way to get involved with members, and also gives guests and sponsors a way to be seen throughout the city—MML airs monthly on Mesa's channel 11.

The chamber talk show is a small part of the proof that Harrison understands a really vital truth about her chamber: at the end of the day, board members and businesspeople are all just people, and people like to be entertained. "I want people to come to [our events] and... learn something, meet some new people, maybe make a lead for their business," Harrison said. "[But] we try to make it fun, too."

With almost half a million residents and more than 20,000 businesses, Mesa, Arizona is the 38th most populated city in the country which, to Harrison, means that if you can't do business in Mesa, Arizona, you're probably doing something wrong. She knows people don't have to join the Mesa Chamber, or any chamber, for that matter: "We know there are a lot of options for our members, or for nonmembers to become members," Harrison explained, "but we want them to come and be a part of a really different-thinking chamber."

Another way that the Mesa Chamber has made a name for

that they asked us if we wanted to have a team." Chuckling, she added, "And I'm just crazy enough to say yes." Harrison and Mesa Chamber member Allison Ewers will team up as the Chamber Chicks from Mesa, AZ, and from September 26th to October 4th, they'll drive from city to city in a donated Dodge Avenger. Not exactly what comes to mind when you try to picture a day at the office, right?

But it's exactly that kind of community involvement that makes the Mesa COC truly exceptional. Even the chamber's social media presence reflects the staff's engagement and constant community involvement. (Really, their Twitter feed is a thing of beauty.) Harrison says that, often, members come to the chamber without having fully realized, or without having fully harnessed, the potential of social media.

At any chamber of commerce, there are almost certainly at least some members who aren't sure of how to use social media to their greatest advantage. At the Mesa COC,



"Chamber Chicks" at Fireball Run

Credit: Mesa Chamber of Commerce

itself throughout the community is with the staff's participation in Fireball Run, an online reality series. The series involves 40 teams from all across the country driving for eight days, through eight different cities. Each team represents a missing child from their community and passes out fliers in each city to raise awareness and, hopefully, bring these kids home. This year, the series' estimated live audience is 75,000.

When I asked Harrison how she ever came to be involved in something like this, she explained, "Last year, [the show] came through Mesa, so we were a host city. And once we did that, I guess they liked us enough

members like that don't stay in the dark for very long. "Once our membership realizes that we can do that and get information out to a lot more people than they can on their own, then they start using it," Harrison explained. "We know that [social media] is free, obviously. So we're able to pass that along to our members."

For more information on the Mesa Chamber of Commerce (and for links to their exemplary social media profiles), visit www.mesachamberofcommerce.org. To support the Mesa Chicks from Mesa, AZ in the upcoming Fireball Run, visit www.chamberchicksfrommesaaz.com.

New Orleans Chamber of Commerce

~New Orleans, Louisiana

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

Number one in entrepreneurship. Number one in small business start-ups. Number three in IT job growth. These are only some of the accolades awarded to the city of New Orleans, Louisiana in recent years.

Which is pretty impressive, in and of itself. But add to those accomplishments the fact that this same city was struck by the one the United States' most costly catastrophe since the turn of the century, not even a full decade ago, and that list goes from "impressive" to extraordinary pretty quickly.

"I have to tell you, nine years after [Hurricane] Katrina, the city of New Orleans is a great place to be." That's according to Ben Johnson, President and CEO of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce. "Now, we're doing what every city in the United States is going to have to do eventually: reinvent itself," he explained. "We're in that process, and it's a great challenge."

A challenge, no doubt, but nothing that the New Orleans COC, and the business community that it serves, has not proven fully capable of rising above.

The New Orleans COC, having first opened its doors in 2004 (just one year before Katrina), is only ten years old. Prior to that, the New Orleans area was served by a regional chamber of commerce that's been around for over a century. Then, in 2003, the regional chamber merged with its economic development initiative to form a regional economic development organization. In January of 2004, the New Orleans COC was launched.

Johnson came to the New Orleans COC in 2009, at which point the chamber had 200 members. The board and staff's vision and mission was 100% focused on the members. At the time of our interview, Johnson said that the chamber had just reached 1,200 members.

You read that right: from 200 to 1,200 in five years. That's

a 500% increase in membership, all on the heels of a disaster that left devastation in its wake on every possible front—infrastructure, property, transportation, and, worst of all, human lives.

But Johnson believes that it's the community's response to that tragedy that has since contributed to the city's resilience and vitality: "As hard as Katrina was, and as terrible as Katrina was, the people who were able to come back and stay in that confusion, they put their stake in the ground," he explained. "You want to keep the things you like; you want to improve the community and get rid of the things that were bad before Katrina."

Since Johnson's arrival at the New Orleans COC, one thing that has changed profoundly is the chamber's revenue model: in the spring of 2010, the chamber started its Chairman's Council. The Chairman's Council is made up of larger corporations who each pay \$15,000 annually. They sponsor every-

pects there to be more than 30 next year—not an unrealistic goal, considering Johnson estimates the Chairman's Council retention rate to be about 98%. "[Members of the Chairman's Council] appreciate that they're helping invest in this boom of small businesses, and smaller businesses appreciate the fact that we haven't raised our dues since inception, 2004." It's a truly symbiotic relationship, and the type of relationship that the New Orleans COC has repeatedly forged with countless organizations throughout the city.

The New Orleans COC is partnered with their local convention and visitors' bureau. It's partnered with the regional economic development entity. It's partnered with the city's public/private partnership for economic development, the NOLA Business Alliance. With relationships like this throughout the city, the New Orleans COC is better able to focus its energy on its members.



New Orleans Skyline

Credit: New Orleans Chamber of Commerce

thing the chamber does, and the chamber, in turn, affords them added benefits at every possible opportunity. (Johnson says one particularly popular perk is the chance to sit down with elected officials in a small room of roughly thirty people, have lunch together, and discuss the needs of the private sector.)

In 2010, when the Chairman's Council first came to fruition, there were five members. In 2011, there were 11. By 2013, that number had more than doubled to 25. Now they're at 28, and Johnson ex-

pects there to be more than 30 next year—not an unrealistic goal, considering Johnson estimates the Chairman's Council retention rate to be about 98%. "[Members of the Chairman's Council] appreciate that they're helping invest in this boom of small businesses, and smaller businesses appreciate the fact that we haven't raised our dues since inception, 2004." It's a truly symbiotic relationship, and the type of relationship that the New Orleans COC has repeatedly forged with countless organizations throughout the city.

marketing; on members bringing other members to events. Without great events, that model simply wouldn't work. Despite all these markers of success (personally, I'm still a bit hung up on the five year, 500% membership growth), the New Orleans COC is far from complacent. "My wife teases me and says, 'This is not your dad's chamber,'" Johnson laughed. "She's right. It's not your traditional image."

But Johnson says that, untraditional or not, he and his staff can't allow themselves to

think their work is done. "I tell the board, I tell the staff, 'We're as good as yesterday.' If we ever think we've arrived, we're dead." Considering the size of the business community in the city of New Orleans, as far as Johnson is concerned, there still remains a lot of ground for the chamber to cover: "I'm calling us slackers," he said. "There are 27,000 businesses in the city, and we've only got 1,200 members. What's wrong with this picture?"

One thing that Johnson says has been a major challenge for the New Orleans COC (and the city as a whole), however, is workforce. The city economic development plan, ProsperityNOLA, divides the New Orleans economy into five different clusters: Advanced Manufacturing, BioInnovation and Health Services, Creative Digital Media, Sustainable Industries, and Transportation and Trade Logistics.

"It's a knowledge-based economy," Johnson said. "This place is on fire but it's hard to get the workers. They're importing

students can also be a step toward alleviating these other socioeconomic challenges.

"Public education, it's not the only answer, but it's a huge piece of the puzzle," Johnson said. "If you can't read, if you can't do math, your workforce opportunities dramatically go down. So a lot of time and energy goes into that." Currently, New Orleans is number one in the nation for education reform, and is widely considered the "incubator for charter schools."

Overall, Johnson feels that New Orleans, Louisiana has really begun to come into its own. A small city in a big region, New Orleans affords residents all of the same benefits of living in a metropolitan city, but as a smaller community, meaning that it's even more affordable compared to other cities. Its European feel and (what Johnson calls) its "gritty authenticity" make New Orleans the kind of place that entrepreneurs have been drawn to in recent years—as evidenced by New Orleans' ranking as the number one city for entrepreneurship and small business start-ups.

"I guess the 'why' of why we do what we do is just this incredible opportunity, working with the leadership that's in this community right now, of rebuilding a great city," Johnson said. "The pieces of the puzzle for Louisiana are just starting to align, and this chamber, we're right in the middle of it." He paused for a beat and then added, "Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good."

For more information on the New Orleans COC, visit www.neworleanschamber.org.

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Jasper, Indiana Spotlight

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

When Nancy Eckerle, Executive Director of the Jasper Chamber of Commerce in Jasper, Indiana, decided that she wanted to work for her local chamber, the career shift may not have seemed like an intuitive one at first glance. Unlike many chamber executives, Eckerle's background isn't in business or in local politics; she was a social worker in a local nursing home.

Eckerle said that before deciding to apply for the job with the chamber, she wasn't entirely sure what the job would entail. "I did a lot of homework on what chambers of commerce do and what they're all about, so I didn't come into [the interview process] blind," she explained. "And anyway, I got the job."

That was almost thirty years ago. Eckerle has served as Executive Director of the Jasper COC since 1987, when she first brought all of the skills that she honed while working as a social worker and started applying them to improving the business community in Jasper.

Which, Eckerle said, was less of a stretch than one might assume: "The nursing home that I worked for was a community all in itself, as nursing homes are," she explained. "They're kind of like their own little city." Eckerle felt that all of the skills required to do her job well at the nursing home would be easily transferable—and highly beneficial—to a broader, community-wide context. And she was right.

Jasper, Indiana is a small city of about 15,000 people, but it's definitely growing: every time the census has been taken in recent years, the city's population has increased by about ten

percent. (This is perhaps due to its repeated ranking among the best small towns in America.) It's the city's small population, though, that has allowed for the sense of community among area business people.

Of the chamber's 385 members, Eckerle estimates that about 75% are local, family-owned businesses. "It adds a nice working relationship with businesses," she commented.



Welcome to Jasper!

Credit: Jasper COC

important that these business owners are able to retire when they want to retire, but from an economic standpoint, the Jasper COC also does not want to see these businesses close their door. And sometimes, keeping the business in the family just isn't a feasible option.

According to Eckerle, one of the main goals of the Jasper COC is to work with these family businesses to figure out the "next step" so that the owners can retire, but the business

doesn't have to close. She says the chamber works with the bank to offer seminars and training to business owners nearing retirement to help them avoid having to close their business for good. Another element of the Jasper COC's focus on small business is its close alignment with the Small Business Development Center. Eckerle says that the Jasper COC facilitates about 30 ribbon cuttings a year, which is great—as long as the businesses are able to stay open.

erle explained, "get their business plans written, attend some seminars, some workshops, work with the local attorney and accountant, the insurance people, the banking people." She believes that making sure everyone is on the same page is the first step in ensuring that a business will be successful for many years to come.

Also helping to ensure that success is the Jasper Action Team, which, according to Eckerle, "is a group of what you might call movers and shakers. They're business people that can sometimes get things done kind of behind the scenes, so they don't have to go through all the same hoops that the government or local city hall has to go to." If a local business is struggling, the Jasper Action Team (whose board Eckerle also sits on) will step in and try to breathe new life into the business.

A recent example of the Jasper Action Team in, well, action, is in the success story of a local bakery. Eckerle said that the bakery had been around for a long time, but after some ownership changes, was having trouble staying open. So the Jasper Action Team stepped in, worked with some different finance professionals, and got another local business to buy the bakery and keep its original name. Eckerle said the community was very happy to see the bakery stay open through its trouble.

Unfortunately, that bakery has since closed, but it was still a success for the Jasper Action Committee at the time. With so many people starting their own businesses each year, Eckerle says that sometimes people find themselves in a bit over their head. "The end up like, 'Oh, I really don't know how to run this. I know how to make donuts, but I don't know how to run a

community building, whether it's in a nursing home, or part of a city-wide effort: "Our chamber is very good at getting people together for a cause." What could be more important than that? For more information on the Jasper Chamber of Commerce, visit www.jasperin.org.

business. You know that type of thing," she explained, adding that that's exactly the type of situation the Jasper Action Committee will step in to help rectify.

All of which speaks to one of the Jasper COC's greatest strengths—inarguably a product of Eckerle's expertise and years of experience in com-

munity building, whether it's in a nursing home, or part of a city-wide effort: "Our chamber is very good at getting people together for a cause." What could be more important than that? For more information on the Jasper Chamber of Commerce, visit www.jasperin.org.

Masthead

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EDITOR: Patrick McCabe

Text:
STAFF WRITERS: Brianna Clegg, Taylor Garritt, Carly Morgan, Lucas John Potter, Olivia A. Viterna
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: David K. Aaker, IOM, Ed Barks, Bob Harris, CAE, Lou Figueroa, Cathi Hight, Frank J. Kenny, Penny Maynard, IOM, Kerry Robertson, IOM, Glenn Shepard, Marcy Weaver

Administration:

Kevin Baer
Bob Bartosiewicz
Tim Corcoran
Greg Thoen

Photography:

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Design/Art:

LAYOUT MANAGER: Katherine Philbin
GRAPHIC DESIGN: Kyle Woolley
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ILLUSTRATIONS: Mykel Griggs

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Leadership Stew

Kerry Robertson, IOM
Contributing Writer

You're creating a stew that contains a savory selection of leadership skills: what ingredients should you include? Here's a tried and true recipe that contains some of the skills people value most in a leader.

The first ingredient is the most important thing a leader can do. Lead by example! Albert Schweitzer once said, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the ONLY thing!"

Next, share your vision.

You're not the Lone Ranger. No matter how good you are, you can't do everything. Focus on building a diverse team—comprised of people with different skills, expertise, and knowledge—around you that understands your vision.

Challenge the process: don't continue doing something just because it's always been done that way. Situations change. A procedure doesn't work as you planned. Sometimes you were just plain wrong. Admit to your mistakes then move on to Plan B.

Empower people to act on

their own with some level of authority. Ritz-Carlton Hotels are known worldwide for their extraordinary customer service. One of the secrets to their success is to empower every employee at all levels, from concierge to gardener, to stop what they are doing and "go the extra mile" to make a pleasant and memorable experience for every guest.

Build relationships and an effective team environment. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "The single most important ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with other people." Research shows that a person's financial and career success depends

85% on their interpersonal skills. Like a big box of crayons, we're all different. However, in order to create a pleasant work environment, we all have to learn how to live in the same box. Smile more. Talk to people. Be a good listener. Show a genuine interest in others.

Now add a generous portion of listening skills, which are the very core of communication, connection, and caring. Listening is not instinctive. It's a learned skill that takes focus, mental energy, and discipline. It's a powerful "human moment" between two people that can literally transform conversations and relationships.

When talking to others, simply give them your undivided attention. Make eye contact and listen with polite curiosity.

Don't forget two heaping cups of praise and support. Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, says, "There are two things people want more than sex and money: recognition and praise!" Appreciation has the power to transform any team. A good leader praises where it is deserved.

Now season the stew generously with *Kaizen*, the Japanese word meaning change for the good. *Kaizen* is the relentless quest for a better way of doing things, a higher quality of excel-

lence. Excellence is doing ordinary things, extraordinarily well.

Mix, simmer, and finally top it all off by doing something that not only matters to you, but will matter to someone else 20 years from now.

Bon Appetite!

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.

Rely on Checklists

Bob Harris, CAE
Contributing Writer

I attended a conference where the staff seemed in chaos. I asked what was wrong, and they explained they had forgotten the name badges and the room signage.

As soon as the executive director returned to the office, he started making a checklist. He was determined not to let mistakes ruin the next event.

The Power of Checklists:

Checklists epitomize the best ways to accomplish projects. Airline pilots rely on them from pre-flight to landing the plane. Health care professionals use them to make certain they consider every option, especially in life saving situations. Where one omission can cause disaster, a listing of tasks, steps, best practices, and protocols is essential.

Checklists promote excellence. Skipping a step might lead to another occurrence where the name badges or signs are forgotten. With a list, when steps are completed, there is a feeling of accomplishment and readiness.

Benefit for Staff:

For staff, some projects may seem overwhelming. To achieve the results, the adage, "When

eating an elephant, take one bite at a time," promotes breaking big jobs into smaller tasks.

A checklist facilitates a team approach to working toward desired outcomes. Any level of staff can help advance items on the list. The list itself increases understanding, for instance, by showing employees why steps must be completed in sequential order.

Other benefits of a checklist:

-Nothing is overlooked or forgotten.

-Steps are completed in the proper order.

-Any member of the staff can help.

-Complex processes are transformed to smaller tasks.

-Continuous improvements occur as the better practices are implemented.

-The rate of completion is increased.

Create a Checklist:

Start by identifying the desired project or outcome. In an association or chamber, it could be a conference, newsletter, board meeting or nominations process.

To create a checklist, consider "reverse engineering." Knowing the desired outcome, think backwards to create the

tasks and timeline. Reverse engineering is the process of taking apart a project to see how it works or was created in order to duplicate it.

Crafting effective checklists:

-Identify the processes that are components of the desired result.

-Don't micromanage the list; detailing every task will turn off creative processes of staff.

-Develop the lists as a team, seeking input from departments and individuals to have a comprehensive approach.

-Enumerate tasks or use boxes that can be checked off upon completion.

-Leave space to make notes about ways to improve—or problems areas.

Make lists for the most important processes. Keep them accessible by adding them to a procedures manual or on a shared computer drive.

Bob Harris, CAE, provides tips and templates for nonprofit governance and management at www.nonprofitcenter.com. Newly developed checklists include: "Cleared for Takeoff - Implementing the Strategic Plan," "Inventory, Assess and Improve" (120 questions to promote efficiency and reduce risks); "Improve the Board's Annual Retreat," and "Equip the Incoming President with Resources."

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What's Keeping You Up at Night?

Lou Figueroa
Contributing Writer

I recently attended an annual conference where the question was asked, "What's keeping you up at night?"

The typical response for a busy executive is they are stressed, trying to do more with fewer resources, and finding less time to sleep. In fact, the sale of sleep aids is at an all-time high, with Ambien and nighttime cough syrups among the most popular. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the number of emergency room visits relating to Ambien went from 13,000 in 2004 to about 28,000 in 2008.

Why are people using sleep aids and substances to balance their life? What drives our addictions and how do we adjust our patterns to change our mindset? To answer this, we must understand our biggest temptations and address the abuse.

With prescription drugs on the rise and the high levels of stress found in the workplace and home, more and more executives are feeling the need to relieve stress, but can't figure out how. They turn to bad habits and substances. The idea of work-life balance may seem elu-

sive, but there are ways you can achieve a better quality of life.

Here are a few things you can do to change your mindset.

Live with Intent: Living well and breathing with intent will bring you many benefits. Practice working with passion and finding your creative abilities. Focus on walking and appreciating the people and accomplishments in your life.

Sustainable Patching:

Learning how to create mental patches for your feelings and emotions can help you overcome your negative self-doubts and fears. Try using a positive affirmation and associate it with the negative feeling or emotion. Take time to reprogram yourself for success. This repetitive process will rewire your thought patterns and allow you to implement change effectively.

Find Your Reset Button:

Take time to find your reset button in life. This is a way to create balance and harmony in your life. Find a place to be alone with your thoughts where you can create new visions and fresh ideas. Some of the best places to reset provide solitude and inspirational landscapes. These environments are beneficial for creating new perspec-

tives.

I have found that when we place ourselves in calm settings, the brain is able to reset itself back to a balanced state. Practice dedicating one day a week to finding these settings and start implementing quality back into your life. Taper down the use of sleep aids and do things that will bring you the rewards that you want without the side effects of substances.

At the age of 27 years old Lou Figueroa encountered a tampered drink and was run over by a train; resulting in the loss of both legs. He shares his knowledge and perspectives, teaching business and chamber executives how to have a healthy work-life-balance. Contact him at Lou@inspiredbalance.org or 720-285-7904.

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How to Choose the Right Member Management System for Your Needs

Marcy Weaver
Contributing Writer

Serving your chamber members is rewarding, and sometimes equally as challenging, especially when it comes to their technology expectations. As technological advances increase efficiencies, they also feed a culture of "need it now."

When it comes to providing your chamber members with excellent offerings, it's important to recognize the role technology plays in how your members communicate and expect to be communicated with. It's equally as important to make sure the system you use allows your chamber staff to manage information easily and effectively. Before trying to select a membership management service or system, there are some significant factors to consider, specifically, what the members see, as well as how the system works for chamber employees. Both sides must work well for your specific needs to be met effectively.

The considerations below are for comparing "apples to apples" in member management systems. By knowing the right questions to ask, you'll be able to make a more informed decision. As you compare options side by side, consider the following factors and how they will work for your chamber staff, including installation and setup, licensing model, system updates, data management, disaster recovery, ease of use, contract length, and mobile capabilities. It's also important to research the member experience.

Installation and Setup: Consider whether you want software to be installed on each computer in your office or if you need remote access. Find out if anyone can install and set up the system or if a specialist is needed. If the system does not require a specialist, make sure support and tutorials are included. Also, determine whether the system has a billing component or if it needs to be integrated

with your accounting system. If integration is needed, find out what that process looks like.

Licensing Model: Because your chamber likely has evolving staff needs, be sure to understand the licensing model. Some systems charge a flat rate and others charge a per-user fee. Consider your staff turnover rate. Also check on how many chamber members you can have in your system and if the cost varies by number.

System Updates: Find out how often new releases of the system are issued and the associated costs, as well as the frequency of bug fixes. Because system updates can be time consuming—especially if you can't use the system during the updates—it's important to understand how time-consuming updates are expected to be and how often they occur.

Data Management: Determine who owns the data in your system, regardless of whether it is stored on your computer or in

the cloud. Make sure you have full access to the information at all times. It's also important to consider the reporting features.

Disaster Recovery: It pays to be prepared for potential disasters. Ask about the recommended backup system and how automated the process is. Use a realistic disaster scenario, such as: if our chamber office burned down, what does the recovery process look like?

Ease of Use: Because not every employee has the same level of technical aptitude, ask for a demo for all employees. The system should be easy to use and intuitive for all employees.

Contract Length: Considering the speed of technological advances, pay attention to the contract. Note the length and what level of support is included within it. Make sure the system has a guarantee.

Mobile Capabilities: As more and more people are accessing information on their mobile devices, it's impor-

I was not looking, he kicked his ball about four feet in bounds. Getting to the green after our putts, I asked him his score on that hole, and his score did not include the penalty stroke. It was at that point that I realized that this sales professional was a great example of "don't believe everything you think."

Expectations: The expectations of what we think are often a lesson in disguise. Leaders are the authors of the expectations of your organization, association, company, or business. Leaders set high expectations and are often the first to think of a better product, service, or offering.

I found many times that thinking of something new and fresh has opened the door to wild ideas and creative thoughts from co-workers expanding on what I was originally thinking. This is the green light you give others in your organization that

you are not hesitant to reach a bit farther, think beyond the budget, or think that it will build a better organization or company.

Past Experiences: Have a quick inventory in your memory of things or topics you thought were going to have a specific outcome, or result. More often than not, we repeat similar experiences and expect a new and improved achievement. Include this in your focus group conversation, your next staff meeting, and your next board meeting. Do not be surprised that you can take a previous experience and take it to a new level, adapt it to current conditions, and perhaps give it a new effort with a winning result.

In Summary, broaden your expectations, and know that what we think is often the birth of a beneficial addition to your success. Take the big picture of what you think, filter it

flexibility with your schedule.

Ask for references and then follow through by calling their customers to find out how their experiences have been. When talking with their customers, don't be afraid to ask what features are most valuable and which ones they wish they had.

Once you have your new member management system in place, you will not regret having done your homework and made your selection based on your specific needs. As you continue to seek ways to better serve your chamber members, they will certainly appreciate your responsiveness and the ongoing value you can add to their membership.

Marcy Weaver is the Vice President of Sales & Marketing at MicroNet, Inc., providers of membership management software and website solutions for over 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

out a bit, and take the purified idea to the finish line, and celebrate with all who got it there.

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.

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Don't Believe Everything You Think

David K. Aaker, IOM
Contributing Writer

In Organizational and Association Management, exaggerated expectations are often the norm for leaders, managers, elected board members, our members, and our staff. I often found myself re-learning the lesson that, "Well this did not turn out as I thought it would."

Quite often we think our message, thought, intention, or direction is sent and received, and somewhere in the journey from our thoughts to the intended recipient, it is diluted, misunderstood, or not digested to the degree we expected.

Potential tools we already have at our disposal to clarify our message would include... Communication: A re-

minder that we send and receive communication in the following ways: 7% in the words we speak, 38% in our tone of voice, and 55% non-verbally. Let us not confuse the words "information" and "communication," but blend them together to better express "what we think."

Information is getting the message out, but communication is getting it through. By using this long established tool, perhaps the message sent will be more specific, clear, and understandable, which would amplify the goal of getting what you "think" you communicated across to your audience the first time.

Another tool we can use to our advantage is to listen more than we talk. This gives us more information to clarify what we

"think" should be heard and understood, and it also offers the other person in the conversation the courtesy to fully explain, expand, and define their question or statement.

Ethics: Leaders tend to think that most people they're dealing with will match their water level of ethics. Again, this lesson can be repeated many times daily in your organizations or associations.

My best lesson in this category was when I was interviewing a gentleman for a membership sales position. He was a highly successful in the specific area of non-profits. I invited him for a quick nine holes of golf to understand his character and temperament. On the second hole, he hit his golf ball out of bounds, and when he thought

Young, Broke Professionals: Educating Your Mind and Wallet

Olivia A. Viterna
Staff Writer

“Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career.” So begins the opening monologue in Danny Boyle’s 1996 feature-length film *Trainspotting*. These lines satirically reflect societal norms regarding young adults and their transformation into young professionals.

What is comical about these lines is that Renton, an addict running from the police, believes that in order to get back on the right track and “choose life,” he must reject his juvenile behavior and become a contributing member of the working class. According to Renton, there’s one solution that will lead you to a life of success, normality, and above all, happiness. The solution: a career.

As young professionals, we are all too familiar with this mind-set. Schools teach us at an early age that the choices we have—finish high school, choose a career, go to a four-year college, graduate, find a job, buy a home, and save for retirement—really aren’t choices at all. They are paths we must follow, regardless of

the costs we may or may not encounter along the way. Because somewhere in the middle, we are never told about the painstaking consequences of paying back our college tuition, and how it will affect us into our mid-20s and 30s.

As I discussed in the first article of this three-part series, “Young, Broke Professionals,” the under-30 group is facing an economic hardship: student debt.

Furthermore, I mentioned how young professional networks are the perfect organizations for helping us solve this issue. Young professional networks are a valuable asset to any chamber. They provide networking services, job experience, and interactive workshop and lectures for members between the ages of 21-40, sometimes even younger.

These YP members receive professional advising and learn valuable negotiating and networking skills. To a young college graduate heading out into the work force, their local YP network is a basic necessity.

Carrie Westergard, Director of Community Relations for the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, identified to me why

it is so crucial that chambers help their young professionals succeed: “They represent the future of our community. It’s important that we keep our young professionals here, so they can put their leadership and entrepreneurship back into our community and help it grow...It’s a partnership.”

Like many of us, Westergard is concerned about the rise in student debt and the overall impact it will have on the community unless something is done to help recent graduates.

Although the BMCOC does not offer specific programs for relieving student debt, its staff is making giant strides in helping young professionals obtain employment right out of college in order to pay back loans faster and get a head start on their futures. Furthermore, the BMCOC offers programs for college students to attend and participate in while enrolled in school. This allows students to network with businesses in their community before they graduate, thereby increasing their chances of employment as they acquire new skills from other entrepreneurs in hopes of starting their own business in

the Boise Metro community.

Members of the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce are also using their resources to educate young professionals on how they can receive a quality education without the threat of debt.

Launched in 2012, Graduate Memphis is an action initiative of Leadership Memphis, a non-profit organization focused on community empowerment that aims to assist adult learners in going back to college to complete their degrees. It plays host to over 20 diverse workshops per year, including a Defaulted Loans workshop.

Although adult learners are the target audience for these workshops, each workshop is free of charge and available to anyone, including college students and graduates, and the objective is always the same: to educate students on budgeting, financial aid, financial planning, and to help them receive a college degree at an affordable cost.

Meghan Stuthard, Communications Coordinator for Graduate Memphis, addresses the student debt issue and provides insight on how communities can help students pre-

vent debt from accumulating:

“It’s unfortunate, and it’s hindering us as a nation from moving forward in education. Education should be a right and not just a privilege, for all of us. We combat the rise in student debt by not only holding workshops like our Defaulted Loans one but also by recommending to our students that an expensive four-year school is not always the right choice.

“Many vocational schools offer extremely competitive programs that guarantee students employment upon graduation, and they do it for so much less—often a fourth of the cost! four-year programs are not for everyone, so why pay for it?”

As a young professional myself, I realize now that educating our future young professionals on how to apply for a loan, budget, and plan out how they’re going to pay back that loan is absolutely essential. This issue started in the first place because students were taught to ignore the growing interest rates accumulating on their loans as well as the adult consequences of applying for a loan in the first place.

Let’s face it. Applying for a school loan these days is too easy. With just one click of a

button and your parent’s signature, you’re approved for a high-interest loan that you’ll forget about until you graduate and work at an entry level job, unable to pay that loan off and left to pay reduced amounts while it collects more interest.

Both the BMCOC and Graduate Memphis have demonstrated that whether you’re a chamber or chamber member, you can use your resources to help put college students, graduates, and adult learners back on the right track through education and financial planning.

Of course, this doesn’t solve our problem with college graduates currently in debt, but it reveals that the “choose life” strategy we are teaching our high school students is hurting our economy, communities, and young professionals.

For the third and final article of this three-part series, I will be discussing what one chamber member is doing to address the student loan crisis, and how we can use this creative solution on an even larger scale and provide our young professionals with a chance to pay off their loans faster and concentrate on pursuing a career they feel passionate about, without the reality of debt weighing them down.

Chambers Take The Lead On Green Energy Education

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

In late June, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Utility Air Regulatory Group v. Environmental Protection Agency* and upheld the EPA’s authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Though the court technically ruled against the EPA, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in the verdict, “It bears mention that the EPA is getting almost everything it wanted in this case.”

What the EPA wanted was regulatory control over 86% of greenhouse gas emissions. What it got was regulatory control over 83% of greenhouse gas emissions; what was, in theory, a loss, looked much more like a victory, in practice.

There is significant legal precedent for granting the EPA regulatory authority as per the conditions put forth in the Clean Air Act: in 2007, for example, the court ruled in *Massachusetts v. EPA* that the EPA could regulate greenhouse gas emissions if it found that the emissions were a danger to public health. Now, plants that are already required to have permits for emitting pollutants such as carbon monoxide, lead, and nitrogen dioxide can be forced by the EPA to temper the quantities in which these gases are emitted.

The United States Chamber of Commerce objected to SCOTUS’s ruling, claiming that any environmental benefits the new regulatory measures may

yield do not outweigh the extra economic burden of operating low-carbon power plants. This is, of course, a rather shortsighted purview: if we don’t get the rapid heating of our planet under control, we may not have a functional planet for much longer. Without a planet on which to do business, financial benefits and drawbacks quickly lose their relevance.

Instead of protesting the court’s verdict, however, many local chambers and businesses have heeded the warning of climatologists and adopted a more proactive approach to the changing energy landscape. Industries traditionally thought to be highly polluting have been finding ways not only to comply with these regulations, but to get ahead of future, and inevitably stricter, regulations down the road, with local chambers playing a major role in facilitating that process.

Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy (CICE) is, according to its website, “a national network of local chambers dedicated to helping other chambers and their members navigate and prosper in the clean energy space.” Currently, there are 381 participating chambers from 49 different states, representing more than 312,000 businesses—and the numbers are only growing. The coalition aims to provide information on clean energy practices, help identify clean energy incentives and opportunities, and connect local chambers to

other like-minded chambers.

One of the founding members of CICE is the Boulder Chamber of Commerce in Boulder, Colorado. Angélique Espinoza, Public Affairs Director for the Boulder COC, is also a member of the CICE Advisory Council.

Espinoza says that CICE was formed at a time when the US Chamber was backing a lot of legislation that wasn’t particularly sensitive to climate change issues, or to the business opportunities that these issues brought with them. CICE provided a platform for capturing the opportunities for innovation and economic advancement presented by clean energy innovation in such areas as wind, solar, geothermal, and energy efficiency—what Espinoza calls the “whole suite” of green energy business opportunities.

“Let’s just start with a kind of a big, easy one,” Espinoza explained when asked what these business opportunities might look like. “Wind production as an industry, nationwide, has been a really important way to re-energize some areas where manufacturing has maybe faltered or needed a bit of an infusion.” She said that the construction of wind turbines and other related equipment has become an important economic revitalizer in some of these communities.

Although green energy is not typically associated with the “conservative agenda,” it has been gaining traction in a num-

ber of communities and states traditionally thought to be more conservative—Texas, for example, gets 29% of its energy supply in the form of wind energy. What this suggests is that green energy need not be considered a partisan issue, as virtually everyone stands to gain something from green energy innovation.

In Boulder, there’s not as much in the way of industrial capital as there is in other places, but the city is home to many labs, as well as the University of Boulder. “We have a lot of research scholars here,” Espinoza said, “and we have a lot of investment in wind technology from the intellectual property point of view.”

One way that CICE has been advancing the cause of green energy is through educating local chambers and businesses on tax credits and rebates available through green energy incentive programs. One such incentive is the wind production tax credit, which recently teetered on the brink of expiration. Espinoza said this tax credit is a big incentive for businesses in the Colorado area, and when it looked like it was going to run out, some of the key Colorado players in wind manufacturing (like Vestas) began to downsize, hurting the state’s economy. When the tax credit was renewed, some of those investments came back.

Although the wind turbine is an industrial level product, Espinoza says that on a smaller scale, there are a number of green energy products that the

average citizen can take advantage of, especially on the solar front. “I have solar [panels] on my roof at home,” she explained. “There’s a large scale solar industry, particularly that installs on homes, on businesses—some of the larger-scale solar installations might be on schools, on big companies.” Espinoza says a lot of businesses have installed solar panels on their roofs and are then able to take advantage of many of the associated rebates.

Espinoza added that while effectively harnessing green energy is a vitally important endeavor, figuring out how to use less energy, no matter where it’s from, would also be beneficial for everyone. “The most efficient energy is the energy you don’t use, and also the cheapest,” she said. “There are all kinds of energy efficiency rebates and programs that are offered for people to do simple things like change out their lightbulbs.” According to Espinoza, in a large commercial business, small investments like that can make for a relatively quick pay-off in terms of both the environment and the business’s bottom line.

And when it comes to that bottom line, green energy can sometimes be a greater financial burden than its more polluting counterparts, which poses a unique challenge to certain institutions. “Large businesses, the university, the school district, federal labs, organizations that are funded by taxpayer money or by tuition and grants,” Espinoza explained, “those organizations really have

to watch their dollars. Even though they may have a desire to take advantage of renewable energy resources, for them, it can be difficult if it is priced higher than traditional sources.”

Which is precisely why coalitions like CICE are so important right now: education and awareness are key components in advancing the cause of green energy innovation, and local chambers are particularly poised to provide this information to their member businesses. Espinoza said that until we see a full financial case for renewable energy resources, there will remain a struggle of having to decide between energy that’s clean and energy that costs less. But, ultimately, Espinoza and the Boulder COC believe there is a long-term, sustainable business case for tapping into these energy sources.

“One day, we will run out of those traditional sources,” Espinoza explained. “The more that we can take advantage of the entrepreneurial opportunities presented by energy efficiency, [the more we’ll be able] to keep all of these industries alive as the technology advances to make it more and more cost-effective.” The environmental benefits are all there, but CICE hopes to educate chambers and businesses on the added economic benefits of green energy.

For more information, or to get involved with the Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy, visit www.chambersforinnovation.com.

The Membership Life Cycle Starts with Smart Recruiting

Cathi Hight
Contributing Writer

Member-based organizations spend a great deal of time in the Membership Life Cycle, starting from the Acquisition stage all the way through the last stage of Renewal. Let’s explore the Acquisition Stage, the typical challenges experienced, and the best practices to implement in this critical first stage.

Stage 1: Acquisition of New Members:

Successful acquisition or recruitment of new members requires a commitment to consistently market the organization’s brand to communicate who it is and what it offers to members, and to create an awareness and interest for prospects to join. The greater the awareness and positive brand recognition your organization has among the constituents it serves, the greater the likelihood of prospects joining on their own or being receptive to marketing initiatives.

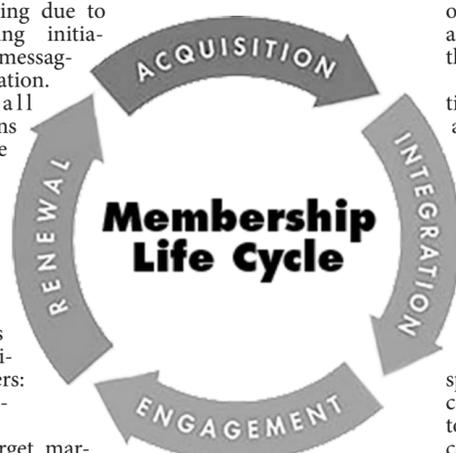
The most common challenges membership-based organizations face include:

- Lack of resources, including time, staff, or funds to market consistently across all mediums (e.g., direct mail, web site, social media, trade shows, community presentations).
- Inconsistent branding due to ineffective marketing initiatives, conflicting messages, or poor reputation.
- One-size-fits-all value propositions that don’t resonate with prospects.
- No sense of urgency for prospects to join.
- Perception of a lack of value for membership.

Best Practices for Stage 1: Acquisition of New Members:

- Recruit for retention:
- Recognize your target market: not all prospects should be members, and the more narrow or specific you make your target market, the more accessible and receptive those prospects will be to joining the organization.
- Identify ideal members: know the specific variables

of members who are more likely to stay and value the benefits of membership (e.g., length of time in business or in the industry, size of organization, common interests).



maintain and implement a consistent marketing communication plan: have an “external plan” for various constituency groups you represent and the media that communicates the

organization, unique value proposition, its strategic direction, and accomplishments; have an “internal plan” for members that do the same as above to keep them abreast of the organization’s direction and outcomes. (Don’t assume they know what you’re doing!)

Manage a positive brand identity proactively and reactively:

- Audit your brand identity periodically: get a pulse on the image and perceptions of the organization through surveys, focus groups, and interviews to ensure that communication plans are interpreted as planned.
- Manage poor or ineffective brand interactions: respond to incidents or misperceptions as quickly as possible to correct, inform, or educate constituents on organizational perspectives or intentions.

Leverage effective value-propositions focused on benefits, not features:

- Features are the “what” and benefits are the “outcomes or “WIIFM” (What’s in it for Me?). For example, networking events

are features, and new lead generation, exposure, or ales are the specific, tangible outcomes of networking. Benefits should be communicated in language familiar to the prospects, even if that language is not necessarily ours. For example, instead of stating that you focus on “economic development,” explain how you help create a strong local economy. Economic development is our language and may not be understood by everyone.

- General value propositions: promote the values or benefits all members receive from the organization stated in language understood by all constituents.
- Unique value propositions: promote the values or benefits specific members receive in a language that mirrors how the constituents communicate or what really matters to them. UVP messages may need to be tailored on a group-by-group basis in order to be received and interpreted effectively.

Offer special promotions or incentives to join:

- Different prospects, different needs: create different promotions to attract new prospects based on their interests or needs, such as free admission

to an event, advertising opportunities, or a first-year or multiple-year membership discount.

Provide incentives to current members to recruit new members:

- Birds of a feather flock together: many great current members will recruit other associates with similar values. This creates stronger communities, and these prospects are more likely to stay with common established relationships in place.
- Bottom-line mindsets create self-gratification behaviors: offer a reward or incentive for current members to recruit new members (e.g., credit toward a program or a discount toward their own membership dues). Of course, this can create the wrong reasons for recruiting prospects and should be managed appropriately.

Cathi Hight is president of Hight Performance Group and has over 20 years experience in performance improvement. She helps organizations build sustainable futures, improve processes, increase productivity, and develop member-centricity. Hight Performance Group is the developer of the Member Retention Kit. Cathi may be reached at (720) 304-0747 or e-mail: cathi@hightperformance.com.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESSES OF THE MONTH: 3rd QUARTER, 2014

Let us know about your Businesses of the Month for October, November & December, 2014. E-mail submissions@chamberreview.org today!

July
-Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Mystic, Connecticut: Finest Kind Signs. Finest Kind Signs has been creating high-quality, award-winning signs and graphics since 1988. Its small, creative staff will add that personal touch to help you achieve an imaginative design and an effectively crafted business identity.

-Hitchcock Chamber of Commerce, Hitchcock, Texas: HotRodDiesels. A full-service Diesel performance shop, HotRodDiesels can handle anything from mild performance enhancement and maintenance to full mechanical services for all light duty Diesel pickup trucks. Whether you're looking for a performance boost, a full-blown race vehicle, or something in the middle, HotRodDiesels has a product and/or service to match your needs.

-Rexburg Area Chamber of Commerce, Rexburg, Idaho: Wolfe Lighting and Accents. With products that are second to none, Brad and Seth Wolfe have made Wolfe Lighting and Accents into one of Idaho's leaders in lighting innovation and sales since they first opened their doors in September, 2008. The Wolfes are active community members, serving on the Chamber of Commerce Board, Madison Hospital Boards, and the City Council.

-Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, Las Cruces, New Mexico: Bosa Donuts & Burritos. Even amidst an increasingly competitive market within the food industry, this family-owned business has remained a hot spot for local residents since opening in 1984. The current owners took over the busi-

ness in 1996, and as their 20th anniversary with the store approaches, they are hoping to expand by opening a second store in the Las Cruces area.

-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, Winfield, West Virginia: Putnam County Bank. First chartered in 1901, the Putnam County Bank is the oldest continuously operating business in the city of Hurricane. With 66 employees operating in 3 locations, the bank was also selected as the best banking financial institution in Putnam County for Charleston Newspaper's 2013 "Best in the Valley" awards.

-Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, Mobile, Alabama: McAleer's Office Furniture. Jim McAleer first noticed a need in the Mobile area for a store that specialized in office furniture back in the 1970s. So, in 1979, he and his wife opened a 3,000 square-foot store, and it's been growing ever since. The company has also been active in the community and charity projects, sponsoring youth programs and contributing to local events and organizations.

August

-Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, Santa Fe, Texas: Advantage Computers. Advantage Computers services and maintains both PC and Mac platforms, including a wide array of operating systems. They also offer an outstanding product selection. Whether you have a single computer, or a network of 150 work stations, Advantage Computers can keep you up and running.

-Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce, Lakeland, Florida: VR Business Sales/Mergers & Acquisitions. Buying or selling

a business is a huge undertaking, but the knowledgeable and dedicated staff at VR Business Sales/Mergers & Acquisitions has been making the process easier for Florida business owners for more than eight years. The company provides business valuation and brokerage services to business owners that want to sell all or part of their companies to outside investors.

-Spring Lake Chamber of Commerce, Spring Lake, North Carolina: Kingdom Community Development Corporation. Founded in 1995, Kingdom CDC promotes community-based development by providing affordable housing, counseling, and education services to low- to moderate-income families in Cumberland County and the city of Fayetteville, North Carolina.

-Hartville Area Chamber of Commerce, Hartville, Missouri: Long's Ozark Mountain Molding and Doors. The Longs purchased Ozark Mountain Molding and Doors in 2008, but the business has been around since the '70s. They sell a wide variety of trim, doors, windows, and lumber, so if you're building, remodeling, or have a small project you're working on, stop by the Longs for advice and a free estimate.

-Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, Duluth, Georgia: Georgia Campus—Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Educating more than 1,000 students each year since opening in 2005, GA-PCOM is a private, not-for-profit branch campus of the fully accredited Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, a multi-program institution with a 115-year tradition of educational

excellence. The college sponsors numerous Chamber events, and makes giving back to the community a primary component of its overall mission.

-Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Omaha, Nebraska: Valpak of Omaha. A business-advertising firm, Valpak of Omaha is currently in its tenth year. They mail to 190,000 upscale homes in Omaha monthly. The franchise is ranked among the top Valpak offices in North America, and in 2010, its sales team was Valpak Corporate's Sales Team of the Year.

-Pearl Chamber of Commerce, Pearl, Mississippi: Ben Nelson Golf and Utility Vehicles. Owner Ben Nelson has personally overseen the growth of his business into one of the nation's best-performing, independently owned distributors of E-Z-GO Textron products. With over 100 years of combined experience, Nelson and his staff are also known for their quality service and customer satisfaction.

-Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce, Whidbey Island, Washington: Papa Murphy's Pizza. For more than 18 years, local owners and operators Josh and Mishal Rowley have been serving Papa Murphy's Take 'n' Bake Pizza—the freshest pizza in Oak Harbor. Their pizzas start with dough made in-store, from scratch, every day, 100% real mozzarella cheese, and fresh-cut veggies.

September

-Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Greenville, South Carolina: Alfonso Interpreting and Transporting, Inc. A local language service provider, Alfonso Interpreting and Transporting, Inc. offers interpret-

ing, translation, safety training, and injured worker transporting services statewide. Their focus on effective interpreting enables commerce and business success by allowing communication to flow freely.

-Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Lafayette, Indiana: La Scala Italian Restaurant. Run by husband and wife Francisco "Paco" Serrano and Kirsten Serrano, La Scala offers fresh, local food, and a creative menu. The couple sold their Toyota Terrel back in 2000 to purchase the small business that eventually grew into La Scala, and they have been evolving (and feeding their community) ever since.

-Myrtle Creek-Tri City Area Chamber of Commerce, Myrtle Creek, Oregon: Rustic Rooster Quilt Shop. From pre-cuts, to patterns, and everything in between, Rustic Rooster Quilt Shop offers a variety of fabric and quilting supplies at affordable prices. Originally an exclusively online store, the Rustic Rooster has since expanded to include an offline shop as well!

-Stillwater Chamber of Commerce, Stillwater, Oklahoma: Suddenlink Communications. Suddenlink is committed to

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Do you want to keep seeing these in upcoming issues, or would you rather see them replaced with more articles?

Email your response to info@chamberreview.org

4th QUARTER 2014 UPCOMING EVENTS:

If you have important events coming up in January, February & March of 2015, e-mail submissions@chamberreview.org to submit them for our next issue!

October

-Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce, Grand Lake, Colorado: Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 Celebration (October 4): Join the County Wilderness Group in celebration of the passage of the legislation that designated local lands as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Confirmed guests are David Skaggs, one of the bill's sponsors, and former senator Hank Brown. Admission is free. For more information, go to <http://gcwg.org>.

-Forks Chamber of Commerce, Forks, Washington: Last Chance Salmon Derby (October 4-5): Since 2001, many participants have been coming year after year to try their hands at fishing the tricky waters of La Push. Prizes are awarded for largest and second-largest Chinooks and Cohos, as well as largest bottom fish. Entry fee is \$25. For more information, go to www.forkswa.com/salmonderby.

-Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce, Sauk City, Wisconsin: Fermentation Fest (October 4-13): If it can be cultured or fermented, you'll sample and learn about it at the Reedsburg Fermentation Fest. The festival features forty classes from authors, chefs, bakers, scientists, chocolatiers, and cheesemakers. Attendees will learn take-home skills and trade secrets in everything from pickling to microbrewing. For more information, go to <http://fermentationfest.com>.

-Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce, Rockland, Maine: Opera-tunity for Food and Fun (October 10): Travel through ancient Peking and the American Frontier as Wolfgang and Pamela Kowald host an operatic dinner party based on the works of Giacomo Puc-

cini. Admission is \$75 for members and \$85 for nonmembers. For tickets, call Georges River Land Trust at 207-594-5166.

-Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce, Cottonwood, Arizona: 58th Annual Fort Verde Days (October 10-12): A carnival, parade, live music, food, and a host of other events—like an 1870s fashion show and historic reenactments—at Fort Verde State Historic Park highlight this annual throwback to another era. The entire town gets involved with this three-day celebration of patriotism, history, and fun. For more information, visit www.campverdepromotions.org.

-Dubuque Chamber of Commerce, Dubuque, Iowa: Fall Foliage Cruise (October 15): Enjoy four hours of relaxation as you cruise along the banks of the lazy Mississippi River. You'll be able to enjoy the beautiful fall colors and spot wildlife such as American Eagles. The cruise will start off with homemade sticky rolls and assorted fresh fruit, which will be followed by a hot lunch buffet. Tickets are \$61.95. For more information, go to www.celebrationbelle.com.

-Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce, Shallotte, North Carolina: 34th Annual NC Oyster Festival (October 18-19): Why is the oyster so treasured by Brunswick County natives? Find out for yourself at the NC Oyster Festival on Ocean Isle Beach! Local cuisine, arts and crafts, children's activities, and live music provide a festive backdrop for the Oyster Stew Cook-off Contest, the Oyster Shucking Contest, and the Oyster Eating Contest. Admission is \$5 and children under 8 are free.

-Provincetown Chamber of Commerce, Provincetown,

Massachusetts: Fantasia Fair (October 19-28): A week-long transgender event, Fantasia Fair is part conference, part social gathering, and is the oldest and longest-running event of its kind. With workshops, keynote speakers, and special events, Fantasia Fair continues to be the leading annual program promoting a gender-variant individual's ability to thrive in real-life situations. For more information, visit www.fantasiafair.org.

-Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, Tyler, Texas: Fall Family Fun Festival (October 23): Bring your family and friends down to the Glass Recreation Center between 4 and 7pm for the Annual Fall Family Fun Festival. Kids are encouraged to wear costumes while they play carnival games and bounce around in the space jumper. Admission is free, and drinks, popcorn, and loads of candy will be provided. For more information, visit <http://tylerparksandrec.com>.

-Red Bluff-Tehama County Chamber of Commerce, Red Bluff, California: Chocolate Fantasia (October 25): An evening of all things chocolate! Come out to the Red Bluff Community Center from 6:30 to 8:30 for delicious treats both sweet and savory, beer, wine, raffles, and music. Tickets are \$20, but they go fast so get yours early. For more information, contact Nancy Shilts at 530-945-7788.

November

-Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce, Pierre, South Dakota: 125th Anniversary Weekend at the Cultural Heritage Center (November 1-2): Celebrate South Dakota's 125th Birthday with free museum admission highlighting some special statehood artifacts, including the pen President Harrison used

to sign North and South Dakota into statehood on Nov. 2, 1889. For more information, contact Jeff Mammenga at jeff.mammenga@state.sd.us.

-Union County Chamber of Commerce, Monroe, North Carolina: Literacy Council of Union County's Adult S-p-e-l-l-i-n-g Bee (November 6): Since 1999, teams of three adults have had to compete for the "Beet-ri-ce" trophy. Concessions open at 5:15 and the event starts promptly at 6:00 at Wingate University. For more information, go to www.literacyunion.org.

-Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce, Bemidji, Minnesota: 2014 Governor's Deer Opener (November 6-8): Bemidji has been chosen as the host community for the Minnesota Governor's Deer Hunting Opener to kick-off the 2014 firearms deer season. Bemidji is a popular deer hunting destination, and this event brings positive attention to an activity that is economically important to the state, and socially important to the community.

-Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Hole, Wyoming: Art Heist (November 7): This 1900's Paris-themed art party will be a night of live music, food, and unique art to be auctioned. The event is made possible by the Art Association of Jackson Hole, an organization dedicated to encouraging a vital, creative community by providing everyone exposure to, education in, and enjoyment of a wide variety of art experiences. For more information on the upcoming Art Heist, contact Alison Brush at alison@artassociation.org.

-St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, Fort Pierce, Florida: Take Back the Night (November

7): Come march through downtown and participate in a candlelight vigil and speak-out to "shatter the silence" of victims of sexual assault, and help put an end to the violence to which one in three women worldwide are subjected in their lifetime. For more information, visit www.innertruthproject.org.

-Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Ashland, Oregon: Ashland Culinary Festival (November 7-9): A three-day weekend celebrating Southern Oregon's food, drink, talent, and creativity. Eight local chefs will compete for the Top Chef title, and this year also features a Sunday Brunch Competition for breakfast chefs. Food demos, wine tours, and culinary workshops await. Contact the Ashland COC for more information.

-Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce, Keene, New Hampshire: Fall Family Farm Day (November 11): Enjoy a day of family fun at East Hill Farm! Activities include goat and cow milking, pony rides, tractor drawn wagon rides, and a sheep shearing demonstration. Lunch is included, as is a campfire to make s'mores. The event runs from 9am to 3pm, and reservations are required. Contact the Inn at East Hill Farm (603-242-6495) for tickets.

-Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, Los Altos, California: American Girl Fashion Show and Tea (November 15): Benefitting the Packard Hospital for Children at Stanford, the Fashion Show is suitable for girls age five and up, moms, and grandmothers. Local girls will model American Girl clothes and dolls, both historic and contemporary.

December

-Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce, Middleburgh, NY: Victorian Christmas Celebration (December 6-7): Welcome the winter and the holiday season in our little vil-

lages by dressing in Victorian costume, strolling Main Street, and experiencing our Victorian Holiday card as it comes to life. Come out for small town, friendly fun, a costume contest, food, drink, and a good old fashioned holiday. For more information contact Melissa Greenwood at sharonspringssustainables@gmail.com.

-Greater Afton Area Chamber of Commerce, Afton, New York: Forget Me Not Equine Retirement Center. Owner Dona Davy has been providing former show horses, breeding stock, and workhorses with a peaceful and relaxing retirement environment since 2005. The horses have 24 hour supervision, and the staff specializes in handling the nutritional problems many horses face as they age.

Logan County Area Chamber of Commerce, Bellefontaine, Ohio: Donatos. Back in 1992, local owner Jim Snyder became the fourth franchise person to be approved by the Donatos Pizza system. A chamber member for 22 years, Snyder says that he "built [his] business through building relationships"—with his employees, his customers, and the community.

-St. Charles Chamber of Commerce, St. Charles, Illinois: PRO Martial Arts. From kids to adults, beginners to experts, from karate, to kickboxing, and much more—every class at PRO Martial Arts includes a core focus on building confidence, staying safe, and developing character. But what truly sets PRO Martial Arts apart from the average martial arts school is their inspiring and motivational life skills training programs for students ages 4 to 17.

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-Greater Seymour Chamber of Commerce, Columbus, Indiana: Dance Indiana's Holiday Dance (December 12): Come join Dance Indiana at the Commons in downtown Columbus for three hours of ballroom dancing—an artistic and athletic form of expression! Tickets are \$25 and are available in advance or at the door. For more information, email danceindiana@gmail.com.

-Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce, Hutchinson, Kansas: Hyde Park Luminaries (December 20): Hutchinson's Hyde Park neighborhood will be aglow with 17,000 Christmas Luminaries lining the streets and sidewalks of residents' homes. Festivities also include hay rack rides and carolers.

-Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce, Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Nashville Cat Club CFA Cat Show (December 27-28): Pedigreed and household cats alike will compete for ribbons and titles at the annual CFA Cat Show at the Sheraton Music City. Sure to fun and educational for the whole family, the event will also feature pedigreed kittens for sale and rescue cats for adoption.

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There, Their, They're: Grammar Isn't So Hard

Carly Morgan
Staff Writer

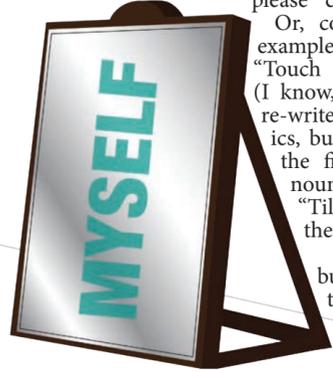
We talk a lot about why good marketing content is important for chambers of commerce—why Twitter and Facebook profiles should be used for more than just liking weird pictures of cats; how blogs and websites can be used to tell your community about what your chamber does and why its role is important; and how to craft an image of transparency, trustworthiness, credibility, and a genuine desire to help by pro-

viding businesses with useful information that is helpful unto itself, regardless of whether or not those businesses happen to be chamber members. Part of your chamber's credibility, though, is vested not only in the quality of the information it provides, but also in the manner through which that information is relayed. For example, how srsly wud u take me if i wrote lyke dis? An extreme example (unless, of course, my thirteen year-old cousin in charge of your web content),

but applicable all the same. Few things have the potential to diminish your credibility more instantaneously than a tenuous grasp on the written word, which is why we've come up with five common grammar mistakes and some quick-and-dirty tips on how to avoid making them. I hate to break it to you guys, but remember all those times you were sitting in your high school English class thinking, "But when am I ever going to need this?" Well, you need it now.

Grammar Gaffe #1: Personal Pronouns: Me, Myself, and I

One thing I hear (and read) all the time is people using "I," "me," and "myself" interchangeably. Often, "I" and "myself" are substituted for "me," as we hear echos of our parents, grandparents, and second grade teachers reminding us that what we actually mean to say was, "So-and-so and I," not, "So-and-so and me." "Me" is awfully useful though, and, like its equally-misunderstood bretheren, has its own specific uses. Here's the quick 'n' dirty on how to keep them straight:



-Me: objective pronoun; use this when you are on the receiving end of the action in the sentence. Example: "Sally gave me her phone number." The speaker—the "me"—is the (indirect) object in this sentence, as he is the one being given something.
-I: subjective pronoun; use this when you are the one actively doing something. Example: "I went for a walk." As the person doing the verb (i.e., walking), the speaker is the subject.
-Myself: reflexive pronoun;

use only when you are both the subject and the object in the sentence. This one can be especially confusing, and its actual, correct usage is far more limited than the frequency of its usage might suggest. Example: "I drove myself

to work." The speaker is the one doing the driving, as well as the one being driven, making him both the subject and the object of the verb, "to drive." A common error is to replace "me" with "myself," as many people seem to fall into the trap of thinking that there are few applications for "me." Here's a real-life example, pulled from an email I received at work: "If you have any questions, please contact *** or myself." "Myself" is incorrect here,

because the speaker is only the object of the verb "to contact"; the speaker is the one being contacted, not the one being contacted and doing the contacting. Correctly written, this sentence would read, "If you have any questions, please contact *** or me." Or, consider this real-life example, pulled from the song "Touch Me" by The Doors. (I know, it's a mortal sin to re-write Jim Morrison lyrics, but the guy didn't have the firmest grip on pronoun case agreement.): "Til the stars fall from the sky for you and I." Yes, it rhymes, but "you and I" is technically incorrect. Written correctly, this would would say, "Til the stars fall from the sky for you and me." The stars are falling for Jim and whatever lucky lady about whom he is singing; Jim and said lady are not the ones doing the falling. A neat way to remember when to use "I" or "me" in situations like this is to try replacing the "you and I" or "you and me" with their plural pronoun equivalents, "we" and "us." If "we" fits, you want "you and I"; if "us" fits, you want "you and me." In this case, the stars don't fall from the sky for "we"; they fall for us. (Sorry, Jim.)

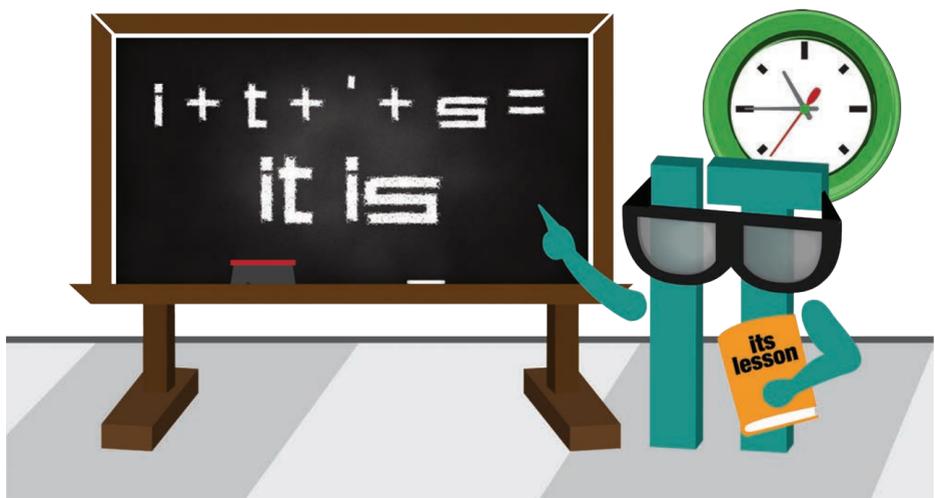
Grammar Gaffe #2: Apostrophes: Who's/Whose, It's/Its



Two things we learn in school: denote possession with an apostrophe and an "s"; make contractions with words like "has" and "is" with an apostrophe and an "s." Both are generally helpful rules of thumb, but just like any other grammar rule, both also have their limitations particularly when dealing with the words "if" and "who" I'm going to help you make sure those limitations don't make your writing look silly.

The only method I have come up with for remembering these bad boys is straight memorization. Fortunately, both pairs defy convention on the same front: in the case of who's/whose and it's/its, the contraction is the one that gets the apostrophe. The possessive, conversely, does not.
-Who's: a contraction, meaning "who is" or "who has," as in the Edward Albee play, *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?*

Here, "Who's" could be replaced with "Who Is."
-Whose: possessive form of "who," as exemplified in the title of the show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*
-It's: a contraction, meaning "it is" or "it has," as in the title of the Barenaked Ladies song "It's All Been Done." Here, "It's" could be replaced with "It Has."
-Its: possessive form of "it," as in, "That dog almost bit me when I tried to take its toy."



Grammar Gaffe #3: Latin Abbreviations: i.e. and e.g.

These two little buggers get mixed up all the time, in part because their misuses are so widely propagated that, similarly to the first-person pronouns discussed earlier, they've come to seem interchangeable. But if things really were that simple, then articles like this wouldn't be necessary. As different abbreviations, these letter pairs stand for different Latin words. The abbreviation "i.e.," is short for *id est*, which means "that is." The abbreviation "e.g." is short for *exempli gratia*, which literally means "for the sake of an example," or to us, "for example." "i.e." provides a means of restating the same thing in different, often more specific terms. Consider the following example, which I pulled from an

essay about Marianne Moore: "Moore betrays her acute awareness of her audience's desire to impose meaning on art in her evocation of a specific moment in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, i.e., "Michael taking Adam by the wrist." In this sentence, the "specific moment in Milton's *Paradise Lost*" is, in other words, "Michael taking Adam by the wrist." If you can replace "i.e.," with "that is," "in other words," or "meaning," then you're using it correctly.

Now contrast that with this sentence, adapted from a course description for a class called Film and Literature: "We will consider cinema's early dependence on previous forms of popular culture, e.g., stage, melodrama, and the dime novel." In this sentence, "stage, melodrama, and the novel" are examples of the "previous forms of popular culture" mentioned earlier in the sentence. If you can replace "e.g." with "for example," then you're using it correctly. Another way to remember when to use which abbreviation? "Example" starts with e, so use "e.g.," "is" starts with i, so use "i.e." BAM. Abbreviated.



Grammar Gaffe #4: Punctuation: Commas Splices



I like long sentences. Maybe I read too much Dickens and Hawthorne in college, but I can write line after line after line of phrases and clauses without feeling any real need or desire to separate them from one another. This, however, can lead to all sorts of problems, particularly when it comes to punctuating these sentences. One such problem is the comma splice. A comma splice happens when you separate two independent clauses with a comma. Therefore, recognizing (and avoiding) comma splices necessitates an understanding of what constitutes an independent clause. Allow me to explain, using dialogue from the modern cinematic classic *When Harry Met Sally*. In discussing Harry's dat-

ing habits, Sally hits Harry with this line of dialogue, delivered in a way that only 1980s Meg Ryan was capable of delivering a line: "You are an affront to all women, and I am a woman." This sentence is made up of two (fiercely sassy) independent clauses: "You are an affront to all women" is an independent clause, as is "I am a woman." They are clauses (not phrases) because they contain both a subject and a verb. They are independent (rather than dependent) because they could each stand on their own as complete sentences. As illustrated in this example, one way to combine two independent clauses into a single sentence (and avoid a comma splice) is to link the two clauses with

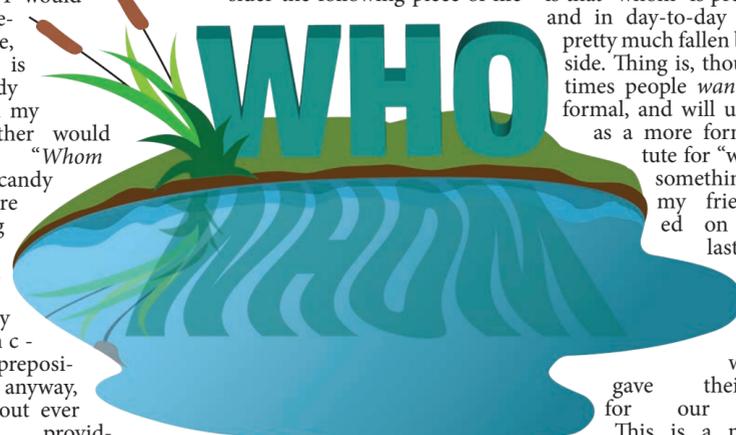
a coordinating conjunction, preceded by a comma. In this case, that conjunction is "and." Linking two independent clauses is also one of the many (forgotten) uses of the (neglected) semi-colon. (Can you tell I have an emotional stake in this? Because I do. I am wild about semi-colons.) For example, the above sentence could also be written: "You are a human affront to all women; I am a woman," and still be technically correct. Semi-colons are great for linking independent clauses that are closely related, but still constitute separate sentences. The difference between a sentence that reads, "You are a human affront to all women and I am a woman" and a sentence that reads, "You are a human affront to all women; I am a woman" are merely stylistic.

Grammar Gaffe #5: Who vs. Whom

My grandmother used to correct me all the time when it came to my use of "who" and my (utterly lacking) use of "whom." I would say something like, "Who is this candy for?" and my grandmother would respond, "Whom is that candy for?" before pointing out that I shouldn't be ending my sentence in prepositions anyway, and without ever actually providing the desired information.

person doing the action, and "whom" when referring to the person having the action done to them. For example, consider the following piece of life advice from Don Corleone in *The Godfather*: "A man who doesn't spend time with his family can never be a real man." The "who" in this sentence refers to the subject. Who can never be a real man? The man who doesn't spend time with his family. For an example of when to use "whom," consider the following line from *Casablanca*, when Ilsa starts to tell Rick a story: "At the house of some friends, she met a man about whom she'd heard her whole life, a very great and courageous man." In this sentence, "whom" refers to the object of the verb "to hear." The girl heard about a great and courageous man. *Who did the hearing?* The girl, the subject of the sentence.

About whom did she hear? A great and courageous man, the object of the sentence. One thing to keep in mind is that "whom" is pretty formal, and in day-to-day speech it's pretty much fallen by the wayside. Thing is, though, sometimes people want to sound formal, and will use "whom" as a more formal substitute for "who." Here's something one of my friends posted on Facebook last Memorial Day: "Thank you to all of those of whom we gave their lives for our country." This is a perfect example of someone trying to dress-up their prose for the sake of austere formality, but ultimately doing the opposite by using the wrong type of pronoun. In this sentence, the verb is "to give." Who did the giving? The people who lost their lives in war. So, correctly written, this sentence would read, "Thank you to all of those who gave their lives for our country."



In order to avoid the stern glare of my (otherwise rather unassuming) grandmother, I started using "whom" all the time. My rationale was that since her correction was always to swap "whom" for "who," and never the other way around (likely because I never used "whom" on my own volition, but my ten year-old brain seems to have neglected that detail), "whom" must always be right, right? No. Wrong. My grandma would glare at the mere suggestion. So, to get back to all that objective/subjective stuff that we talked about with those personal pronouns: "who" is a subjective pronoun; "whom" is an objective pronoun. Use "who" when referring to the

advice from Don Corleone in *The Godfather*: "A man who doesn't spend time with his family can never be a real man." The "who" in this sentence refers to the subject. Who can never be a real man? The man who doesn't spend time with his family. For an example of when to use "whom," consider the following line from *Casablanca*, when Ilsa starts to tell Rick a story: "At the house of some friends, she met a man about whom she'd heard her whole life, a very great and courageous man." In this sentence, "whom" refers to the object of the verb "to hear." The girl heard about a great and courageous man. *Who did the hearing?* The girl, the subject of the sentence.

So, I could ask my grandma, "Who is your favorite grandchild?" or "For whom is this candy intended?" and even though I might not get a straight answer, it definitely wouldn't be because she was too busy correcting my grammar. Have any grammar questions you would like to see explained? Send us an email at Carly.chamberreview@gmail.com.

Chamber Networking 3.0

(Continued from Page 1)

2.0 types do OK with social media. They aren't self-focused so they don't drive away their online friends. But before too long, they begin to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the online world. They question when and how to do promotions that generate an ROI. It's just too much to manage.

Our heroine, she leverages technology. Utilizing her social sites, online listening stations and a social CRM, she nurtures relationships with hundreds of people. She realizes that she herself is a powerful media

company with the ability to create and broadcast helpful ideas and insights that her target market will value. She isn't afraid to shoot a quick video or Tweet out an opinion.

Between her in-person networking and online efforts, she generates massive awareness for herself and her business. She invests time and energy to translate that awareness into relationships through engagement. Those relationships convert into sales, some organically (they call her) and some through digital marketing (she runs online email and social



media marketing campaigns).

Her success grows exponentially as her community grows. Strangers come to her, not she to them. They

become friends and customers. Then they tell their friends. And so on. Net-working 3.0... And everybody lives happily ever after...

Chambers, you have my permission to repurpose this story in your newsletter and marketing.

Frank J. Kenny is a speaker,

writer and consultant. He is a leading authority on social media and technology for chambers, business associations and their members. His newest digital download, *5 Leaps of Faith*, A white paper on how to remain relevant in the digital age, can be found at <http://bit.ly/5leapsofffaith>.

Frank is the founder of *The Chamber Focus Show* and the *Chamber Pros Community*. He is a former chair of the Chamber Division of the Association of Washington Business and former Washington State Chamber of Commerce Executives board member. He has a degree in finance and an MBA. Reach Frank at FrankJKenny.com.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! HAVE AN IDEA? TELL US WHAT YOU THINK. EMAIL INFO@CHAMBEREVIEW.ORG OR LEAVE A MESSAGE AT 1-877-316-4311

CGI & Weblink Working Together

(Continued from page 1)

your members want, wouldn't you like the chamber to be the one providing this opportunity?

What about how your members are appearing online? What does that mean? It means that if you do a good job for someone, they'll tell two

to your members getting new customers. Reviews can come from a myriad of places, making them hard to manage. But today, so many people are using online reviews to decide whether or not to try a new restaurant, store, or other business, so it's crucial that your

nize your members? Whether you have 500 members or 5,000, you need software solutions to keep them all organized and up-to-date with various membership levels, dues requirements, calendar notices, etc. Instead of creating a system on your own, there are companies that already have systems in place to help keep you organized.

So far I've posed a lot of questions about what services chambers of commerce can provide to members: an organizational system, video promotion, and online reputation management. What if I told you there was a place you could go and obtain all of these solutions at once?

Through a recent partnership between two companies, CGI Communications and Weblink International, that is now easier than ever.

"Chambers, associations, and their members should be excited for the future of CGI Communications with our purchase of Weblink's digital media division," says CGI President and CEO Bob Bartosiewicz. "Our cutting-edge promotional tools coupled with their convenient management software will be a win-win for every organization that works with our company."

For those unfamiliar with the companies, CGI Commu-

nications provides high-impact marketing solutions for communities, organizations, and small businesses in the form of online video programs, reviews, and reputation management; Weblink International works with chambers and associations to provide a full suite of management software products. The two companies have a combined experience of almost 50 years in the chamber industry and a client base that includes over 1,000 individual chambers of commerce.

I traveled to Indianapolis on October 1 to attend Weblink International's 14th Annual Summit. With over 200 chambers of commerce and associations represented, it was a tremendous success. On Wednesday afternoon during lunch, the partnership between CGI and Weblink was announced.

The announcement was made in part by Weblink President DJ Muller. "I've known Bob for many years," says Muller. "And I think one of the things he values in his company is the relationship with the customer... We're really excited with the products and services we're going to be able to add on top of that with all the video technology that CGI brings to the table."

This kind of partnership

is great for chambers of commerce as they can now seamlessly integrate video content into their new website designs. "This is an exciting time in the chamber industry as new leaders are emerging and serving today's chamber users in ways not heard of before," says Weblink International CEO Terry Dwyer. "I believe the relationship with CGI puts Weblink in an excellent position to better serve our customers' needs by providing a wide range of value-added services."

The partnership involves a treasure chest of goodies of which chambers can take advantage. Video-integrated membership directories, imbedded video on chamber and member websites, online review and reputation management—the sky's the limit.

"We are excited to bring access to affordable video and reputation management services through CGI. We are even more excited about a long-term relationship with a great company built by great people," says Muller.

At the end of the day, the goal of these companies is to provide organizations with what they need to keep their local business environments thriving. It's about giving a leg up to those or-

ganizations that are so crucial to the communities where we live.

"Like Weblink, CGI focuses on providing high value products to their customers," says Muller. "What impressed me most about CGI was their relentless focus on giving small businesses access to affordable marketing tools that, frankly, level the playing field with their larger competitors. Our chamber customers are always looking for more ways to bring value to their members and CGI's products are perfect. By integrating CGI's products into our online directories, chamber members get more value and even more leads for their businesses."

Both CGI Communications and Weblink International are thrilled to have the opportunity to improve the future landscape of chambers of commerce and business associations in the United States. The overall health of our country's business environment is dependent on local communities coming together, working together, and improving the way they operate through reliable organization and state-of-the-art technology.

To learn more about how this impacts your chamber, contact CGI Communications Vice President of Marketing Nicole Rongo at 1-800-398-3029 x203.



President & CEO Bob Bartosiewicz Founded CGI Communications in 1987
President DJ Muller Founded Weblink International in 1996

people, but do a bad job for someone and they'll tell a hundred. Say you have a member who's been in the community for 20 years and has a wonderful local reputation. What is their reputation online? Did you even know they had one? Online reviews are crucial

members are aware of their ramifications. If there were a way for the chamber to provide reputation management to your members, wouldn't it be ideal for your local organization to have an influence over how they're appearing online? What about how you orga-

Empowerment is included.



- G **et more** from the most customizable and configurable association marketing and management solution.
- R **ev up** for continuous updates and innovations that keep you current in the midst of rapid technological changes.
- O **ffer more** benefits to your members and stay relevant with free resources from WebLink.
- W **ait no longer** for remarkable customer support.

Download our free eBook, **4 Simple Steps to Growing Your Membership with LinkedIn** at www.weblinkinternational.com/growmembers, or call us toll-free at **877-231-4970**





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