

20 Reasons Why Chamber Membership Is One of the Best Business Investments Out There



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Have you ever attended a chamber event? If you're not a member, you're missing out. Before you think you don't have the time to attend events, it's important you know chamber life is not just mixers and ribbon cuttings. Chamber membership is one of the best-kept secrets for free or nearly free business resources like webinars, lunch & learns, and written collateral. Plus, a whole lot more. Chamber membership is one of the best business investments you can make for the money and return.

Is Chamber Membership Worth It?

Not if you don't know why you're joining. In this article, you'll learn all the benefits chamber membership can give you professionally and how it is a worthwhile investment in your business. But before you sign up, for maximum benefit, you should be very clear about what you want out of membership.



Why?

Because you want to communicate that to the chamber staff when joining. When they know what you want, they can help get you on the right track. The chamber offers many benefits, and to get what you're looking for, you need to ensure the chamber knows what that is.

Perhaps you're not clear what you want out of chamber membership. That's okay because after reading this list of why membership is a great investment you should have a better understanding of what's important to you.

What Will I Get with Chamber Membership?

It's always best to begin at the beginning. If you're not sure what you need from the chamber, look at a list of member benefits and make a mental note of which of these things are the most important to you/your business:

1. Networking Opportunities: Let's start with the obvious. Chambers offer various networking events, such as mixers, business expos, speed networking, and industry-focused lunches, where businesspeople can connect with other professionals, potential clients, partners, and mentors. Building relationships is one of the best ways to help your business grow.

2. Visibility and Exposure: Membership often comes with a listing in the chamber's directory, both online and in print. This can increase your business's visibility and credibility in the local community. Your chamber may have additional opportunities for your business like being listed on a business map, featured in their visitor's magazine, or being invited to participate in a Wine Walk or other member-exclusive exposure opportunity.

3. Credibility and Trust: Being a chamber member can enhance your business's reputation as the chamber is generally seen as a credible organization that supports businesses. Membership shows your community you care about the area and have made an investment in it. Becoming a chamber member can also help people get to know your business (and show you're connected) if you're new in town.

4. Advocacy and Representation: Chambers represent the interests of local businesses to government bodies and policymakers, giving you a voice in local economic and regulatory matters. Being a member makes you part of something larger and thus amplifies your voice and business needs.

5. Business Education: Chambers organize seminars, workshops, and training sessions to help members stay updated on industry trends, business strategies, and best practices. Members and guests can learn from top-notch thought leaders for just the cost of membership or a token



expense to cover the meal. It's one of the most affordable (and best-kept secrets) in business education.

6. Marketing Opportunities: Chambers offer an array of advertising and sponsorship opportunities, allowing businesses to market themselves to the wider community. They often have large audiences/good traffic, name recognition, and a strong reputation—all helpful when looking where to spend your marketing budget.

7. Access to Resources: Members can access resources such as business development guides, market research, and economic data to help them make informed decisions. (Chambers also give away a lot of free information to the community including blog posts, newsletters, articles, etc.) Some chambers also offer extensive leadership programs for interested members to help them achieve their leadership goals.

8. Discounts and Exclusive Offers: Many chambers negotiate discounts on products and services for their members, ranging from insurance and office supplies to software and event tickets. Some offer exclusive member-to-member discounts as well.

9. Community Involvement: Being part of a chamber provides you with business-directed volunteer opportunities to contribute to community development and philanthropic activities, which can foster a positive public image for your business.

10. Referral Network: Chambers often refer their members to others who are looking for specific products or services, increasing your business's chances of gaining new clients. Check with your chamber as they also might offer referral groups that can be free with membership or a fraction of the cost of a BNI group.

11. Partnerships and Collaborations: Connecting with other businesses through the chamber can lead to partnership opportunities, joint ventures, and collaborations on projects.

12. Business Support: Chambers can provide advice and assistance to businesses, especially startups and small enterprises, on various aspects such as funding, legal matters, and growth strategies. Some offer business incubators, pitch contests, and other opportunities to launch and grow.

13. Government Relations: Chambers can help businesses navigate government regulations, procedures, and other challenges, as well as provide insights into legislative changes that might affect your operations or the business climate, in general.

14. Access to Influential Contacts: Chambers attract a diverse group of professionals, including local leaders, executives, and entrepreneurs, which can open doors to valuable contacts.



15. Brand Building: Active involvement in chamber events and initiatives can help build your brand within the local business community.

16. Market Insights: Chambers have access to economic and demographic data that can help businesses make informed decisions about their target markets.

17. Professional Development: Chambers may host training sessions, workshops, and leadership development offerings to enhance your professional skills. Your chamber may also have opportunities to help you step into a new skill or business. For instance, if you wanted to add the title of professional speaker to your resume and launch a speaking business, you may be able to start with the chamber. By speaking in front of members at a special event, you could build clientele and experience.

18. Local Support Network: Joining a chamber can provide emotional support, because you're part of a community of business owners who face similar challenges. As well-meaning as friends and family are, if they're not involved in business or your industry, they may not understand your challenges and triumphs the way your fellow chamber members will.

19. Access to Business Services: Some chambers offer their members business services such as mentorship, business incubation, space rentals, marketing, and consulting.

20. Membership Perks: While the chamber helps all businesses in the community, many chambers provide special perks to members like access to exclusive events, VIP receptions, ribbon cuttings/celebrations, and members-only resources.

Ultimately, the decision to join a chamber of commerce depends on your business's specific needs, goals, and offerings of the local chamber. Knowing what your biggest challenge is in business can help you see just how impactful a chamber membership investment can be to your business.

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