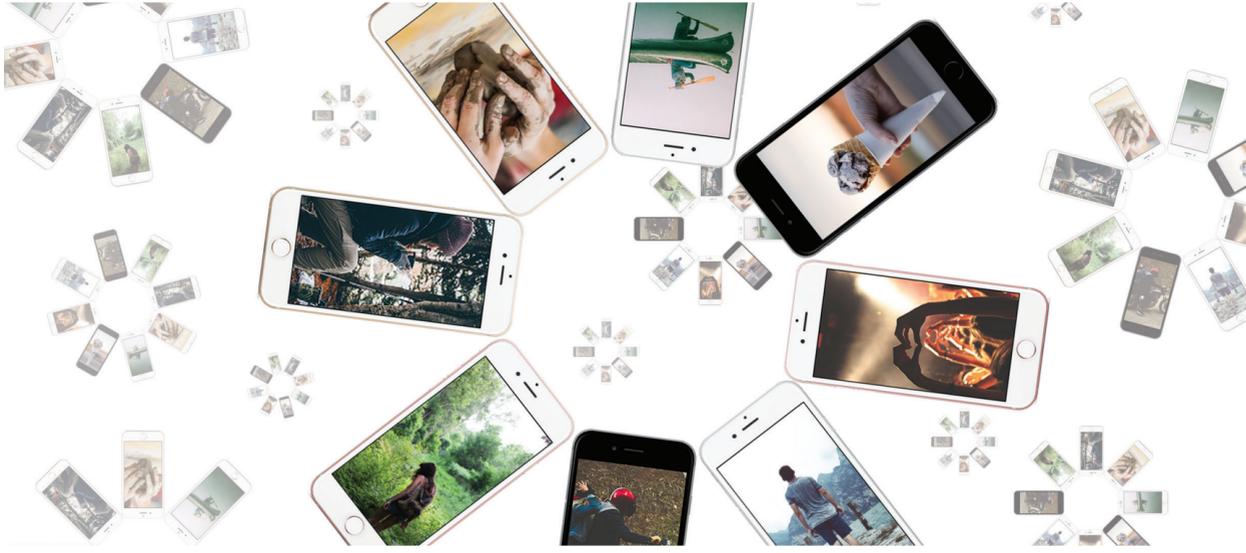


The National Chamber Review

Vol. 4, No. 4 YOUR LOCAL PAPER, NO MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE www.nationalchamberreview.org

Page 1



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

Review Culture & Experiential Spending

Patrick McCabe
Editor-in-Chief

The world is connected on a global level like never before. The millennial generation (a.k.a. millennials) has the opportunity to experience things that their parents (and certainly their parents' parents) could never have dreamed of. Living life is no longer a race to a successful career and owning the best stuff; it's a journey to grow, to understand, and to experience the world.

First of all, who is the millennial generation? Well, an exact definition can't really be pinpointed, but it's generally agreed upon that millennials are those who were born between 1980-2000. The millennial generation grew

up being taught that if you work hard and go to school, you can be anything you want to be—only to be burdened by tens of thousands of dollars in student debt and a job market that doesn't support them. As a reaction to this, millennials have found the greatest value in what they can experience during their lives.

The dreams of a steady, corporate job with tremendous benefits, 2.3 children, and a white picket fence seem virtually unattainable, so living in the moment and making the most of now is the mindset for a majority of millennials.

What we're discovering now is how that mindset is affecting spending habits; how it determines what is popular; and how all of that is affecting our economy.

At this point, in 2015, the youngest millennials are only a few years away from finishing high school, and the oldest are getting closer to 40 years old than they are to 30. This group makes up almost one quarter of our nation's total population; and according to a 2014 study by the Boston Consulting Group, millennials account for an estimated \$1.3 trillion dollars in annual consumer spending. Where is this massive amount of money being spent? On experiences. Concerts, sporting events, travel, and events of all kinds; the millennial mindset is that a meaningful life is made up of fulfilling experiences. It's about creating and sharing memories.

In fact, according to a study conducted by Eventbrite, 78 percent of millennials would

choose to spend money on a desirable experience or event, rather than on the purchase of a desirable, material object. They also discovered that 80 percent of millennials participated in more than one "live experience" event over the past year, and over 70 percent of that group plans on increasing their live event attendance during the following year.

What drives this behavior? A lot of it stems from the fear of missing out (or "FOMO"). Almost 70 percent of millennials experience FOMO. This fear drives them to show up and share these experiences with their peers.

So what is the experience of this generation? It's connections.

(Continued on page 2)

2016 Candidate Primer

Carly Morgan
Head Writer

It is both a means of building dramatic intrigue, as well as a statement of objective fact, to say that the 2016 race for the White House is unlike anything else in American political history.

On the Republican side is a primary field unprecedented in size, the frontrunners of which are a billionaire real estate developer, a retired brain surgeon, and a Fortune 20 CEO. The candidate pool is so big, in fact, that news outlets have had to re-write the rules of televised debates on the fly, as ranks have been thinning much more gradually than originally anticipated.

On the Democratic side, conversely, is the most popular non-incumbent candidate in the party's history, whose early lead in the polls has been continually diminishing thanks to the grassroots campaign of a self-identified Socialist from the country's second least populous

state. Third in those same polls is the current vice president of the United States, for whom nearly one-fifth of the Democratic electorate has expressed a desire to cast their ballot, despite the fact that he is not actually running for the nomination (yet).

Because of the unique nature of this primary election cycle, we at the NCR thought it a worthwhile endeavor to put together a "crash course" of sorts in "Who's Who in the 2016 Election." Inside, you'll find brief profiles of the candidates, including synopses of their credentials, their platforms, and a look at from which segments of the voting population they draw the most support. (These assessments are, of course, generalizations, the usefulness of which lies in their lending of qualitative insight to quantitative data.) But first, an explanation of how we've presented the candidates:

Candidates are separated by party affiliation, with the Republicans listed ahead of the Democrats because there has been more election-related activity among the former (e.g., Republican candidates have already had two televised debates; Democrats have had none). Within each party, candidates are then presented in descending order by poll ranking (according to the HuffPost Pollster, which provides an aggregate look at all publicly available polls that claim to provide representative samples of the electorate) as of October 1, 2015.

In our coverage of the Republican primary, we have not included two candidates who are, at the time of press, still in the race: former Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore, and South Carolina Senator Lindsey Gra-

ham. Gilmore was not invited to participate in the last televised debate due to his low poll numbers (which average 0 percent); Graham has fared slightly better (averaging 0.2 percent), but both candidates receive so little attention at this point in the race that their campaigns have come to be of minimal consequence.

In our coverage of the Democratic primary, we have not included Harvard Law professor Lawrence Lessig for the same reasons that Gilmore and Graham were omitted on the GOP side. We have, however, included Vice President Joe Biden, because although he has not yet formally declared his candidacy (and there remains some serious doubt about whether or not he ever will), his popularity among Democratic voters has had a profound impact on the distribution of voter support thus far. Biden still has time to throw his hat in the ring—the Democrats' first filing deadline is November 6, when candidates will need to sign a statement of candidacy in Alabama in order to appear on the state's primary ballot—but the likelihood of his doing so seems to decrease with each additional day of inaction.

The primaries officially kick off on February 1, 2016 with the Iowa caucus, but the odds of a clear Republican choice emerging before May seem improbable, and the chances of a Democratic nominee whose name doesn't rhyme with Shmillary Shmlinton seem unlikely. But with a full thirteen months before President Obama's successor is officially decided upon, a lot can happen, and conditions in either party are certainly liable to change. We hope the information we've provided will help you keep track of who's who along the way.

(Continued on page 6)

Uber & Airbnb: The Takeover of the New Gig Economy

Brian VanDenBergh
Staff Writer

As technological progress and innovation continually move society further away from traditional business models and practices, yet another segment of the online marketplace is up for the taking.

By updating the "on-demand" model of service delivery to one that leverages the growing popularity of e-commerce, companies like Uber and Airbnb are the driving forces behind what has come to be known as the "gig economy." In the gig economy, workers use new technologies and marketing platforms to connect with consumers directly in order to provide a service, fulfill a roll, or perform a task for a limited period of time.

New York City's streets may be lined with those iconic yellow taxis, but Uber, a car service app for smartphones, allows customers and drivers to operate in concert with one another without a moment's hesitation. Instead of a having to hail a cab or call a dispatch operator, Uber customers just make a few clicks and swipes on their smartphone screen and the nearest driver will be en route to that customer's location instantly.

Similarly, Airbnb's online marketplace for short-term lodging means that tourists no longer have to sort through myriad travel or hotel websites to find an affordable place to stay. Instead, Airbnb users just type in their travel destination and are instantly met with images and descriptions of apartments, lofts, rooms, and houses all available for rent at a fraction of the price of a hotel

room, especially in major cities. Uber drivers and Airbnb hosts are classified as independent contractors for these companies. This model gives workers greater flexibility and independence in the workplace, effectively treating them as though they are each running their own small business. A drawback, though, is that the larger companies with which these workers are associated are not responsible for providing any employee benefits, or for reimbursing workers for any expenses incurred on the job.

In the corporate world, independent contractors and freelancers have become increasingly desirable, since they allow businesses to minimize operating costs, even amidst expansion efforts. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of independent contractors in the US increased by approximately 2.1 million workers. That means that independent contractors accounted for one out of every four jobs added to the economy during the first four years of post-recession recovery. Independent contractors allow companies to use high-quality professionals on an as-needed basis, while remaining distant enough not to have to worry about employer liability, and without having to dole out costly benefits or salaries.

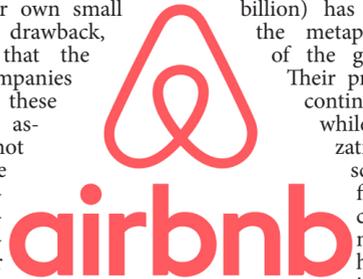
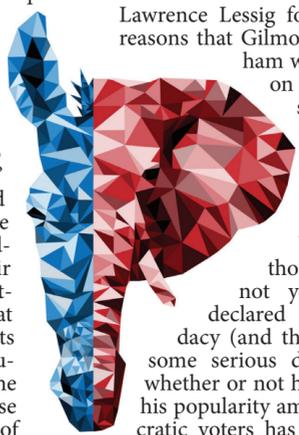
So when faced with this changing landscape of travel and transportation options, what are institutions like taxi

cab companies, hotels, and travel agents left to do to compete, and how can these vast new resources be tapped to benefit more traditional businesses? Uber and Airbnb are not the only companies of their kind, but their massive success (Uber was recently valued at \$50 billion) has made them the metaphorical face of the gig economy. Their profit margins continue to grow while the organizations of old scramble to combat these new powerhouses being built before their eyes.

The legality and safety of these companies has come under fire of late, and many proponents of an older economic order have gone on the offensive against these companies, looking to impose strict laws and regulations to help level the proverbial playing field and curtail the momentum of these businesses, while massive profits continue to pour in daily from their legions of posting, tweeting, and hashtagging Millennial customers. Uber and Airbnb may be more convenient, trendy, and substantially cheaper than traditional taxi services or hotels, but their sustainability and long-term reputation among consumers remain to be seen.

Traditional businesses—especially hotels, which are typically a universal fixture in chambers of commerce across the country—need to remain competitive in this evolving economy. The best way for chambers of commerce to facilitate that process and help these businesses remain viable just might be to help them find a mutually beneficial way to co-exist with the "nonemployment organizations" of the gig economy.

So, how directly are these businesses actually competing? (Continued on page 2)



U B E R

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Uber & Airbnb: The Takeover of the New Gig Economy

(Continued from page 1)
Airbnb, for example, is widely accepted as something of a mixed bag: subsequent experiences can vary immensely, and sometimes even well-reviewed hosts can have factors arise that negatively impact the quality of the service they provide. When you sign up to stay in someone's home, apartment, or guest room you are rolling the dice on what you're actually walking into. The safety of that mysterious situation is generally enough to keep vacationing families, honeymooners, middle-aged travelers, and anyone with strict accommodation requirements more inclined to opt for traditional accommodations.

In essence, the idea of Airbnb is nothing new. When heading to Europe or South America, finding a hostel or staying with a host family are always cheaper options than staying in a hotel. Airbnb is simply organizing that marketplace of parallel lodging into one neatly designed space.

Should towns and cities be worried? Look at it this way: whatever gets people into the community can end up being beneficial for everyone in the long run. More affordable lodging could bring in an entire class of tourists who may not have found it financially feasible to visit certain places. It could also mean that consumers with a moderate amount of disposable

income choose to take more trips to a greater number of destinations, using the money they save on accommodations to fund additional excursions. And, once they have reached their destination, tourists who have spent less money on a place to stay may also decide to spend additional cash at local restaurants, shops, and events.

The presence of Airbnb doesn't have to be a declaration of war on traditional businesses. Instead, it offers new experiences for a bit less money. Those who want the traditional room service with mints on their pillows will still have such options available to them; those looking for something a bit more adventurous—and sometimes even unpredictable—now have different options available to them as well.

Uber, on the other hand, poses a slightly different threat, siphoning consumer dollars away from a broader range of services. With drivers in over 59 countries and a seemingly limitless supply of jobs for people that own their own car, Uber is the true wild card of the sharing economy, and public transportation, vehicle rentals, and taxi services all stand to feel its effects.

On the worker's side, part of the draw of driving for Uber is that basically anyone 21 years old or older with a license and a halfway decent car can start

making money almost immediately. With the option of taking on extra work to make extra cash as needed, and the completely flexible hours the job provides, the number of "active drivers" in the Uber system has been growing at a rapid pace. Hired and classified as independent contractors, drivers remain mostly autonomous and are not subject to the same constraints as someone working a standard 9-to-5 job. Don't think that market's going to saturate any time soon, though: most Uber drives work fifteen hours a week or fewer, and only about half are still driving after one year with the company.

From the consumer's perspective, a big part of Uber's appeal is its on-demand quality: instead of standing on the sidewalk and quietly pleading to be picked up by the occasional empty taxi, or having to remember to call a car service well before you actually intend to be picked up, Uber users can hail a ride instantly. And because Uber bills the customer's credit card directly, there is never any need for the driver and rider to address payment arrangements after the ride.

Where Uber and other ride-hailing companies have drawn criticism from consumers is in their use of what Uber calls "surge pricing" or raising and lowering prices based

on consumer demand. For instance, an Uber ride from Point A to Point B might cost one amount on a typical Friday night, but the cost of that same ride is likely to skyrocket if, at the same time on the following Friday, there happens to be a big concert or major sporting event happening in the area.

It is unclear what, if anything, organizations like chambers of commerce can do to help community members and chamber businesses with more traditional operations benefit from, or even stay afloat despite, the presence and popularity of Uber in local economies. Right now, part of Uber's financial success stems from the fact that it faces minimal government regulation, and is able to operate as a sort of "outlaw" of the transportation community by enlisting amateur drivers who generally don't have any sort of commercial insurance. It's this lack of regulation that also allows Uber to engage in pricing practices that, in most any other industry, would qualify as price-gouging.

While stricter market regulations are often seen as anti-business, anti-growth, and anti-innovation, the taxi industry might present an exception to that general wisdom. When the taxi industry first took off after the Great Depression as able-bodied, out-of-work people saw an employment opportunity in driving unlicensed taxis, the re-

sults were bleak: namely, overall driver quality decreased, so accidents were far more frequent.

It's possible, though, that the industry has since over-corrected. In London, for example, in order to become a taxi driver, or "cabby," job candidates must pass what is widely believed to be one of the most difficult exams in the world. Even those born and raised in London will still spend years acquiring "The Knowledge," which refers to the comprehensive knowledge of all of London's 25,000 streets, as well as back routes and landmarks, that any aspiring cabby must possess. And now, taxi regulations that once served the primary purpose of protecting consumers might start to look more inhibitory than anything else, especially given the rise of faster, more accessible, and more efficient options.

As chambers of commerce are often active in legislative pursuits, it might be worthwhile for executives, staff, and board members to consider which approach would best serve their own communities and chamber memberships: fighting for looser restrictions on taxis and other transportation services in order to help them compete more effectively with Uber and other gig economy equivalents; or, advocating stricter regulations or ride-hailing services operating in this newly realized market sector, the novelty and modernity of which has

allowed these businesses to, at least so far, operate outside of existing regulatory frameworks.

Either way, the current profitability and market success of gig economy heavyweights like Uber and Airbnb, as well as the growing number of similarly-structured competitors, suggest that these businesses aren't going away any time soon—and, in the meantime, they're likely to continue making money hand over fist. Finding a way to integrate or accommodate these businesses into local economies and service markets might be worth the attention of chamber executives, as businesses in the tourism and hospitality industries are traditional staples in chamber of commerce membership bases.

When faced with drastic change, history tells us that you can either get involved and help drive that change to be as beneficial as possible, or you can stand off to the side and hope for the best. As the voices of their local business communities, chambers of commerce are generally not the type of organization to sit back and watch things happen, and it could prove immensely beneficial in the long-run for chambers of commerce to take their quintessentially proactive approach to navigating these market innovations.

Review Culture & Experiential Spending: The Habits of Millennials

(Continued from page 1)
Connections to their family, friends, and billions of strangers all over the globe through a multitude of online social media platforms. Almost 70 percent of millennials believe attending these events makes them more connected. And FOMO makes

more (and post more) in return. I'm not condemning this behavior, though. I think the urge to go out and see the world is an incredible pursuit. Never before in human existence has the average person had this much access, and taking advantage of those opportunities

of conspicuous consumption. According to *Forbes*, "33 percent of millennials rely mostly on blogs before they make a purchase, compared to fewer than 3 percent for TV news, magazines, and books. Older generations rely more on traditional media, whereas millennials look to social media for an authentic look at what's going on in the world, especially content written by their peers whom they trust" (emphasis mine). This tells us that while millennials are constantly trying things that are new to them, the reason they try them is because of what they heard from other people.

The reason websites like Yelp and TripAdvisor are so prevalent is because millennials want to hear other millennials' opinions before trying something new. It's part of the "experience and share" culture that we've cultivated through social media. The 2014 Millennial Study from Moosylvania, an independent, digital ad agency, found that, "Overall, millennials identify with themselves as being incredibly self-confident and independent, yet seek constant reassurance from friends and family when it comes to shopping, buying, and making purchases. Whether shopping alone or in a group, they remain digitally connected, contacting friends and family for advice or opinions via text, phone call, or social media. While 57 percent surveyed say they tell their friends about their purchases, 44 percent prefer to 'show off' their purchases, even if it's in subtle ways."

Have you ever made a purchasing decision based on reviews you've seen online? Have you ever posted a review yourself (either positive or negative)? I'd be willing to bet the answer is "yes" to both of those questions for most of you. So it's not a stretch to think that in the years to come, as millennials become the majority of business owners, their decision to join the chamber will largely hinge on peer reviews. Chambers need a way to encourage their members to post reviews of their services and events—and your members need a way to encourage patrons to do the same for their businesses.

What are the most engaging types of reviews? Text is great and all, but seeing a photo from an event or a restaurant drives the experience home even further. And if a picture's worth a thousand words, then a video is worth a thousand pictures. How cool would it be if you could get video reviews from members talking about how great your chamber is? Well, video reviews are coming, and they're coming fast.

Companies are now offering solutions to businesses for getting real customer video reviews added to their websites, and almost instantly. Businesses can give customers a phone number to text and they'll be sent a link. The link opens up their camera and allows them to post a video review. Those reviews then get posted to that business's website for other customers to experience. Lobbies, waiting rooms, restaurant tables, and many other places can feature cards en-

couraging customers to text the number and post a video review.

The same thing can be done for chambers. Imagine email blasting your members with a phone number for them to text. They text it, get the link, click on it, and record their video review. Getting a one percent return on that wouldn't be far-fetched. And even for chambers on the smaller side, that would be three to five video reviews they can have featured right on their official website.

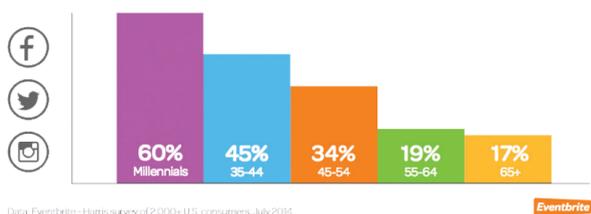
At networking events you could get a couple more members to post reviews right there on the spot. The utility of this technology is almost never-ending. We're always trying to find new ways to relate to the next gener-

ation. Well, if you want to be in the mindset of a millennial, you need to be open to new things, and you need to be connected. In the meantime, talk to members at events and see if they'd be willing to record a quick video on your phone. Record them saying something nice about your chamber and share it through your social media. We have to embrace the social revolution of experience-sharing, and chambers of commerce can be right at the center of that.

A chamber that is in tune with how people are communicating is a chamber that will stay relevant; and today, staying relevant means staying connected.

EXPERIENCES ARE BETTER WHEN SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

People who have posted, tweeted or shared about their events and experiences in the past year.



Data: Eventbrite - Harris survey of 2,000+ U.S. consumers, July 2014

them show up and share their experience on the Internet. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, Tumblr, Instagram, Flickr, Vine, Reddit, Whatsapp, SnapChat, Yelp, TripAdvisor ... and that is just scratching the surface. Our ability to share our experiences with others drives us to try new things for two main reasons: jealousy and narcissism (insert tongue in cheek now).

That isn't a generational jab, but an observation of how the conditions of today's society impact the human condition and behavior. That's not to say millennials just sit around coveting each other's experiences all day long; it's that they have found their own, new form of conspicuous consumption, and that's something that everyone does.

Conspicuous consumption is spending money on goods or services as a status symbol to display where you stand socially. In the 1950s and '60s, conspicuous consumption was the purchase of a second car for a family of four, or a second household television set. Today, it's the 350 photos we upload to Facebook from our day trip to Niagara Falls. You aren't what you have, not anymore; you are what you do. Experience is the new currency.

Jealousy and FOMO cause millennials to go out and attend events, meet new people, and experience new things; and narcissism (and our urge to share) causes us to post our experiences for everyone to see. It's a self-perpetuating cycle: you see everything that your friends are doing online, so you feel motivated to go out and do some new things yourself; then you post about it on your profiles so your friends can see it, thus causing them to want to do

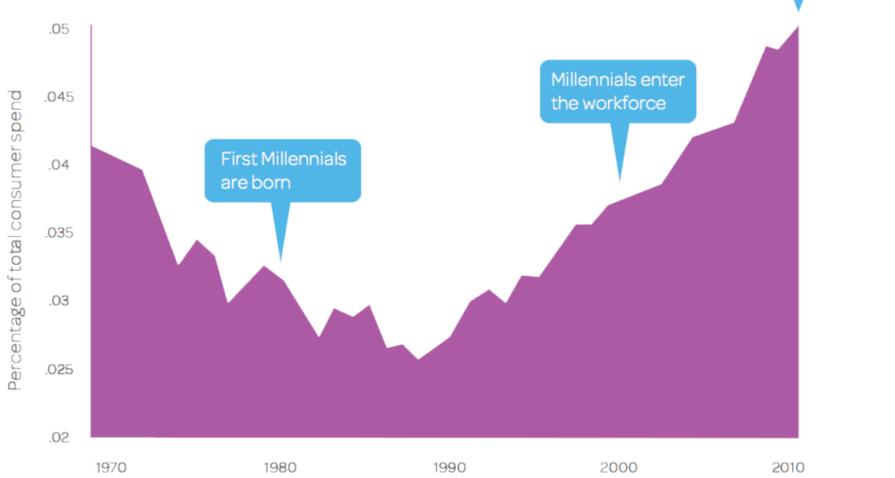
in the form of new experiences is an exciting way to live life.

Something remarkable happens, though, when you constantly have people talking about and sharing their experiences: word of mouth marketing. When someone likes a meal at a restaurant, when someone enjoyed a concert, when someone's at a baseball game with their family, they take photos and they share them. People all over the country are taking photos of their meals and posting them online, talking about how delicious they were. These peer-to-peer, word of mouth interactions are the most valuable forms of advertising because they're honest and they're real.

Chambers of commerce need to adapt to this new behavior and help get their members involved with this new form

AMERICANS ARE BUYING EXPERIENCES

Admissions to live events: music concerts, performing arts, sporting events.



Data: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Masthead

THE NATIONAL CHAMBER REVIEW
Founded in 2012

PATRICK McCABE, Editor-in-Chief

KATHERINE PHILBIN, Creative Director
CARLY MORGAN, Copy Editor/Head Writer

BOB BARTOSIEWICZ, Chief Executive Officer
TIM CORCORAN, Chief Financial Officer
GREG THOEN, Vice President
KEVIN BAER, Production Director
PETE PETERSON, Attorney at Law

TY CHATELLE, Layout Designer/Illustration

BRIANNA CLEGG, Staff Writer
TAYLOR GARRITT, Staff Writer
LUCAS JOHN POTTER, Staff Writer
BRIAN VANDENBERGH, Staff Writer

DAVID K. AAKER, IOM, Contributing Writer
BOB HARRIS, CAE, Contributing Writer
FRANK J. KENNY, Contributing Writer
GLENN SHEPARD, Contributing Writer

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Printed & Distributed by:
Messenger Post Media, Canandaigua, NY

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The Difference Between Management and Leadership Rethinking Your Membership Sales Process



Glenn Shepard
Contributing Writer

A 27 year-old manager named Justin who attended my seminar at the University of Wisconsin asked why his employees didn't respect him, even though he had been given the title of General Manager. He was taking over the company from his father and thought it was because of his age. It was not. Bill Gates was a teenager when he co-founded Microsoft, yet his employees respected him.

Justin's employees didn't respect him because, while he was a manager, he had not yet become a leader. The title of management can be given to anyone regardless of qualification, and employees have no choice but to comply with a manager's orders if they want to keep getting a paycheck. People will comply with a manager, but will only commit to a leader. The title of leader, however, cannot be given. It only comes when employees respect the manager, and respect cannot be given, or ordered. It must be earned.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell described

it best when he said, "Leadership is the art of getting people to accomplish more than the science of management says is possible." When managers face the unpleasant task of firing an employee whom we like personally, but whose performance just doesn't cut it, we often try to ease the discomfort of the situation by telling the employee, "This isn't personal. It's just business."

Leadership, however, is very personal. As Dr. John C. Maxwell put it in his bestselling book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, people must buy into the leader before they'll buy into the leader's mission. Steve Jobs was a perfect example of this phenomenon. After co-founding Apple when he was 19 years old, he was fired by his board at age 30. When he was brought back in 1997, he began to lead the company in new directions. He was not, however, immediately recognized as the visionary leader he is now considered to be. In fact, some thought he had "lost it" altogether, based on some seemingly bizarre decisions he made: for example, he settled a copyright infringement lawsuit with Microsoft because he realized that Apple, which was losing market share rapidly, could not fight the 800 pound gorilla that Microsoft had become.

Steve then reinvigorated his employees with a leader's most powerful tool: momentum. He got them so accustomed to change that it became second nature to them. It began when he streamlined the bloated Macintosh product line. He wanted simple, and to Steve that meant there would be only two versions of the Mac desktop, and

two versions of the Mac laptop.

Then, he lead the company into a new industry they had no background in: MP3 players. His detractors argued that Apple was a computer company and, as such, should leave MP3 players to industry heavyweights like Sony, which dominated the portable electronics market with its Walkman. But after starting with no market share, Apple's iPod quickly came to dominate and became a category killer.

The same thing happened when Steve wanted Apple to make cell phones. His detractors argued that Apple should stick to what it does best, and leave cell phones to companies like Motorola and Nokia. But the iPhone quickly went from no market share to becoming yet another category killer.

By the time of his death, there was a general wisdom stating that had Steve announced that Apple was going to start making toaster ovens, no one would have questioned him. Instead, his employees would have said, "Lead the way!" Steve was not the greatest manager in the world, but he was one of the greatest business leaders in recent history. It's no wonder that he's called a visionary.

Glenn Shepard is a professional speaker and internationally recognized authority on managing problem employees. He's the bestselling author of six books, which have been translated into five languages, and over 500 published articles. His company provides accredited seminars for chambers. Go to www.glennshepard.com or email Rebecca.Johnson@rebecca@glennshepard.com for details.



Frank J. Kenny
Contributing Writer

Are you intent on innovating at your chamber?

To do so, it is always helpful to look outside the chamber industry for new ideas, and new ways of doing things.

Sure, you also want to keep abreast of what your industry colleagues are up to, but if you really want to think outside of the box, widening your frame of reference can produce a great return on your invested time and energy.

Here is an innovation from outside the chamber industry for you to consider: open enrollment periods.

Think about the insurance business. It employs limited-time windows to drive consumers into action. For example, open insurance enrollment might start on November 1, and end on December 31; if you snooze, you lose. That scarcity, that deadline, inspires people to take action. The fact is, most people are terrible procrastinators. If something can be done tomorrow instead of today, people often find a reason (or an excuse) to put it off.

Additionally, most people don't like to spend money if they

don't have to. If they can keep money in their wallets an extra day, week, or month, and still get the goods or services they want at that time, they will wait.

Another group that uses open enrollment periods is the online educational products industry, which offers online training, coaching, and consulting through products and membership sites. For example, if you want access to Michael Hyatt's popular Platform University membership site, you have to jump in during the short enrollment periods that occur several months apart from each other. Again: if you snooze, you lose.

You may have noticed the effectiveness of this phenomenon in your own chamber. If so, you probably experienced an increase in memberships during the final days in which prospects are eligible to be included in the printed directory/visitor guide. The approaching deadline drives procrastinators to come out of the woodwork and join.

Scarcity creates demand. People want what they can't have. We all have a fear of missing out (or "FOMO"). Deadlines work.

In my own Chamber Pros Insider membership group, there are 77 people on the waiting list ready to pay and join. They can't get in until we reopen enrollment. Next time we reopen enrollment, these people are very likely to jump at the chance to get in.

Moreover, people that procrastinated and failed to join during the last enrollment period will be more likely to act quickly this time around, having already fallen victim to deadline enforcement once before.

Just think of the benefits of doing this at your chamber. You would onboard cohorts rather than individuals. You would create new demand by adding

an element of scarcity. And you would have a reason to launch membership campaigns, and not ones based on friends calling friends, but instead, as something you do in-house through digital marketing; something that feels generous and exciting.

If you have been looking to monetize your social media and marketing, this is a conversion strategy to consider. You spend a couple of months creating awareness and building relationships by giving gifts and being generous through content marketing. Then, you do a two-week digital marketing campaign announcing your open enrollment period. It turns something boring and ineffective into something fun and exciting.

When someone joins, they pay the regular annual dues at that time and become members in good standing.

As a bonus, if you utilize the same type of software that many people, including me, use for the online educational products industry, the membership will renew automatically in a year. The system will simply charge the same credit card that was originally used to join.

This is what we do in our business. Give it a try in yours.

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.

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The Silent Problem Solver



David K. Aaker, IOM
Contributing Writer

Listening is one of our most beneficial communication tools,

yet it often does not come to our full attention during the times when it would benefit us most.

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just Listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention" (with thanks to Rachel Naomi Remen).

At a recent breakout session on customer service in Jackson, Mississippi, I noticed a gentleman in the usually vacant front row really using his listening skills as he jotted down a few notes from my presentation. At the conclusion of my session, he introduced himself to me. It was then that I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. John Igwebuikwe, CTM, Ph.D. We have kept in touch ever since, and he recently shared an article with me that

revealed his role as a conductor of numerous workshops and seminars on effective listening.

During these workshops, Dr. John would remind his audience that it was listening that first opened the door to our ability to read, write, and speak, enabling us to get and retain jobs, maintain good relationships, and build successful lives. He asked that if the key to good communication is listening, then what is the key to good listening? Well, he discovered that "key"!

It's a small key, but remember, little keys can open big doors and unlock giant vaults. The key to listening is this: listen to how the other person feels. The essence of interpersonal communication is to take note of

whether the people with whom we interact are happy or sad, frustrated or elated, confused or excited, mournful or blissful, tired or energized. People want us to listen to the gut impact of what they say. In short, they want us to listen to how they feel.

Our world constantly bombards us with sounds and noise. When we take the time to listen and empathize with others, we offer them a kind of mini-vacation from their frenzied existence; a soothing conversational oasis where they can stop and be validated and refreshed.

Reading Dr. John's article made me review my listening skills, and as I reflected back on the hundreds of board meetings that I have attended in my twenty years as a chamber pres-

ident and CEO, I began to wonder just how much information I might have missed by not using all of my listening skills.

I found myself guilty when I came across this quote from William James: "The deepest craving of the human soul is to be understood." When reflecting on my many conversations with people, I was struck by the fact that I often had not listened to the speaker, let alone to how he or she was feeling at the time. More often than not, I was more focused on getting my chance to speak and get my message across.

So today, I pledge to turn up the volume on my listening, and look forward to appreciating how the person that is speaking to me is really feeling at the same time. I suspect that I will

benefit from this silent problem-solver called "listening."

After a successful 20-year career in chamber management, 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.

Feeling Trapped on a Chamber Board



Bob Harris, CAE
Contributing Writer

He was excited to be a new member of the chamber's board of directors. But by his second meeting, he was feeling trapped in an unpleasant three-year commitment.

This scenario plays out all too often. While chambers of commerce constantly seek leaders, the culture of the board may not be so welcoming. A board set in its ways, or that does not adhere to the principles of engagement and transparency, will be a hurdle to attracting anybody new.

Each of the following disappointments were all voiced by real volunteers. These stories exemplify the frustra-

tions often experienced by new board members.

Disparaged: Respected in his profession and a ten-year chamber member, this director had decided that now was the time for him to start serving the organization. But at his first board meeting, whenever he asked questions or offered his perspective, he noticed the negative body language of the senior directors. During the meeting's break, he was told, "You have to pay your dues. Don't just jump into these conversations." Somebody else told him, "Give yourself a couple of meetings to learn the politics before voicing opinions." The result was an otherwise motivated new board member losing all enthusiasm for involvement.

Orientation: This director had anticipated an orientation to learn more about his responsibilities and the chamber's operations. But then, three months passed between his installation and the first board meeting. He wondered if he had missed the training. Would he receive a leadership manual, or have access to documents? He asked about it, only to be told, "We do orientation every two years. You'll be included next time." Without having been briefed on the chamber's budget, re-

sources, strategic plan, and organizational charts, this new director felt foolish at meetings. But what was he to do?

Nominations: When the nominating committee called, she was honored. But then they asked her questions to which they would have known the answers, had they read the membership directory and her profile. They told her, "OK, we'll give your name to the board." Throughout the selection process, the nominee received no information regarding time requirements, or the expectation that she disclose any conflicts of interest. She was never informed of the mission and priorities. Consequently, she was shocked at the first meeting to hear that every director must contribute \$500 to the foundation and sign up two new members. Shouldn't the nominating committee have briefed her thoroughly on these expectations?

Conflicts: This new director understood his allegiance was to the chamber, not to his business, part of town, or personal interest. He signed the conflict of interest form. But soon, he noted that some directors were gaining personally from the chamber's operations. One director's spouse was catering lunch for a fee; another mentioned that his son was working on the new cham-

ber website; and two directors asked to speak at the conference for \$500 honorariums. The new director was uncomfortable to learn that board members even had their dues waived. How did this look to the membership?

Financial Reports: The director knew financial reporting was a duty of the treasurer. At the first meeting, the treasurer said, "Staff will give my report." After the report, the new director asked questions about savings and an audit. (In his own business, he knew how to read a financial report.) The officers bristled. After the treasurer's report, there was no motion to accept or approve the report. He knew the treasurer was responsible for chamber resources, but the new director couldn't get any answers about an audit, policies, or savings.

Aimless: This director knew organizations needed a strategic plan. Her last board kept a copy of theirs on the table during meetings. When directors offered new ideas, they referenced the plan. This new board had no plan. The chairman announced his priorities for the year and mentioned "wanting to leave a legacy." Meetings of the board seemed to be governed solely by the chairman's priorities and interests. Without a strategic plan, what was there to stop the chamber's agenda from becoming

just one person's agenda?

Surprise! This is a director who got more than expected. By the second meeting, he had been assigned to chair the conference committee. The nominating committee said, "You won't have to do much except attend board meetings." Soon, he was told he must seek sponsorships, buy a table at the annual meeting, visit prospects, and serve on the speakers' bureau. His role was morphing from governance to task management. If he'd known his board position would require so much time, he might have reconsidered taking on the role.

Time Management: She drove an hour to get to board meetings on time. Often arriving early, she was frustrated that meetings started as much as 35 minutes late because the chair wanted to give others time to arrive (they barely had a quorum otherwise). At her second meeting, the chair arrived late. Both meetings ran over the scheduled adjournment time by more than an hour. Which left the new board member wondering: was there any respect for volunteer time?

Committee Work: At the first meeting, directors were informed they would all need to chair a committee. When one board member asked if it was better to have directors serve

as committee liaisons instead of as chairs, the reply was, "Our directors have always served a dual role of committee chair and board member. It is too cumbersome to rely on chamber members for committee work." The new director felt this was a missed opportunity; shouldn't the chamber be working to develop future leaders?

Token Students: This director thought his board was progressive for including a high school and college student in its meetings. Both students offered good input and attended regularly. After a few meetings, the new director noticed that the students never voted, and asked them why. They said that they would like to vote, but had been told that voting was only for the more seasoned directors. The new director thought this policy was disrespectful. Weren't the students putting in just as much time as everyone else?

Each of these scenarios is real. You may recognize them as situations that have arisen within your own board of directors. No director should come to regret his or her commitment to serve because of poor board practices. Address these scenarios, and you may find yourself with a healthier, more organized board.

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT: 4 DIFFERENT CHAMBERS, 4 UNIQUE COMMUNITIES

Every chamber of commerce has a unique story to tell. In "Chamber Spotlight," we take an in-depth look at chambers from across the country and tell their story. Want to be considered for a chamber spotlight? Tell us why at nationalchamberreview@gmail.com.

Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce

-Pocatello, Idaho

Carly Morgan
Head Writer

The Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce, located along the Portneuf River in Pocatello, Idaho, was founded in 1901—well, technically. Back then, it was the Greater Pocatello Chamber (more on that later), but in early 2014, a comprehensive rebranding campaign catalyzed the evolution of the Greater Pocatello Chamber into the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce of today. By leveraging the chamber's existing resources, community ties, and established commitment to growth, Matt Hunter, President and CEO of the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce, along with his staff members, worked to produce an organization optimally poised to lead its thriving business community into a bright future.

Hunter, who is currently in his eleventh year as president and CEO of the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber, has a long history of chamber involvement. Hunter arrived in Pocatello as the general manager of a hotel and joined the chamber of commerce, where he eventually went on to serve as a board member. "As a hotel guy, I've been involved in chambers forever. ... So I understand what chambers do and how they do it," he explained. It was because of that involvement that transitioning into his current role as a chamber executive felt like a natural progression.

About halfway through Hunter's tenure as president and CEO, however, economic recession set in, and membership at the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber took a bit of a hit. "If you go back pre-recession, [our membership] was about 850. Then we dropped to about 700," Hunter recalled. He said that chamber membership tends to flow with the economy; if the economy is down and businesses are struggling to stay afloat, membership declines; if the economy is expanding and businesses are doing well, membership numbers improve. It's nothing new, but the reasons for the recent growth at the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber just might be more than a post-recession, economic turnaround.

Currently, the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce is just shy of 770 members. Hunter says that it's really been in the last year and a half that that number has started to grow. And some of that undoubtedly has to do with the area's overall, economic vitality: a June 2015 study released by Glassdoor Economic Research ranked Pocatello, Idaho an impressive 27 out of 327 American cities for post-recession recovery. Rankings were determined by each city's respective "Recovery Index," determined by three different data points: percentage decrease in area unemploy-



City Creek - Pocatello, ID

Credit: Charles Peterson

ment; percentage change in area employment; and percentage change in average hourly wages.

To chalk up recent membership growth at the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber exclusively to economic expansion, however, seems like an oversimplification, and perhaps does not afford credit where credit is likely due. The chamber's re-branding campaign launched in January 2014, and multiple, vital aspects of the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce were updated, improved, or reimagined. Hunter, who comes across as a humble guy, disinclined to sing his own praises, hesitates to take too much credit for the chamber's recent turnaround, saying it's hard to say how much of it has to do with the economy, and how much has to do with the rebranding campaign. So I'm going to go ahead and take some of that credit on Hunter's behalf by saying: it almost definitely has a lot to do with the rebranding.

The rebranding of the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce was multi-faceted and comprehensive. Hunter wanted a rebranding campaign that wasn't just "changing your

logo or changing your name," (though the chamber did do both of those things), but one that involved "really looking at the programs you run, and figuring out how to promote the programs you run," he explained. "So we put together a committee that went through a pretty exhaustive process of [asking], 'What are all the things we do? What are the things that are old that we maybe don't need to do any more? What are some of the new things we should be doing?' And overall really, 'How are we perceived by our members?'"

Any sort of branding (or

rebranding) campaign is, essentially, the decision to take on an active, involved role in shaping consumers' perception your organization. For Hunter and his staff, changing that perception started with redefining the chamber's identity, and the Greater Pocatello Chamber of Commerce became the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce.

"We've always served Chubbuck, we had just never identified them in our name," Hunter explained. "Yes, we serve businesses outside of Pocatello and Chubbuck, but it's maybe three or four percent of our membership. It's really small. Pocatello and Chubbuck are really our focus ... so we decided to pick that up in our name."

The new name reflects not only the communities to which the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber is most closely tied, but also the cities' shared history of unified growth and economic interconnection.

"Pocatello and Chubbuck are two basically attached communities," Hunter said. "Matter of fact, the WalMart store sits right across the [city] line." Pocatello and Chubbuck

are home to a combined 68,000 of Bannock County's 84,000 residents, so the two cities account for a large majority of of the county's total population. Several decades ago, there was a third city, Alameda, also in the area. In 1962, a proposal to merge Alameda and Chubbuck with Pocatello was brought to vote; Alameda residents voted in favor of the consolidation, while Chubbuck voters opposed the measure by a small margin. Consequently, Alameda became part of Pocatello, and Chubbuck remained a separate municipality. The two cities of Pocatello and Chubbuck "weren't quite

so together back then" Hunter joked, noting no such consolidation has even been proposed since that first vote. "But they've grown together ever since."

With a new name by which to identify itself, the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber got a new logo and a new website to complete its surface-level transformation. But the rebranding process went much deeper than that, as Hunter noted that it ultimately came down to "re-figuring out the chamber world," and adjusting accordingly.

They started with programming. Hunter and his staff started reviewing the different events they put on each year, and quickly realized that there were some that had become virtual money drains for the chamber. Hunter said that there were several events he and his staff had continued to bankroll out of a sense of commitment to their community, but those events were resulting in net financial losses for the chamber. If the events weren't making any money, that meant the business community wasn't turning out to support them; if the chamber is losing money on an event, and the community isn't show-

ing up to it, then who is benefitting from the continuation of that event? If that question couldn't be answered, the event found itself on the cutting room floor.

But reimagining the chamber's programming wasn't only about cutting tired events; it was also about implementing new programs to enhance membership value. According to Hunter, one such program is the chamber's "Be Well" wellness program. The Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber's wellness program is a collaborative effort between the chamber and the Portneuf Health Trust. According to the program website, its goal is to "provide opportunities to participate in wellness activities, called 'challenges,' as a team to promote health consciousness, support comradery within the workplace, and to ultimately improve the health of the community." Participation in the program is free for chamber members.

"A lot of big companies can afford and take the time to figure how to do a wellness program for their employees," Hunter explained. "But you know what? The 85 percent of our members that are small businesses [i.e., with ten or fewer employees] don't have the time, [and] they don't have the funding." The wellness program, Hunter said, has been very well-received, and is a major benefit of chamber membership that one might be hard-pressed to find in many other places.

Hunter's conceptualization of the rebranding process as a general "re-figuring out [of] the chamber world," however, is perhaps best reflected in an organizational/structural shift brought on by the process: the addition of another staff position, the responsibility of which is to work full-time on membership sales.

"We have never had an absolutely dedicated salesperson," Hunter said. "As part of [the rebranding] process, we hired a full-time, hourly, well-compensated salesperson, which is something we had never had. And that is really helping us."

Hunter says the chamber's current sales specialist has been with the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber for five months, and each month she has produced ten to fifteen new members.

For this chamber, that's pretty big: "We have, over time, been a fairly slow-growth chamber," Hunter said. "You maybe net ten or fifteen [members] a year; you get fifteen new [members] but you lose a bunch. She [i.e., the new salesperson] is really producing that ten to fifteen new members a month that we had never produced before."

But the addition of a new role, while it has proved immensely beneficial, is not without its challenges. For one thing, Hunter expressed his and his staff's uncertainty about the sustainability of the current enrollment rate, and what the performance expectations should be for the person in the sales position. "For the size of community we are, what is the realistic number [of members] that we should be able to get to? Is it 1,000? Is it 1,100? And then, how long should it take to get them?" Hunter said, outlining some of the questions with which he has been wrestling. "And then once you've sort of maximized [membership], how do you integrate this person into other stuff? Because there may not be as many new sales, so do they just really focus on retention, or do they take on some other roles?" he continued. Overall, Hunter said, "We're really feeling our way through that process, because it hasn't been implemented for that long."

There's undoubtedly a quiet wisdom to Hunter's handling of this organizational development, and it's a wisdom that seems to underlie many of the decisions Hunter and his staff have made in evolving the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber into an organization befitting of its growing community: proceed thoughtfully, but decisively; admit what you don't know and keep an open mind, but don't let uncertainty alone be enough to quash progress; and, perhaps most importantly, recognize that sometimes, the best way to learn how to do something is to just do it.

For more information on the Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce, visit www.pocatelloidaho.com.

Bolingbrook Area Chamber of Commerce

-Bolingbrook, IL

Patrick McCabe
Editor-in-Chief

There's one thing that no chamber anywhere could ever function without: help. No matter the size, location, or history of your organization, there's no way you would be where you are today without some help.

Help comes in many forms. It comes from the time offered by volunteers, from the participation of members attending networking events, and from a staff who care about their chamber as much as they do their own family.

At the Bolingbrook Area Chamber of Commerce in Bolingbrook, Illinois, their organization is lucky enough to have help come in all of these forms and then some.

Bolingbrook is a village in the western suburbs of Chicago, but it's a village with a robust population of over 75,000 people. The chamber has almost 600 members, and a staff of three-and-a-half to handle it all. Kevin O'Keefe has been the Executive Director of the Bolingbrook Area Chamber for almost one year, and he certainly understands and appreciates the value of a community coming together to help.

"Coming into the position," says O'Keefe, "there was actually nobody else in the office.

The three of us started within the same couple weeks. There was no staff here, we almost had to start from the ground floor. There were some notes from the previous administration, but we were flying by the



State of Bolingbrook, Mayor Roger Claar

Credit: Bolingbrook Area COC

seat of our pants. But I'm very lucky, I have some great employees who work for me, and every day we have to adjust."

Adjust is right. With three-and-a-half people responsible for handling over 75,000 residents and 1,400 businesses in town, there's no way they could do it alone. "My volunteers in town are very active. They do a lot of the work for me. It's amazing," says O'Keefe. "Our volunteers, our ambassadors, our various business development groups really do a great job for us. ...

"I'll give you an example. Just recently, in July, we had our Taste of Bolingbrook. The event requires volunteers just to man the street, walk around, and make sure everyone's happy. We had a woman in charge of the volunteers and she had

over 60 volunteers to work the one-day project. Ironically it was a day that was 95 degrees with 95% humidity and thunderstorms. And these volunteers all stayed out there."

So how does he go about

recruiting volunteers? "Knock on wood," O'Keefe says, "they recruit me. They come and step up. Obviously when we have our networking events we ask for volunteers ... If I send an email out for volunteers, I need four or six or eight people to work an event, within half an hour the thing is full. It's a very giving community."

There's a real pride in the community here, and it shows. Throughout our conversation, the topic of caring came up. We talked about how impressed we are with chamber people and their capacity to care. How important is it for us to work with people who care? It can't be understated; it's huge.

"It's actually quite amazing," says O'Keefe. "When I first started this job, probably a month into it; and one of our

more high profile members; we were at one of our signature events going from 5:00-6:30pm, and she stayed in my office and we spoke for more than an hour and she told me how many people care about the chamber of commerce; and it's really neat to see the passion in these people."

I met Kevin O'Keefe at the ACCE Convention this year in Montreal and I remarked on how amazed I am every time I attend one of those events, seeing this big group of people come together and how they all care so much. "And you know, Patrick," he says. "The chamber can make a difference in the community. And I think that's what's really nice. A lot of times when you're in a job you can make a difference for that business, but I can make a difference and my staff can make a difference in the community and that's really a source of pride for me."

The way a chamber makes a difference, the "how" of it all, just like the help, comes in many forms. But I think when it comes down to it, it's about instilling a mutual sense of community pride among residents and businesses; and a lot of that community-mindedness comes from events. Every chamber has signature annual events, those that define the organization for many in the community. In Bolingbrook, it's no different.

Having to start at the chamber at the end of the year with no staff and loose plans, you might say O'Keefe was thrown right

into the fire. "I came in October, the rest of my staff came in November, and in January we had our first event, The State of The Village," he says. "Luckily we had volunteers, the mayor's staff all helped me out. This is something that had to be successful whether I was ready or not, and they ran it very well."

The State of The Village is an annual event that is a showcase for the Mayor and his staff, and it's the largest program each year with over 800 attendees. "[The Mayor] identifies each and every project going on in the village, as well as identifies individuals," says O'Keefe. "So he calls up practically everybody in the audience and recognizes them; calls their name and announces what they've done over the year. It's a nice program that he puts on. He doesn't forget to recognize anybody that is in the audience."

But that's not the only event this brand new staff was expected to put together and run flawlessly right out of the gates. The Best of Bolingbrook is an event at that recognizes and awards business in different categories; The Taste of Bolingbrook is an outdoor event where attendees can sample various cuisines from Bolingbrook area restaurants; Wine Around the World is an event that the chamber partners with local restaurants to give food and wine pairings to attendees; and their annual golf outing is crucial for non-dues revenue.

But with the help of his staff, O'Keefe got it done, and with flying colors. "They gave me input, it's almost trial and error, but we learned, and in six months we had six signature events. So basically for the first six months of 2015 we had an event every month and we were flying by the seat of our pants, but I tell you what, you wouldn't know it by the actual events. They ran very well."

But O'Keefe doesn't rest on his laurels. "We're always looking to improve," he says. "After each event we hold a postmortem to discuss what we did right and what we did wrong. So now we have the State of the Village coming up again in January and we just started talking about it and she pulls out her book on it and we had all these great notes from the year before."

When you care, when you have passion, it's not a question of "Can we do it?"; it's an assertion that "It's going to happen, and this is how." Because when you care about something, you get it done, and you get it done in the best way possible. With a year under their belts as an administration, Kevin O'Keefe & Co. are positioned for great success for years to come.

To learn more about the Bolingbrook Area Chamber of Commerce, visit www.bolingbrookchamber.org.

Bentonville-Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce

-Bentonville, Arkansas

Carly Morgan
Head Writer

If you hear the phrase “multi-billion dollar industry,” or “corporate entrepreneurship” and don’t immediately associate either of them with “Northwest Arkansas,” I maybe wouldn’t blame you.

But just because I wouldn’t blame you, doesn’t mean that the lack of any cognitive association is befitting, exactly.

It might come as a surprise to some that Northwest Arkansas (the official designation of which is the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area) is home to three Fortune Global 500 companies: J.B. Hunt Transportation in Lowell; Tyson Foods in Springdale; and the largest retailer in the world, WalMart, which is headquartered in Bentonville. In 2014, these three companies alone saw a combined revenue of nearly \$530 billion dollars.

The revenue generated by these corporations has helped spur growth in Northwest Arkansas, which is currently one of the fastest-growing regions in the country. And right at the heart of efforts to adapt to, encourage, and build upon that growth is the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Data from the US Census Bureau indicates that the population of Bentonville increased roughly 75 percent between 2000 and 2010, and Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber President and CEO Dana Davis says that if you expand that timeframe to include the last four years as well (i.e., from 2000 to 2014), that growth percentage is actually just over 100 percent, effectively doubling the city’s population in just fourteen years. Growth on the microeconomic level has been significant as well Bentonville families earning nearly 20

percent more annually than the average American household.

Davis believes that there are several factors making such immense expansion possible, from the city’s bustling downtown to the first-rate public schools in the area. But one factor that is truly unique to Bentonville and the surrounding region is the continued commitment to hometown roots and community-building demonstrated by some of the area’s most successful entrepreneurs.

Walmart founder Sam Walton moved to Bentonville in 1950, and opened the Walton 5&10 on the Bentonville Square (home now of the Walmart Museum). Walton opened the first Walmart store in Rogers, Arkansas in 1962. He and his wife, Helen raised their family in Bentonville. J.B. Hunt moved to Lowell, Arkansas in 1969 and started JB Hunt trucking company with only five trucks and seven trailers. JB Hunt, located in Lowell, Arkansas, is now the largest publicly held trucking company in the country. John Tyson founded Tyson Foods in Springdale, Arkansas in 1944, and his son, Don, grew the company to be one of the world’s largest meat producers.

“All three men raised their families here in Northwest Arkansas and they have left a legacy. Their family members are now actively involved in running these world-class companies,” Davis said. “They have left an impact not only on Northwest Arkansas, but the world economy and we continue to see growth in our area because of their vision and entrepreneurial spirit.”

The widespread impact of these companies speaks to another unique aspect of the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber’s role in the community: while many of the organization’s initiatives have a local focus, it’s the chamber’s regional identity that often takes precedence.

To help me get a sense of just how strong regionalism is in the area, Davis explained to me that when someone asks the typical area resident where he or she is from, the response rarely, if ever, “I’m from Rogers”; or, “I’m from Fayetteville”; or, “I’m from Bentonville.” The response is almost always, “I’m from Northwest Arkansas.”

The area’s growth, then, is likely also attributable to this regional identity, which influences the chamber’s approach to economic development. For example, Davis explained, “We knew several years ago that we



5&10 Sams Truck

Davis said it was sometime in the 1990s when communities in the region realized that the factors impeding economic growth in one city or town were not drastically different from the challenges faced by neighboring municipalities. So, the Northwest Arkansas Council came to fruition and started working with five major chambers of commerce in the region.

Davis believes that the region’s population growth, economic expansion, and enhanced overall quality of life are possible, at least to the enormous degree that they have been lately, because the Northwest Arkansas Council and chamber of

commerce leaders “got together and they said, ‘Let’s focus on issues that impact us from a regional perspective, as opposed to Walmart [executives] saying, ‘Let’s just focus on the issues that impact Bentonville.’ Or J.B. Hunt [executives] saying, ‘Let’s just focus on issues that impact Lowell, Arkansas,’” Davis explained. “Instead, they said, ‘Hey, there are regional issues that impact all of us ... and if we combine our efforts, we can be more successful as a team.’”

The regionalism that permeates the Bentonville/Bella Vista community is, of course, not the only factor determining how, and on what, the Ben-

tonville/Bella Vista Chamber focuses its time and resources. Recently, Davis and the rest of the chamber have played an integral role in revitalizing Bentonville’s Downtown Square.

“That’s where a lot of communities are trying to get back to, redeveloping their downtown area,” Davis said. He added that it was in the early 2000s when it started to become evident that the downtown area was on a steady decline, and community intervention had become crucial. “We had some companies that were located here [in Bentonville] that were willing to step up to the plate and make some investments in our downtown square,” Dana recalled. “That just kind of began the ball rolling on that process, moving forward to the point, today, where every [downtown] storefront is full.”

Further adding to the allure of downtown (as well as to the growth of the entire Northwest Arkansas region) is the recent opening of Crystal Bridges, a museum of American art founded by WalMart heiress Alice Walton. The 217,000 square foot facility was designed by renowned architect Moshe Safdie, who is perhaps most famous for his design for Habitat 67 in Montreal, Canada. Crystal Bridges opened on November 11, 2011, and in August 2013, less than two years after opening its doors to the public, welcomed its one millionth visitor. The museum continues to attract about 500,000 visitors annually (in a city with a population of just over 40,000), and passed the two million visitor mark in September of this year.

Crystal Bridges Museum has, as Davis puts it, “generated a re-interest in Bentonville ... that helped kickstart the whole downtown redevelopment process.” It also doesn’t hurt that just a short walk from Crystal Bridges is the 21c Museum Hotel Bentonville, a 104-room boutique hotel that topped Trip Advisor’s 2013 list of Hot New

Hotels, outranking the 32 other hotels that opened that same year, in 18 different countries.

“I’m a firm believer that if you build something strong, then you start to see these concentric circles that grow out from that, and your community will continue to grow stronger as it moves further out,” Davis said. Which, so far, is exactly what has happened in Bentonville. “Property values around the square have really grown quickly over the course of the last five years,” Davis explained. He added that those property values are reflective of the increased demand for downtown real estate, as more businesses want to move or establish themselves in the center of the city than the area has space to accommodate.

“So what we’ve seen is that that growth and redevelopment has started to expand out,” Davis continued, with the Downtown City Square—the heart of Bentonville’s downtown—“like the target. You start at the center and then you start elevating out, and we’re starting to see some of that occur because of the connectivity of the downtown area.”

As the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber’s regional approach to economic development suggests, what’s good for the city of Bentonville is good all for of Northwest Arkansas—which is probably why it’s no coincidence that the revitalization and redevelopment of Bentonville’s downtown just happens to coincide with growth throughout the entire Northwest Arkansas MSA. Fortunately, for local business owners and community members, Davis and the rest of the staff at the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce seem optimally positioned to keep their city—and, by extension, the region as a whole—on a trajectory of steady growth.

For more information on the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce, visit www.bbchamber.com.

Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce

-Galveston, Texas

Carly Morgan
Head Writer

In 2007, the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce in Galveston, Texas had just wrapped up a strategic planning period. After nearly 170 years of representing area businesses (the Galveston Regional Chamber, the oldest chamber of commerce in the state of Texas, was established in 1845), the goal of the strategic planning initiative was to make the chamber more relevant in its community; to further cement its position as a leader and ally of area businesses.

“We finished in 2007,” said Gina Spagnola, President of the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce, “and 2008, our first year of implementation, was when Ike hit.”

Hurricane Ike, a massive tropical cyclone, made landfall on the northern end of Galveston Island in the early morning hours of September 13, 2008. One of the costliest hurricanes in American history, Ike wreaked nearly \$30 billion worth of havoc on the United States. Most of that damage was in Texas, and the brunt of the damage in Texas was borne by Galveston, a little island in the Gulf of Mexico, about 50 miles south-east of Houston. At least 75 percent of the island’s homes, and nearly all of its infrastructure, was damaged in the hurricane.

“We lost everything,” Spagnola recalled. “We had nine feet of water in our chamber offices. We did everything right—we had a plan; we checked off everything on our list for a hurricane; we evacuated. [But] when we came back, we had lost every single thing that we had.”

Except, it turned out, a pair of scissors. In the aftermath of Hurricane Ike, someone had recovered the scissors that the Galveston Regional Chamber

staff had used to cut ribbons at grand opening events for area businesses. Spagnola isn’t sure how many ribbons, exactly, those scissors have cut, but she’s confident that it’s at least 1,000. And at a time when it would have probably been easiest for those at the Galveston Regional Chamber to just cut their losses (no pun intended) and walk away, that symbol of the chamber’s past served as constant reminder to Spagnola and her staff of just how important their



Pleasure Pier - Galveston, TX

term impact of the devastation brought on by natural disasters. “[The BCLC] just rallied the troops, and people began to sort of become our angels and helped us all along the way,” Spagnola said. “And that’s what chambers do,” she added. “We’re a family.”

Which is why Spagnola is involved in some of the things she is today. In discussing her experience and what it was like during those early stages of recovery, “I just thought that if we could ever get through this, I

promised to myself I would give back to other communities,” Spagnola recalled. “This chamber will pay it forward. And we did get through it,” she said. “We got through it beautifully.”

The Galveston Regional Chamber started giving back to its local business community perhaps before it had even fully managed to regain its footing itself, which speaks to a certain brand of goodwill arguably more rare than the average version.

“We put together a recovery expo that brought in all sorts of resources for our community, from FEMA, to insurance ... even psychologists, just to talk to people, because you’re so stressed out when you’re going through it,” Spagnola explained, adding that it was at this particular event that

she believes the healing process really started. “Anything we could think of that would help our chamber, our members, get back into business, we brought to that one event.”

The recovery expo, which the Galveston Regional Chamber put on just two months after having lost everything, was the first chamber event post-Hurricane Ike. “It was a way for all of us to get together, and for this chamber to say, ‘We’re committed to helping you get back into business, and we’re not going anywhere,’” Spagnola

recalled. “Ain’t no storm big enough? That’s what we said.”

Today, Spagnola is a member of the National Business Recovery Corps., an organization first developed by the US Chamber of Commerce BCLC in response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. The National Business Recovery Corps.—to which Spagnola was appointed in 2009—is comprised of committed individuals whose communities have experienced major disasters in the past. Drawing on their firsthand knowledge of, and experiences with, disaster recovery, these individuals offer support and guidance to communities experiencing major disasters of their own, aiming to help expedite their recovery process.

Not one to rest on her laurels, however, Spagnola has continued to keep herself and her staff completely engaged in the growth and development of the Galveston Regional Chamber. The chamber’s women’s conference, for example, has come to earn national attention as one of the best of its kind in the country: in 2013, the Galveston Regional Chamber was recognized by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) with the Grand Award for Communication Excellence, in honor of the chamber’s Celebrating Women: Mind, Body, Spirit Conference.

“We want people from anywhere and everywhere to come and be empowered and learn more about Galveston,” Spagnola said of the annual event. “Women give so much to so many, so it’s great to be able to offer a day that’s just for them to unwind and relax and just have some fun. But it’s also very educational.”

Much of the educational component comes in the form of an impressive roster of keynote speakers that the Galveston Regional Chamber brings in for the event: past speakers include Leigh Anne Tuohy, who was portrayed by Sandra Bullock in the 2009 movie *The Blind Side*; Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*; and Criminal Minds actress Aisha Tyler. For its ninth iteration in April 2016, Celebrating Women will feature *The Happiness Project* author Gretchen Rubin as its keynote speaker. While the Celebrating Women conference continues to attract hundreds of women to the area each year, the Galveston Regional Chamber recently undertook the project of engaging yet another area demographic: Millennials.

Spagnola said that several years ago, she and her staff realized the vital importance of “looking to the future” by getting Millennials involved in chamber activities. So, before long, the C-Crewe was born. Now 160 members strong, the

C-Crewe (short of Chamber Crewe) is the Galveston Regional Chamber’s young professionals group. One of the programs its members have developed since the group’s inception is the School of Hard Knocks, a series of luncheons organized and hosted by the C-Crewe.

“What they do is, they identify leaders in the community, bring them into a luncheon, and ask them to share some of the greatest lessons of business,” Spagnola explained, outlining the C-Crewe’s simple but effective approach to one of its more popular initiatives. “It’s one hour of a leader in our community saying, ‘This is how I started my career. These were the obstacles back then, and this is how I overcame them.’”

The C-Crewe has been so successful in engaging young community members that Spagnola has since been invited to speak all over the country, through the US Chamber’s Institute for Organization Management, to teach other chambers how to start young professionals groups.

“To stay relevant, to stay fresh, to keep the younger generation involved, we have to be ever-changing. We have to be listening,” Spagnola said. “We don’t know it all. And it energizes me to hear [the young generation’s] ideas. It inspires me. And it keeps our chamber, I think, on the cutting edge.”

The Galveston Regional Chamber’s young professionals group, in its respect for, and willingness to learn from, older generations of business leaders, exemplifies what Spagnola believes to be at the heart of her chamber’s success: “We listen to our past, and we’ve learned from our past,” she said, “and we’re looking to the future with these new, young leaders.”

Learning from the past and planning for the future—sounds like a pretty solid game plan. For more information on the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce, visit www.galvestonchamber.com.

2016 Candidate Primer

Credentials: Trump's credentials are not in the political arena, though he is a highly accomplished real estate developer and businessman. For four years, he also starred in the reality television show, *The Apprentice*.

Supporters: In the first weeks following Trump's campaign announcement, political analysts were inclined to deride him for tarnishing the efforts of a Republican party trying to appeal to a broader voting constituency. The reality of the Trump campaign, however, seems to have, so far, been just the opposite: Trump has spent the majority of the primary race with a comfortable lead over all other contenders, consistently maintaining a double-digit lead over second place, and even unseating Ted Cruz as the resident Tea Party Favorite. Trump is another of the race's political outsiders, whose popularity reflects the GOP's growing disenchantment with its more traditional leaders. Trump's base skews conservative on nearly every issue, but is typically less religious than voters supporting any of the race's other conservative candidates. The most unifying, and defining, characteristic of Trump's support base, however, is frustration: frustration with politicians, the establishment that breeds them, and the ostensibly unacceptable status quo that they seem poised to maintain.

Platform: It's Trump's stance on immigration that has garnered the most media attention so far, as it is both the central tenet of his campaign platform, as well as objectively extreme: start by deporting undocumented immigrants, of which there were approximately 11.3 million in 2014; then, construct an impenetrable wall along the 2,000-mile US-Mexico border, the construction of which will be bankrolled by the Mexican government; and finally, in direct opposition to the Four-



Donald Trump (R)

teenth Amendment, eliminate birthright citizenship for children born in the US to immigrant parents. Once written off by the Republican establishment as a political gimmick, the Trump candidacy seems only to gain momentum, as Trump manages to leverage his candor into a way of endearing himself to a sea of voters who are thrilled to finally see someone "telling it like it is." Part of his appeal, too, stems from his ability to self-finance his campaign, so voters don't see him as "in the pocket" of any major donors.

Challenges: Despite a slew of highly publicized gaffes (remember the "I like people who weren't captured" comment?) and a couple of lackluster debate performances, Trump has maintained a comfortable lead in the polls, with support from 25 percent of likely Republican voters, according to the Pew Research Center. Trump doesn't appeal to any of the party's major donors, but seeing as he can self-finance his campaign, that's basically a non-issue. As the campaign season moves forth, Trump will have to put some added time and energy into enhancing his political credibility. Also, historically, early poll frontrunners do not typically maintain their leads as voting draws nearer, though no Republican primary candidate has ever maintained such a strong lead for as long as Trump has maintained his, leaving us without an adequate historical analog from which to gain insight into the Trump campaign trajectory.

Just Want To Make The World Dance: So forget about the price tag! Or at least, forget about the corporate bankruptcies: Trump, whose companies have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy four times since 1991, has said he "never went bankrupt" but instead had "taken advantage of the laws. And frankly," he added, "so has everybody else in my position"

Credentials: In the political arena, zero. At age 63, Carson is a retired pediatric neurosurgeon who has never held public office. He is also the embodiment of the rags-to-riches narrative of which Americans are so fond: from an impoverished, fatherless childhood in Detroit, Michigan, Carson pulled himself up by his bootstraps to become the Chief of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. In 2008, President George W. Bush awarded Carson with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

Supporters: Currently second in his party's polls, Carson is a Tea Party darling and a favorite among the Evangelical base, whose support speaks to the GOP's general disillusionment with "establishment politicians." His campaign has benefitted from the same type of grassroots mobilization and support that got Barack Obama elected in 2008, as Carson has received more small-dollar donations than any other Republican in this year's race. He's also popular among older party conservatives, who like the many similarities between Carson's and Trump's brand of political conservatism, but appreciate Carson's more tempered delivery of the "Washington outsider" platform.

Platform: Carson first made a name for himself on the national political scene as an ardent critic of Obamacare, famously admonishing it in a 2013 speech at the National Prayer Breakfast, all while standing mere feet away from the president himself. Though no longer closely associ-



Ben Carson (R)

ated with any one, hot-button campaign issue (*a la* Trump and immigration), Carson does run more extreme than the other candidates on several issues. For instance, he believes the US military should be exempt from war crimes law while fighting in the Middle East, and has accused the Obama administration of advocating a more open border for the sole purpose of increasing the welfare population and keeping Democrats in power. Reflective of his personal "American Dream" narrative, Carson rejects liberal social policies in favor of both personal responsibility and self-reliance.

Challenges: He's not well-versed in many issues of political import, so defining a cohesive platform has proven one of his greatest hurdles, and while he has made recent gains in the "political credibility" department (as evidenced by his two debate performances), Carson remains shaky, at best, on essentially all foreign policy issues. Lately, Carson has come under fire for beliefs widely characterized as anti-Muslim, which prompted the Council on American-Islamic Relations to call for him to drop out of the race.

What Have You Done Lately?: In 1987, Carson became the first doctor to successfully separate twins conjoined at the head. Carson's medical career is in fact characterized by a series of other such neurosurgery milestones.

Credentials: Fiorina launched a campaign for a California Senate seat in 2010, but lost to incumbent Barbara Boxer, preserving her now-enviable status as a "political outsider" who has never held public office. Fiorina was the CEO of Hewlett-Packard for six years, making her the first woman to head a Fortune 20 company.

Supporters: Fiorina's popularity and name recognition have skyrocketed since the early days of her campaign, when she barely even registered in national polls. Her popularity surge is thanks in no small part to her formidable presence on the debate stage, emerging as the decisive victor in the second-tier candidate "Happy Hour" debate prior to the first major primary debate on FOX, and further distinguishing herself among top-tier candidates in the mainstage, CNN debate in September. Fiorina may also be the Republican party's best chance at capturing a larger percentage of the female vote—not a bad goal, considering President Obama's 2012 victory was characterized, in part, by the largest gender gap in recorded electoral history, with women decisively favoring the Democratic candidate.

Platform: At the center of the Fiorina platform is her passionate opposition to abortion, and she supports the possibility of using a government shutdown to defund Planned Parenthood. Fiorina opposes a federal minimum wage, as well as any law mandating paid maternity leave. She believes the Supreme Court overstepped its authority with the Marriage Equality Act, and has expressed her desire



Carly Fiorina (R)

to see the Roe v. Wade decision overturned. The only woman in the Republican field, Fiorina is highly critical of any and all "war on women" rhetoric, and contends that her candidacy would negate Hillary Clinton's ability to "play the gender card" in the general election.

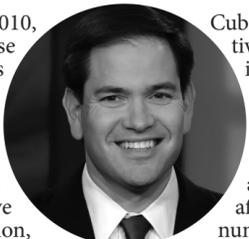
Challenges: In terms of credentials, Fiorina is running exclusively on the private sector experience and expertise afforded by her tenure as CEO of Hewlett-Packard. But her record there was less than stellar, as she was unceremoniously ousted from the post in 2005 after a failed merger with Compaq led to a 55 percent decrease in the company's stock value. Also complicating Fiorina's candidacy is the irony in her adamant rejection of the "feminist movement" and any associated "identity politics," despite her frequent reliance on the rhetoric of identity politics in debates and interviews (e.g., "I think women all over this country heard very clearly what Mr. Trump said"). Ultimately, Fiorina will have to decide whether she wants to be seen as the Republican party's Female Candidate, or if she truly believes there no longer remains any reason to address questions of gender identity.

Are You There George Harrison? It's Me, Carly: Having entered the race as something of a "dark horse" candidate, Fiorina's recent success has led many to speculate that, even if she doesn't win the candidacy, she may still find herself in a position of prominence within a Republican administration, either as Vice President or as a cabinet member.

Credentials: A newcomer to the national scene, Rubio was first elected to the Senate in 2010, representing the state of Florida. Prior to that, he had a nine-year tenure in the Florida House of Representatives after winning a special election in 1999, and four consecutive elections after that, eventually becoming the youngest State House Speaker in Florida's history.

Supporters: Among the many, deeply-divided factions within the Republican party, Rubio is the favorite of none of them: the Tea Party constituency has Cruz and Paul to choose from, and those voters in particular are likely to still be holding a grudge against Rubio for his role in co-authoring an immigration reform bill back in 2013; conservative Christian voters have a laundry-list of candidates vying for the "most devout" designation, and Rubio is not among them; moderate Republicans (and many of Rubio's home-state senate race donors) are more likely to cast their support for fellow Floridian Jeb Bush than for Rubio; and the fact that both Bush and Rubio are from the same state means that neither can guarantee voter support at home. In this race, Rubio will struggle with the fact that he's not the "most" anything; even his perceived chances of capturing the Latino vote—a growing demographic that has voted decidedly Democratically in the last two elections—could potentially be found elsewhere in the party.

Platform: A proponent of interventionist military strategies, Rubio has more than once highlighted America's obligation to "stand up to" totalitarian regimes, and he has been highly critical of (what he sees as) President Obama's too-soft handling of such countries as Russia, North Korea, Iran, and



Marco Rubio (R)

Cuba. Most of Rubio's other policy proposals are largely aligned with the "reformed conservative" movement: for example repeal Obamacare and balance the federal budget by freezing all spending at 2008 levels (for everything except defense, of course). In defining his position on immigration, Rubio has effectively distanced himself from one of the most impressive items on his short Senate resume: in 2013, Rubio was part of the "Gang of Eight," a bi-partisan group of senators that drafted a comprehensive immigration reform bill that happened to include a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants already living in the US. Today, Rubio is highly critical of President Obama's proposal to afford immigrants that same pathway to citizenship, and cites "securing the border" as the number one priority that any sound piece of immigration legislation would need to address.

Challenges: The biggest challenge of Rubio's campaign is perhaps best essentialized in his status as the election's "Okayest Candidate." He has broad appeal: he's a great speaker; his personal background as the child of Cuban immigrants renders him a physical embodiment of the American Dream; he's moderate and not too polarizing, and his last name isn't Bush. But even with that, any asset of Rubio's seems readily identifiable in at least one other candidate, and often to a greater degree. Rubio's task, then, will be to find a way to make himself the first choice of any voting demographic.

Play That Funky Music, Marco: An avid hip-hop fan, Rubio cited "Straight Outta Compton" by NWA, "Killuminati" by Tupac, and "Lose Yourself" by Eminem as his three favorite rap songs in a 2012 interview in *GQ* magazine.

Credentials: Bush served as the governor of Florida from 1998 to 2007, during which time he presided over some serious economic growth. (When he left office, Florida's unemployment rate was 3.4 percent, roughly 25 percent lower than the national average at the time, 4.4 percent.) Bush touts his executive experience as a way of setting himself apart from a campaign field comprised predominately of senators.

Supporters: Fifth in Republican polls at the time of press, Bush has struggled to garner voter support, despite having been designated the party's "front-runner" before he had even announced his candidacy. His moderate platform is likely to appeal to voters not drawn to the party's fringe, but the splintering GOP has shown a distinct preference for non-establishment candidates, which Bush certainly is not.

Platform: A self-proclaimed "compassionate conservative," Bush supports a legal pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants. He is an outspoken supporter of Common Core (widely reviled by conservative politicians and voters alike) and is a textbook Hamiltonian in his interventionist foreign policy streak,



Jeb Bush (R)

championing the US as an international agent of order. Bush's allies have also worked to leverage the candidate's "cultural fluency" as evidence that he could appeal to a more diverse electorate (namely Latino voters, who happen to be the country's fastest-growing voter bloc).

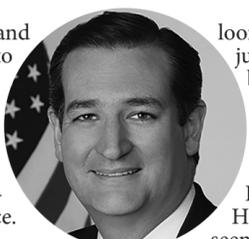
Challenges: Bush's most direct competition comes from Florida Senator Marco Rubio, who is not only seen by many as one of the party's most viable general election candidates, but will also compete with Bush for voter support in his home state. He also has to contend with a conservative voter base leary of his moderate platform, particularly in regards to his stance on immigration. The recent resignation of House Speaker John Boehner doesn't bode well for the Bush candidacy either, as it proves just how powerful grassroots conservatives have become in upsetting the very political status quo that Bush represents.

But What's In A Name?: Just last April, former First Lady (and Jeb's mom) Barbara Bush went on the record saying that "we've had enough Bushes" in the Oval Office. Could that be why all of Bush's promotional material says only, "Jeb!"?

Credentials: Cruz was a law clerk to former Chief Justice William Rehnquist in 1996 and '97, and continued on to a prolific and high-profile law career. In 2013, he was elected to represent Texas in the Senate despite having no previous experience in elected office.

Supporters: A Tea Party leader with Evangelical appeal, Cruz recently won the straw poll at the Values Voter Summit, an annual conference for conservative, grassroots activists, for the third year in a row. Cruz's commitment to his role as "Republican Establishment Antagonist" has attracted some big donor money, but among voters, he's struggled to maintain his "outsider" credibility in a primary field dominated by candidates who have never even held office.

Platform: Cruz's politics are perhaps best essentialized by his oppositional efforts: he was one of the chief engineers behind the sixteen-day federal government shutdown in 2013, which aimed to defund Obamacare. In recent weeks, Cruz and his allies have pledged to take a similar approach in their effort to defund Planned Parenthood, as yet another government shutdown



Ted Cruz (R)

looms. Cruz is an advocate of abolishing the IRS, imposing popular votes on Supreme Court justices every eight years, and sealing US borders. On foreign policy, Cruz favors a robust military, and is neither entirely isolationist nor indiscriminately interventionist.

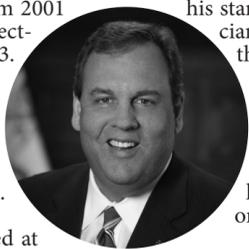
Challenges: The antagonistic approach for which Cruz's supporters commend him has done little for his relationship with his colleagues: both Republicans and Democrats in the House view him as divisive (see: Cruz's 2013, McCarthy-esque smear campaign of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel), and he has burned many proverbial bridges on Capitol Hill. Cruz also has virtually no support among the party's more moderate voters, as he is not seen as a viable general election candidate. And while the Evangelical vote might provide the most fertile ground for a sustained Cruz candidacy, he's highly contested in that field as well.

These Boots Were Made For Arguing: Cruz served as the solicitor general in Texas from 2003 to 2009, making him the youngest person to ever hold the post. He was perhaps also the most dapper, often donning cowboy boots (or, what Cruz calls his "argument boots") in the courthouse.

Credentials: Christie made a name for himself as the US Attorney for New Jersey from 2001 to 2008, racking up a record-breaking 130 convictions throughout his tenure. He was elected Governor of his (traditionally Democratic) home state in 2009, and again in 2013.

Supporters: Like Bush, Christie has the potential to appeal to moderate Republican and Independent voters in a general election. In the primary race, though, the “moderate Republican” vote is highly contested, and so far, Christie hasn’t fared particularly well in securing it: even the recent exit of Wisconsin Governor (and fellow moderate) Scott Walker from the race did little for Christie’s presence in Republican polls, where he currently sits in seventh place.

Platform: The focal point of Christie’s platform is his economic policy, which is aimed at cutting the national debt and growing the economy through entitlement reform, which would include cuts to Social Security and Medicare spending. But policy aside, Christie is also campaigning largely on his persona as a straight-talking, pull-no-punches New Jersey boy who voters can count on to “tell it like it is.” He fought hard against marriage equality in NJ and is socially conservative, but his home state also has the second-toughest gun laws in the country, and



Chris Christie (R)

his stance on immigration is not as cut-and-dry as conservative voters might like. As a politician with a proven capacity for bipartisan governance, Christie is a harsh and vocal critic of the Republican Congress, accusing it of failing to govern, despite a dual-house majority.

Challenges: The now infamous Bridge Scandal, for one, which raised some serious questions about Christie’s political ethics and power-wielding decisions. Also, many voter polls show him second to only Donald Trump on the list of least likable candidates, and he doesn’t appeal to any segment of the party that isn’t already spoken for. If Christie ever had a chance of clinching the Republican nomination, it was probably during his days as one of the party’s “rising stars” back in 2012, post-Hurricane Sandy Obama-embrace and all.

McCain By Any Other Name: In terms of his political agenda, Christie is often compared to 2008 Republican nominee and Arizona Senator John McCain. In terms of his gregarious nature, sense of humor, and visible ease on late-night talk shows, comparisons to Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton perhaps seem even more fitting.

Credentials: Kasich (pronounced KAY-sik) served nine terms in the House of Representatives (from 1983 to 2001), during which time he played a key role in engineering the balanced-budget agreement in 1997, as Chairman of the House Budget Committee). Kasich then took an eight-year hiatus from politics to work for FOX News and has served as the governor of Ohio since 2011. He won his 2014 reelection bid by an impressive 30 points.

Supporters: Kasich’s popularity in his home state, the quintessentially “purple” Ohio, is indicative of his appeal to both moderate conservatives and Independent voters. And, unlike some of the other governors in the race, Kasich’s approval rating has stayed at a respectable level even in the wake of his primary campaign launch. In light of his Ohio-based support, then, it is also worth noting that the last presidential candidate to win the general election without winning the state of Ohio was John F. Kennedy in 1960, and no Republican candidate has ever won the primary election without the support of the highly-contested swing state.

Platform: Economically, Kasich represents traditional Republican “supply side” tenden-



John Kasich (R)

cies, with a hint of welfare state reform, namely in the form of participating in ObamaCare’s Medicaid expansion. He’s another of the field’s more moderate candidates, supporting things like Common Core and a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants.

Challenges: There seems to be pretty unanimous agreement among political analysts that Kasich is one of three Republican candidates with a shot at winning the general election (the others being Bush and Christie). Kasich’s biggest hurdle might be winning over his party’s conservative base, which will likely be put off by the “impurity” of his nuanced political ideology. He also lacks the name recognition of others like Jeb Bush, who is likely among Kasich’s most direct competitors.

A Minute of Your Time?: Or 20, in this case. As a college freshman at the Ohio State University, Kasich wrote a letter to then-President Richard Nixon, requesting a meeting at the White House. It must have been a pretty compelling letter, because less than three weeks later after sending his earnest (and brash) three-page plea, Kasich was in the Oval Office, chatting with the president.

Credentials: An ophthalmologist by trade, Paul was elected to his Kentucky Senate seat in 2010 and has held office since then. Paul was the first candidate closely affiliated with the Tea Party to win a major election.

Supporters: Paul is a beacon of much of what characterizes Tea Party ideology, and much of his voter base was expected to be carry-over from those who had supported his father, former Texas Representative (and prominent Tea Partier) Ron Paul, during his own presidential bids in 2008 and 2012. That, however, hasn’t gone exactly as expected, as the litany of Tea Party candidates in the 2016 race have siphoned off some of Paul’s anticipated supporters. Rand Paul polls particularly well among voters under 30, who seem eager to get behind his stances on privacy rights and social issues, and have been courted en masse by Paul’s highly adept social media campaign.

Platform: Though perhaps not as staunchly libertarian as his father, Rand Paul certainly has the most prominent libertarian streak of any of the candidates. He believes in decriminalizing marijuana and completely overhauling the US tax system by replacing all federal taxes with a flat personal income tax and (what amounts to) a European-style, value-added tax on goods and services. Paul further sets himself apart from the rest of the field with his foreign policy agenda, regularly criticizing his opponents for their hawkishness, and claiming that US rela-



Rand Paul (R)

tions in the Middle East would only deteriorate further under such interventionist policies.

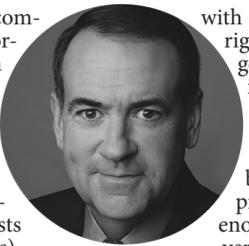
Challenges: Paul needs to appeal to a broader cross-section of Republican voters if he wants to have any hope of winning the primary. Any efforts to do so, however, have so far seemed mostly to negatively impact his image as an authentic “non-politician,” guided more by principle than by poll results. And, despite early voter support, Paul has struggled in recent months, both in the polls (with many of his supporters defecting to the Cruz and Carson camps) and in his fundraising efforts (Purple PAC, one of three major Super PACs funding Paul’s campaign, recently announced that it had stopped raising money). His isolationist military platform is also guaranteed to make him a target among opponents who seem united only in their belief that President Obama has been too restrained in his handling of ISIS and other such Middle Eastern adversaries.

The Winter of Paul’s Discontent: ... was probably 2014. With the help of Freedomworks, a libertarian advocacy group, Paul filed a class-action lawsuit against President Obama and top national security officials in February of last year. The lawsuit, which was filed on behalf of American citizens, focused on the NSA’s bulk collection of telephone metadata, which Paul characterized as a “clear and continuing violation of the Fourth Amendment.” The Justice Department put the lawsuit on hold in September 2014, pending a ruling on a similar case in the US Court of Appeals.

Credentials: After serving as Governor of Arkansas from 1996 to 2007, Huckabee competed for the 2008 presidential nomination, emerging victorious in the ever-important Iowa caucuses. Since then, he’s spent his political hiatus hosting a show on FOX News—the aptly titled *Huckabee*—from September 2008 to January 2015.

Supporters: As an ordained Southern Baptist minister, Huckabee has a loyal support base of Evangelical Christian voters, who were largely responsible for the relative success of his 2008 bid. This time around, however, Huckabee is also the only Republican to have received endorsements from major labor unions (specifically, the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which represent a combined total of nearly 900,000 workers).

Platform: Social agenda aside, Huckabee touts himself as an economic populist (hence the organized labor support): he’s critical of the Trans Pacific Partnership; opposed to reducing Social Security benefits; and maintains a belief in the economic utility of private-sector unions. Huckabee believes that the country’s current trajectory has us on the fast-track for the “criminalization of Christianity,” and he has so far been campaigning on the promise to do everything in his power to prevent that, starting



Mike Huckabee (R)

with an amendment to overturn the Supreme Court’s ruling that same-sex couples have the right to marry in all 50 states. Recently, he has been one of Kentucky clerk Kim Davis’s biggest public supporters, praising her as a “champion of religious freedom” in her refusal to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples after the passage of the Marriage Equality Act.

Challenges: The voting bloc from which Huckabee drew most of his support back in ‘08 has many more options in this race: Carson, Cruz, and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal are all actively courting the conservative Christian vote. Funding may also prove problematic for Huckabee, as his early success in the 2008 primaries was not enough to keep his campaign from ultimately petering due to insufficient funds for advertising in major battleground states like Florida. This time, though, Huckabee and his team have taken some unique approaches—like fundraising in Israel, campaigning on Huckabee’s opposition to the Iran deal—in efforts to ensure that history doesn’t repeat itself.

The Biggest Loser?: After a 2003 diagnosis of Type II Diabetes, Huckabee undertook a lifestyle overhaul and lost more than 100 pounds. In 2005, he went on to complete his first of several marathons.

Credentials: The youngest of the 2016 primary candidates, Jindal has been the governor of Louisiana since 2007. He also has some serious policy chops: after graduating from Brown University at just twenty years old in 1991 (with degrees in biology and public policy), Jindal turned down admissions to Harvard Medical and Yale Law, opting instead to study health policy as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

Supporters: Like several others in the primary field, Jindal has his eye on the Christian conservative vote, though he has averaged less than one percent in national polls.

Platform: The central tenet of Jindal’s platform seems to be one of winning the alleged “War on Christians” and saving the American people from a culturally secularized future. Jindal also has a leg-up on most other candidates in the Obamacare department, as he, too, is an ardent critic of the legislation, but also happened to be the first of the primary candidates to outline a detailed plan for replacing Obamacare. His proposal, called “America Next,” calls, in



Bobby Jindal (R)

part, for a pool of \$100 billion in federal money to cover insurance expenses for low-income individuals and people with pre-existing conditions. The plan has drawn criticism from both the left and the right, but the fact that Jindal has any plan at all is at least worth noting.

Challenges: Once seen as a rising star within in the Republican Party, Jindal’s reputation (and popularity) has suffered some serious setbacks since he assumed the role of governor. His approval rating in Louisiana—where his economic policy left a \$1.6 billion budgetary shortfall in its wake—bottomed out at a paltry 31.8 percent (possibly lower, depending on where you look). Under Governor Jindal, the state of Louisiana currently has the seventh highest unemployment rate, and the third highest poverty rate, in the country.

What’s My Name Again?: Jindal was born Piyush Jindal, which remains his legal name to this day. When he was four years old, however, Jindal opted for the monicker “Bobby,” in honor of the youngest brother of the *Brady Bunch* clan.

Credentials: Santorum represented Pennsylvania in the Senate from 1995 to 2007, but he hasn’t held office since losing his bid for a third Senate term in 2006.

Supporters: In 2012, it was evangelical Christian voters who were largely responsible for Santorum’s strong primary showing, where he emerged as an unexpected (and underfinanced) victor in the hotly contested Iowa caucuses. Unfortunately for Santorum, in the 2016 race, his previous support base of Evangelicals, Tea Partiers, and grass-roots libertarian voters has mostly cast its support elsewhere. In national surveys released earlier this year by FOX News and Quinnipiac University, Santorum was ranked an abysmal tenth out of fourteen candidates for born-again/Evangelical voters’ support.

Platform: With an economic policy that he calls “blue collar conservatism,” Santorum is trying to position himself as the workingman’s spokesperson, calling for an increased minimum wage and criticizing both the Wall Street bailout and the right-wing’s fixation on cutting taxes for the wealthy. Socially, however, he’s far less moderate: he decries cultural secularism, supports a constitutional amendment to reverse the Supreme Court’s ruling on same-sex marriage, and believes all birth control should be illegal and women shouldn’t work outside of the home.



Rick Santorum (R)

Challenges: Santorum rose to prominence in 2012 as part of a much less crowded primary field. Those vying for conservative Christian support included Rick Perry, Herman Cain, and Newt Gingrich, each of whom fell victim to various campaign follies along the way, thereby tacitly designating Santorum the “guy who screwed up the least.” This year, Santorum has to do more than just not screw up by either becoming the front-runner of the conservative wing (unlikely), or somehow earning the support of more moderate Republican voters. The latter will be made difficult by his controversial stances on marriage equality, contraception—even education, as Santorum would like to see Bibles brought back into the public school classroom curriculum. Finally, many Republicans see Santorum as a guy whose shot at the Oval Office already came and went, and his 2016 bid has (so far) been overshadowed by many of the party’s new up-and-comers.

Fight For Your Right: ... to dope? In 1987, Santorum, working in his first career as a lawyer, represented the World Wrestling Federation, arguing to the Pennsylvania State Legislature that professional wrestling should be exempted from federal steroid regulations on the grounds that professional wrestling as we know it is not actually a “sport,” per se.

Credentials: In 1994, Pataki un-seated then-Governor of New York (and darling of the Democratic party) Mario Cuomo. Pataki went on to serve three terms as Governor of New York (despite the state’s long history of favoring Democratic candidates), and led the state through the September 11 terrorist attacks and the beginning stages of recovery.

Supporters: In theory, Pataki is the guy for Republican voters hoping to shy away from partisan politics. He’s the quintessential “fiscally conservative, but socially liberal” candidate, the perceived absence of which is a common lament among Millennial Republicans going into the 2016 election. In the polls, however, Pataki consistently garners less than one percent (usually closer to the “zero percent” side of things) among potential 2016 voters.

Platform: is complicated. As a fiscally conservative, socially liberal, hawkish Republican, Pataki is truly the only one of his kind in this race. He believes in small government and created a 2010 super PAC aimed at repealing Obamacare; he believes in gun control and abortion rights (defining himself as “pro-choice”) but did not support gay marriage as governor; he opposes the Iran deal and believes in greater military intervention in the Middle East, citing Theodore Roosevelt as one of his political heroes.



George Pataki (R)

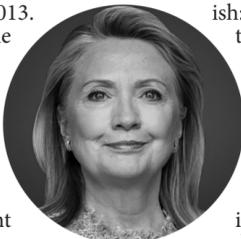
Challenges: It would actually take less time to make a list of things working in Pataki’s favor in 2016, as that list would consist of approximately zero items. Pataki has little to no name recognition outside New York State, and even there, he didn’t leave public office on the best terms: in 2007, his approval ratings were painfully low, and that year’s 40-point victory of Democratic successor Eliot Spitzer is seen by many as a reflection of the state’s mounting discontent with Pataki. He hasn’t held public office in eight years, and he’s 70 years old, making him the oldest of the Republican candidates. Add to all of that the fact that his party’s recent conservative shift has left him clinging to the margins to which Moderate Republicanism has been relegated, and it’s no surprise that Pataki has struggled so profoundly in the primary polls.

Where’s The Beef?: Last June, Pataki made his entrance into the boutique food industry, selling beef products from Pataki’s South Farm (located in Essex, NY) at a stand at Abingdon Square Greenmarket, a farmer’s market in Manhattan’s West Village.

Credentials: Clinton was Secretary of State under President Obama from 2009 to 2013. She served as a senator from New York from 2001 to 2009, and was First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001, during her husband Bill Clinton's presidency.

Supporters: Clinton is probably the closest thing the Democratic party has had to a "consensus candidate" since Edmund Muskie in 1972. She has the party machinery and political establishment behind her, and for a little while, the idea of Clinton securing the nomination was not a question of "if," but "when." Clinton's lead in the polls has been steadily diminishing in recent months, though, as liberal and progressive Democrats prove more than willing to migrate over to the camp of her lesser-known adversary, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. One thing Clinton has working very much in her favor, however, is a female voting demographic eager to see a woman in the Oval Office: House Minority Leader and California Democrat Nancy Pelosi has publicly attested to that sentiment, and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren stated more than once that she wouldn't run against Hillary Clinton, specifically, perhaps alluding to a desire not to interfere with another female candidate's pursuit of the presidency.

Platform: Clinton's economic platform is characterized by redistributive efforts to reduce income inequality (e.g., higher minimum wage, free or reduced public college tuition, paid family and medical leave) and greater regulation of the financial sector (particularly the "shadow banking" industry, the practices of which played an integral role in the 2008 financial crisis). In terms of foreign policy, Clinton's congressional voting record actually positions her right-of-center, which prompted President Obama, during his 2008 primary campaign, to dub her record "Bush-Cheney Lite." As a member of President Obama's cabinet, Clinton remained steadfastly hawk-



Hillary Clinton (D)

ish: she was a proponent of escalating the war in Afghanistan, arming Syrian rebels, intervening in Libya, and allowing the use of drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen.

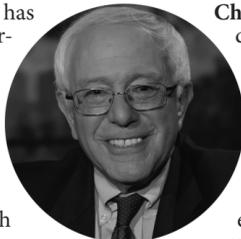
Challenges: If Clinton is the party's 2016 analog for Edmund Muskie, then it might behoove the Democratic establishment to remember what happened to Muskie: he lost the nomination to little-known, grassroots candidate George McGovern. Bernie Sanders might be the McGovern to Clinton's Muskie, as his far-left platform appeals to the party's liberal base. But even if Sanders doesn't prove as formidable an opponent, he has succeeded in pushing Clinton further to the left on some domestic issues, forcing her to find that delicate balance between maintaining her broader appeal, while also liberalizing her platform. And while the "email scandal" continues to hamper Clinton's campaign, it's her history of supporting some initiatives that were widely unpopular with Democratic voters (e.g., the invasion of Iraq and the Trans-Pacific Partnership) that makes it all the more imperative for her to find a way to show voters that a Hillary Clinton presidency wouldn't just be "Barack Obama: The Sequel." Also, the reservations that some Republican voters have expressed about electing a third Bush to the White House can be seen replicated in a Democratic party that isn't unanimously enthusiastic about the prospect of another Clinton.

Goldwater Girl: Clinton's involvement in national politics began with her 1964 volunteer stint on Republican Senator Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign. In 1968, however, Clinton supported Eugene McCarthy's candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination, and in 1972, she worked on George McGovern's doomed White House bid, thereby solidifying the Democratic political identity that characterizes her today.

Credentials: Sanders is one of two Independents in the US Senate, and has been representing Vermont since 2007. Prior to that, Sanders occupied Vermont's sole seat in the House of Representatives for sixteen years, making him the longest-serving Independent in US congressional history.

Supporters: Progressive Democrats who are dissatisfied with Clinton's moderate platform have gravitated toward Sanders, who is especially popular among voters age 29 and younger (i.e., Millennials, a demographic which, if they actually show up to the polls, would constitute the largest voting bloc in the country). Sanders also has a network of volunteers that would put most any grassroots movement to shame, with nearly 200,000 self-organized volunteers campaigning on his behalf all over the country.

Platform: A self-identified "democratic socialist," Sanders' domestic policies include single-payer health care, progressive taxation, higher wages, and enhanced labor rights. He believes that the US is on its way toward oligarchy and warns that capitalism must be made more humane if we hope to preserve our democracy, pointing to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland as countries after which the US should model its own domestic policy. The consistency with which Sanders has held to his beliefs is another central tenet of his campaign, as he highlights that his efforts to raise wages, impose stricter corporate regulations, and reform campaign finance span the entirety of his political career, which dates back to his 1981 election as Mayor of Burlington. Sander's foreign policy positions have remained of secondary to his campaign efforts thus far, and voters have mostly been left to try to deduce a platform based on his congressional voting history (e.g., "no" on both Iraq war votes, "yes" on the war in Afghanistan, and a pledge of support for the Iran nuclear deal).



Bernie Sanders (D)

Challenges: For starters, Sanders is running against the most popular non-incumbent candidate in the history of the Democratic party, and despite his usurping Clinton's lead in both the Iowa and New Hampshire polls, analysts warn against reading too much into these results: Sanders' support base, though enthusiastic, is also narrow, and he has yet to win over two of the Democratic party's key demographics, female voters and black voters. And, while some will point to Barack Obama's 2008, come-from-behind primary victory as evidence of political precedent for a Sanders win, a key difference between the two candidates is the support Obama received from an overwhelming majority of black voters; a voting bloc which, in this race, favors Clinton over Sanders by a factor of nearly five. Which means Sanders' campaign could ultimately prove more similar to those of past "party insurgents" like former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, whose strong anti-establishment campaign in 2003 was not enough to secure the nomination, which ultimately went to current Secretary of State John Kerry. Most recently, Sanders has drawn criticism for his inconsistent record on gun control, having voted in favor of an assault weapons ban and universal background checks, but against the Brady Bill and in favor of allowing firearms on Amtrak trains. Finally, Sanders lacks any semblance of the establishment support that has so far fueled Clinton's campaign, as he has not yet received a single congressional endorsement.

Not Another Nader: Sanders has unequivocally stated that he will not run as an Independent candidate in the general election, should he fail to secure the Democratic nomination. His reluctance to launch a third-party White House bid stems from his concern that it might ultimately facilitate a Republican victory—a scenario all too familiar to former Vice President Al Gore, whose narrow loss in the 2000 presidential election soured many Democratic voters on the very idea of third-party candidates.

Credentials: Biden is currently Vice President of the US, a position he's held since he and President Obama assumed office in 2009. Obama tapped Biden as his running mate in the 2008 presidential election primarily as a way of bolstering the foreign policy credibility of the Democratic ticket, as Biden had several years' experience as the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee under his belt. Prior to his vice presidential appointment, Biden had served as a Delaware senator since 1973 when, at thirty years old, his election made him one of the youngest senators in US history.

Supporters: In the month of August, Biden's poll numbers among Democratic primary voters increased ten percent, giving him the support of 22 percent of the party's primary electorate, and pushing him just ahead of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. The complication, of course, is that Biden is not actually a candidate, and although he launched an exploratory committee last month, there's still a good chance he won't be a candidate any time soon, or at all. And the party's pretty torn on how it feels about that: Biden has broad within-party appeal, and many Democratic voters like the idea of another big-name candidate to undermine Hillary Clinton's perceived status as 2016's "Anointed One." Others, however, worry that a Biden candidacy would only divide Clinton's base, siphoning votes away from her and clearing the way for a Sanders victory. Sanders, although popular among liberal and progressive Democrats, would be markedly less viable in a general election than someone like Biden. Also of note is the Draft Joe Biden Super PAC, launched in March 2015 by some Biden supporters hoping to drum up national support, and compel the reluctant VP to declare his candidacy.

Platform: If Biden were to run, one area in which he could mount an ideological offensive against Clinton would be in the foreign policy arena. As members of Obama's cabinet, Biden and Clinton often disagreed on how and when to use military force, with Biden's reluctance to wield military power—in



Joe Biden (D)

situations from Libya, to Afghanistan, to the bin Laden raid—drawing a stark contrast to Clinton's record as a hawk. Like Clinton, though, Biden did vote in favor of the 2002 Iraq invasion, though he has since been very open about how much he regrets the decision. Part of Biden's campaign would undoubtedly center, too, on his now-infamous candor and authenticity (or his ostensible lack of a conversational filter—six of one, half dozen of the other, really). The Biden Brand has all but acquired a life of its own in recent years, thanks in part to his tendency to go completely off-script and do things like publicly declare his support for same-sex marriage, well before the White House had taken an official stance.

Challenges: Biden's in a bit of "damned if he does, damned if he doesn't" type of situation for 2016: at 72 years old, this would be his last shot at a job to which he has aspired for most of his life, with failed candidacy bids in 1988 and 2008. So, if he didn't run (or if he ran and lost), he would be the first incumbent Democratic vice president since Alben Barkley (Harry Truman's second-in-command) never to become the party's candidate in any subsequent election. (Biden's historical, vice presidential analogs are Lyndon Johnson in '64, Hubert Humphrey in '68, Walter Mondale in '84, and Al Gore in 2000.) But with the amount of establishment support (and major donor dollars) behind Clinton, there's a good chance Biden wouldn't win even if he *did* decide to run. And with the recent and untimely passing of his eldest son Beau, Joe Biden has been very open about his uncertainty of whether or not he's emotionally ready to commit to a White House run.

Leaving on an Amtrak Train: In 1972, shortly after he was elected to the Senate, Biden lost his first wife and infant daughter in an automobile accident. In light of that tragedy, Biden began making the 90-minute commute from Capitol Hill to his home in Wilmington, Delaware every day, in order to spend more time with his two young sons. Biden maintained the practice throughout his Senate career.

Credentials: O'Malley is a two-term Maryland governor, in office from 2007 to 2015. He was Mayor of Baltimore for seven years prior to that, and in 2005 was included on *Business Magazine's* list of the five "new stars" in the Democratic party. Also on the list? President Obama.

Supporters: On paper, O'Malley is nothing short of a Dream Candidate for the Democratic Party. In this particular election cycle, though, with media attention largely focused on other higher-profile candidates (i.e., Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders), O'Malley is struggling to carve out his own voter bloc, scoring a paltry four percent name recognition among potential primary voters.

Platform: As governor of Maryland, O'Malley enacted progressive reforms in multiple arenas: he signed legislation to raise Maryland's minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour by 2018, passed some of the country's toughest gun restrictions, as well as legislation to end capital punishment and legalize same-sex marriage, respectively. A strategic hallmark of O'Malley's governance is his data-based approach to policy decisions, a strategy that was behind many of the policies associated with the 48 percent reduction in overall crime that O'Malley oversaw as Mayor of Baltimore. These past accomplishments will undoubtedly shape O'Malley's national platform, allowing him to outflank Clinton on the left in several areas, but still pose a more establishment-friendly alternative than Sanders, should the wheels fall off the Clinton campaign. Most recently, O'Malley has garnered media attention for his response to the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, urging the US to absorb at least



Martin O'Malley (D)

650,000 of the four million people displaced by Syria's civil war, as well as for his stance on gun control, which is arguably the furthest left-leaning of any of the Democratic candidates.

Challenges: Democratic voters, by and large, have no idea who O'Malley is. O'Malley, however, remains undeterred by this, often citing Democratic hopeful Gary Hart's 1984 primary campaign (for which O'Malley worked as a volunteer) as evidence that slow and steady, even if it doesn't win the race, can at least have an impact. (Hart, who spent months languishing on the outer margins of his party's polls, didn't win the nomination, but did prove a formidable opponent to party favorite Walter Mondale.) Marring O'Malley's political legacy, however, is the April 2015 death of Freddie Gray, an unarmed black man who died while in custody of the Baltimore Police Department. Some of O'Malley's critics have speculated that it was the "tough on crime" policies of O'Malley's mayoral tenure that fostered an environment rife with racial tension and mistrust of law enforcement, both of which were key factors in Gray's death.

Simon Says: In 2004, O'Malley was immortalized in season three of David Simon's HBO drama *The Wire*, providing (at least some of) the real-life inspiration for fictional Baltimore politician Tommy Carcetti. O'Malley, who is highly critical of Simon's dark portrayal of life in Baltimore, is less than flattered by the comparison, and a 2014 article in the *Washington Post* says that "aides and staffers [still] know not to mention it around him."

Credentials: Webb represented Virginia in the Senate from 2007 to 2013. He's also a decorated military veteran, having been awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star Medal, two Bronze Star Medals, and two Purple Hearts for his service in Vietnam.

Supporters: With little name recognition, and even less campaign funding, Webb's support within his party is minimal. To moderate Democrats, though, Webb represents an opportunity to vote for a more conservative candidate without defecting from the party entirely; to the Democratic party, a Webb candidacy might constitute a chance for the party to win over demographics whose support has alluded the party for years: rural, working-class, and low-income white voters, for instance, as well as military veterans, as Webb is the only decorated, active-service veteran in the race.

Platform: More than any other Democratic candidate, Webb is politically amorphous. He started his career political career as a Republican, serving under President Reagan as Secretary of the Navy, and some of his right-ward tendencies on issues like gun control (he's a staunch defender of the Second Amendment) and climate change (he's critical of efforts to enhance greenhouse emissions regulations) certainly seem like holdovers from that era. On the other end of the political spectrum, however, Webb identifies as an economic populist (though he did vote against initiatives to



Jim Webb (D)

raise taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 annually), he opposed the war in Iraq, and his "pet" issue for this campaign has been prison reform and a call to start treating drug addiction as a medical problem, instead of treating it as a criminal concern.

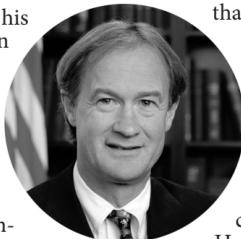
Challenges: Webb's defining personality trait seems to be his low-key, semi-private nature, so in an election cycle where few to none even know who he is to begin with, his tendency to lay low isn't going to do him any favors. Like O'Malley, Webb poses another viable alternative in the case of a Clinton Campaign Machine derailment; unlike O'Malley, Webb would probably fare better than past Democratic candidates in states that haven't gone blue in a general election since the Bill Clinton years, such as Arizona, Georgia, Kentucky, and Louisiana, to name a few. The problem for Webb, however, is that the qualities that make him appealing in those southern states, are the same qualities that are going to make it hard for him to win primary support from a Democratic party that has been inching ever-further left in recent years.

A Man of Many Words: Before getting into politics, Webb worked as a writer and war journalist, even earning an Emmy for his 1983 coverage of US Marines in Beirut for PBS. Webb's 1978 novel, *Fields of Fire*, is widely regarded as the "classic Vietnam War novel."

Credentials: Chafee was appointed to the Senate as a Republican in 1999 after the death of his father, Rhode Island Senator John H. Chafee, left the seat vacant. He was elected to a full term in 2000. In 2010, Chafee ran for Governor of Rhode Island as an Independent and won, though he ended his gubernatorial tenure as a Democrat, registering with the party in May 2013.

Supporters: Chafee doesn't have much in the way of voter support, even among members of his home state, and he barely even registers in many major polls.

Platform: As a senator, Chafee was the only Republican to vote against the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which he often highlights as a proud point of contrast between himself and Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton, who voted in favor of the military campaign. Foreign policy is the central component of Chafee's platform: he's staked out ideological territory to the left of Clinton's, and will aim to challenge her on her positions in



Lincoln Chafee (D)

that arena. He also wants to switch the US to the metric system, so there's that, too.

Challenges: Chafee has minimal name recognition, a two-person staff, and almost no financial support (he raised \$30,000 in donations in his first quarter of campaigning). With an estimated personal net worth of \$50 million, however, he could afford to self-finance. But, millions of dollars or not, he'd still have to overcome a less-than-stellar record as governor on top of everything.

O, Tannenbaum!: In 2011, Chafee found himself embroiled in a not-so-merry controversy when he referred to the trimmed evergreen in the Rhode Island State House as a "holiday tree" instead of a "Christmas tree." To Chafee, this was a small gesture toward being more inclusive of other religions; to the state of Rhode Island, it was an egregious political misstep, the backlash to which garnered national media attention.

Is There a Chamber Trend Toward Obsolescence?

Penny Maynard, IOM
Contributing Writer

Ask ourselves, is obsolescence in our future? The recurring theme at conferences is often “relevancy.”

Since there is no clear definition for a chamber of commerce under the US Chamber, or through state chambers, there is often confusion surrounding the question, “What is a chamber of commerce?” Perhaps chambers are losing relevancy with the current boilerplate paradigm. (I am writing primarily about smaller chambers since there are more small businesses and small communities in the US than major corporations and metropolitan cities.)

Many factors come into play in defining a chamber and its role, but a crucial one is that a chamber of commerce is what its specific community says it is. Chambers in smaller communities tend toward acting as “community boosters” that work to get along with everyone. They specialize in networking and

are often events-driven. These chambers have less of a business advocacy policy, and look more toward networking as the best way to help businesses.

The saying, “People tend to do business with people they know” is a common theme that holds true in smaller communities. Chambers in these communities leave business advocacy to either their state chamber, regional coalitions of chambers of commerce, or economic development organizations.

One possible approach for these smaller communities when it comes to business advocacy is to partner with other chambers and adopt a regional approach on broader, state-wide issues. In addition, let your state chamber do the lobbying for pro-business legislation, since it is probably better equipped with staff and other resources to do this job effectively.

For smaller community chambers to remain relevant, consider operating as fiscally sound, five-day-a-week organizations, with events primarily

funding their operations. There are some good non-dues revenue options out there. I have details on one in particular that is even recession-proof; email me for more information on that.

At the chamber, work behind the scenes from a position of fiscal strength to engage in low-key governmental affairs. Once you have established widespread community support (a process facilitated by your chamber not constantly promoting political positions with which people may not agree), you can make things happen with city officials behind the scenes.

In larger cities (i.e., populations of 100,000 or more), there is a stronger pro-business focus that places less emphasis on personal relationships, and more emphasis on professional ones. These chambers represent businesses quite effectively at various levels of government and commissions, including state, federal, and local.

I often hear recommendations for regional chambers, but there is one such recommendation that I generally do not sup-

port. I was a chamber executive in the past, and headed one of eight organizations under a state chamber. The coalition held, just barely, for a few years. Local chambers began leaving after being swallowed up by the state chamber and losing their individual community identity. The coalition/regional model was used primarily for legislative advocacy, but I believe that smaller communities want and need to maintain their uniqueness, and should, therefore, remain separate entities.

Regionalization can work on a few issues, such as tourism and economic development, but sometimes, smaller, local, chambers are better able to serve their local communities.

A concern that has contributed to businesses leaving chambers of commerce is the growth of associations. Associations often provide similar services and programs, but for one type of business rather than for the many different types that tend to belong to chambers of commerce. The US Chamber has shown that this broader model is not always the most ef-

fective, since businesses tend to drop membership if their issues are not addressed at the national level, or if issues addressed nationally are ones with which they do not agree because they are not good for their specific business or industry. For this reason, associations tend to do better at government advocacy on state and federal legislation.

One reason for questioning the continued relevancy of chambers of commerce is that some seasoned executives (as well as newer executives being taught by them) are pursuing an outmoded business model that is fast becoming obsolete. Chamber executives need to get out of the bubble and away from much of what they were trained to do more than twenty years ago.

Chambers that continue to stress membership are an example of this shift toward updating the organizational model to improve relevance. But this is not necessarily true of all chambers. When I began in the chamber industry, the received wisdom was “75 percent membership, 25 percent events.” I think we have almost flipped these num-

bers in recent years. I’ve had great success with recruiting only 25 percent or so of the businesses in the community to become chamber members. I worked to grow events through sponsorships and increased attendance, leaving business advocacy mostly to our state chamber or regional group.

With nominal dues increases and a tiered dues program, we were able to remain a community booster while growing our tourism-based economy. Additionally, when we did go to our city government to advocate on some local issue, we were listened to and supported because we had not been constantly pushing an aggressive agenda.

After a 22 year career as a chamber executive professional and a graduate of the US Chamber Institute program, Penny now provides, through Chamber 911, consulting services as a transitional executive, financial turnaround specialist, and will evaluate your chamber. To learn more, contact Penny at pdanabeach@gmail.com or by cell phone at 949-370-6520.

The Elephant on the Street: The Solution to Homelessness is Good for Business

Brianna Clegg
Staff Writer

Homelessness presents a multitude of problems to modern society, not the least of which is the immense human suffering it causes. But it also has the potential to negatively impact businesses in areas where the homeless congregate.

Homelessness is a problem that is often pushed aside. Sure, people talk about how much homeless outreach costs taxpayers, but rarely do the potential peripheral effects on business come up in the conversation. Chambers of commerce should always be on the lookout for ways to improve the business environment in their area, and curtailing homelessness could be a highly effective means of doing exactly that.

Image is one of the most important parts of any successful business. Helping the homeless population positively impacts a business’s image in two ways: public perception of business morals improve, as does as the literal, physical appearance of your business and neighborhood.

A recent study lead by Dr. Rob Eyler of Economic Forensics and Analytics looked into the potential side effects of increased homelessness on businesses in the city of Petaluma, California. The study examined what might happen if services provided by the Committee on the Shelterless (COTS), an organization that serves the homeless, were reduced.

Dr. Eyler estimated the potential impact of a one percent reduction in revenue for businesses affected by the reduced COTS services. Based on the premise that the increased presence of homeless individuals would alter foot traffic to the area, Dr. Eyler found the business losses would total as much as \$20.6 million annually, and would contribute to the loss of area jobs.

Depending on your local loitering and vagrancy laws, it can be difficult to manage the homeless in your area using punitive laws. Even if the homeless were forced to simply move to another area, the problem wouldn’t be solved, just shifted.

Given the potential economic impact of a large homeless presence, the best option for

businesses is to encourage programs that help get the homeless off the streets and in a place where they can make positive life choices for themselves. Because homelessness is such a momentous problem, it would also be helpful to focus on a particular subset of the homeless population: the chronically homeless.

People who are chronically homeless (i.e., those who have been homeless for at least a year, or who have experienced homelessness

at least four times in the last three years) consume a disproportionately large amount of the resources available to the homeless population.

Traditional approaches to homelessness require sobriety and employment in order to achieve permanent housing status. But in this case, it is important to consider what comes first: the chicken or the egg? Is it possible that someone might require the stability afforded by consistent housing before they can begin to make posi-

tive choices, and effect positive change in their own lives?

“Sobriety first” systems have proven to be fairly ineffective, not to mention expensive. Policing the homeless and paying for the emergency services they use costs a lot. For that reason, cities across the country have embraced a different way of approaching aid for the homeless: giving them a home, no strings attached. And it is surprisingly affordable.

Salt Lake City, Utah is approaching the end of a ten-year plan to eradicate chronic homelessness, and the city is well on its way to success. In April of this year, the Salt Lake Tribune reported that Salt Lake’s chronic homeless population dropped from 1,932 to 173, and 80 percent of individuals remained in supportive housing over time.

The Housing First program also saved an estimated \$8,000 for every chronically homeless individual, in comparison to the amount spent per person on “sobriety first” programs. The

Housing First solution is not only saving money up front, but it’s also affording the chronically homeless a path to more stable, healthy lives, while simultaneously helping keep the streets of Salt Lake a place where consumers want to be spending their time—and money.

Despite the efficacy of such programs, those wishing to implement them must first overcome two major obstacles: local homelessness policies and funding.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), a conglomerate of nineteen federal agencies, coordinates the federal response to homelessness and is predicated on the belief that the solution to homelessness does not rest in a single federal, state, or local entity.

USICH provides online resources for communities and policymakers regarding the implementation of Housing First programs. One important way businesses and chambers of commerce can contribute to the adoption of such a program would be to support and promote legislation in favor of Housing First programs.

A second way chambers can contribute is to support the non-profit and private sector entities that offer services to the homeless. USICH relies on many non-government organizations that directly meet the needs of the homeless, and it is important that they are supported in order to continue meeting those needs and maintain program efficacy.

Helping the homeless is good for the economy and for individual communities, and what is good for the economy and communities is good for business. If your city’s strategies for helping end homelessness haven’t been working, consider looking to Salt Lake City, and other municipalities like it, as an example of how to effectively address the challenges posed by homelessness.

Businesses and business organizations represent a powerful force in the political world and society as a whole, and when they rally behind worthwhile causes, everyone comes out ahead. Aiding in the creation of programs that positively impact the homeless population could lead to long-term positive effects on business communities, and on our country as a whole.

McDonald’s and the Real Food Movement

Taylor Garritt
Staff Writer

The birth mother of the Big Mac, the Father of Fries, the patron saint of fast food lovers has finally met its match: once hailed as “recession proof,” McDonald’s has experienced a recent decline in profits as a new generation of consumers make it clear that they care about what they put into their bodies.

Let’s face it; the fast food industry has changed dramatically since its initial boom back in the 1950s. Back then, conformity was the driving force behind consumer spending habits, as one’s ability to “keep with the Joneses” (pardon the cliché) was seen as a direct measure of personal financial stability. Consequently, the general population found itself fascinated with assembly-line sameness and, in the case of McDonald’s, the magic surrounding just how fast this new “fast food” was.

Fast forward to today, and this fast food nation is changing its tune. The nation, and the world, as we know it today has begun to lift the veil surrounding the food industry, its operations, and business practices. Along with the prominence of the Internet, where information is right at our fingertips, a new consumer conscientiousness has ignited a demand for transparency that is now shining light on any and every dirty little secret it can find.

With sales and traffic consistently falling, McDonald’s performance numbers suggest

that it is among the biggest victims of the transparency-focused consumer agenda. According to *US News & World Report*, in April of this year, McDonald’s faced its lowest quarterly reading since 2007.

This drop in sales, and the shift in consumer perception of the fast food giant from one of universal love, to one more colored by skepticism, ambiguity, and in some cases disdain, has not been sitting well for the men behind the curtain.

Last May, McDonald’s announced a revitalization campaign to combat the company’s sales woes. The plan—titled “Plan to Win 2.0”—officially went into effect on July 1, 2015. In a video overview of “Plan to Win 2.0” released by the company, McDonald’s CEO Steve Easterbrook said, “I will not shy away from the urgent need to reset this business,” adding that the company needs to find a way to focus on doing fewer things, better. Now in effect, the campaign aims to revamp McDonald’s outdated image and make the company more competitive in a fast food landscape comprised of more socially-aware companies like Chipotle, known for their cutting-edge take on fast food that speaks to our increasingly health-conscious society.

The McDonald’s turnaround plan has three main components: re-franchising 3,500 of its 36,000 global establishments in an effort to cut costs; simplifying the menu in order to streamline service;

and improving their declining reputation among consumers.

It’s that third point, though, that best addresses what is likely at the root of McDon-



McDonald’s Artisan Grilled Chicken Sandwich

ald’s consumer perceptions problems: the quality of their food. In the revitalization plan announcement video, Easterbrook spoke to that very point, saying, “The business cannot ignore what consumers are saying when the message is clear: We’re not on our game.”

But it’s not just about the quality of the menu items; consumers are also put off by some of the company’s food production practices, and its longstanding tradition of trying to obscure the details of these practices from consumers’ view.

On October 13, 2014, with its image steadily losing favor in the eyes of the American consumer, McDonald’s launched a campaign called “Our Food, Your Questions.” This campaign aimed to give consumers what McDonald’s thought they

wanted: transparency. Using behind-the-scenes video footage and statistical data, McDonald’s offered consumers clearer insight into how a Chicken McNugget is made; what a McRib Sandwich is actually made of; and from where their food is

burgers, the response was: “Yes, we used Lean Finely Textured Beef between 2004 and 2011. We do not use this today.” Which is only about half an answer because, well—what does that mean you’re using today?

After facing backlash over some of the production practices revealed by the company’s push for increased transparency, McDonald’s seems to have realized that what American consumers wanted from their most historically beloved fast food chain was never transparency just for transparency’s sake; they weren’t looking for a clearer glimpse of what they had already suspected were unhealthy food production processes. What they wanted was transparency that would foster corporate accountability and force McDonald’s to address the growing disparity between the food consumers were looking for, and the food McDonald’s had been hoping to sell them.

In the US in particular, consumer spending trends show that diners have grown less interested in “fast food,” and more interested in “good food, fast.” This has contributed to the growing success of restaurants like Chipotle, Five Guys, Shake Shack, and Panera—restaurants that don’t offer full table service, but are more conscious of food quality—relying less heavily on frozen or processed ingredients than their traditional fast food counterparts. Consequently, consumers perceive the food at these “fast casual” restaurants as healthier than standard fast food menu fare.

Following Chipotle’s well-received example of remov-

ing artificial ingredients from its menu items, McDonald’s has come out with a “simplified” take on grilled chicken, cutting unrecognizable ingredients to cater to a current population focused on fresh.

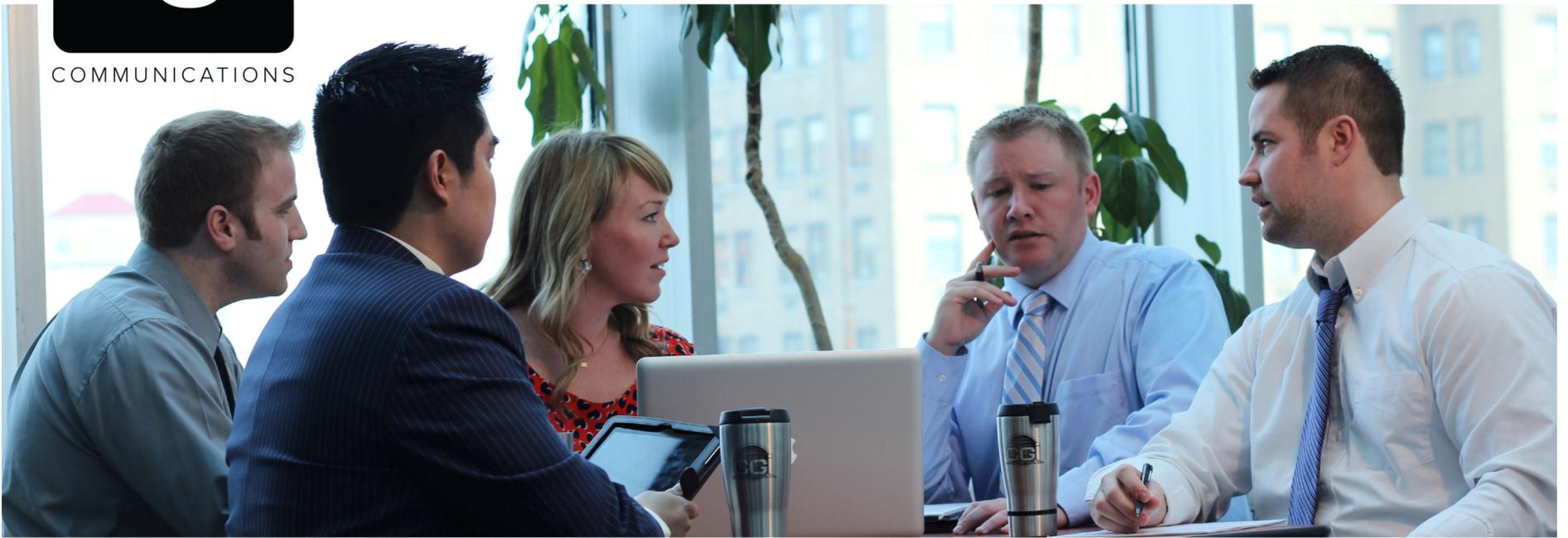
The goal was achieved: create a fast food chicken sandwich made of real ingredients. But the impact was probably less than intended, as consumers were not all that impressed. Maybe it’s a matter of too little, too late; or maybe it’s just that the typical consumer has moved on.

McDonald’s is changing as they try to keep their head above water and navigate territory they have rarely found themselves in: amid a declining interest in traditional fast food. They are doing what they do best, marketing to appeal to the masses. Since the preference of the masses is evolving, McDonald’s must follow suit by using prominent buzzwords such as “artisan,” “organic,” and simply, “real,” in order to stay relevant.

McDonald’s revitalization and shift towards “real” food made with “real” ingredients is an attempt to remain a fast food leader. It’s a small step, but a small step for such a large company is a promising victory for the new consumer.

It’s the perfect example of supply and demand, of the power of voting with your dollar, and of the power of the real food movement.

**HAVE AN IDEA?
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