

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers for the Volunteer Organization

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What Is A Chamber of Commerce? How Does It Operate?

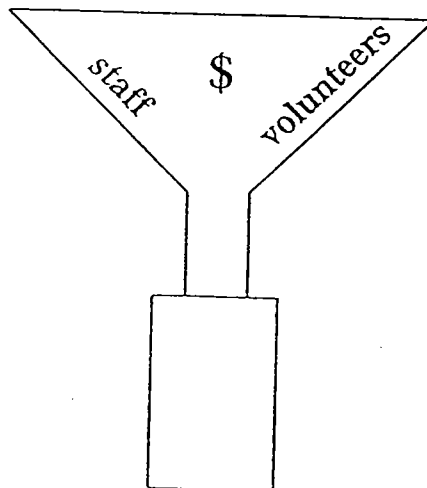
History of the Chamber Movement

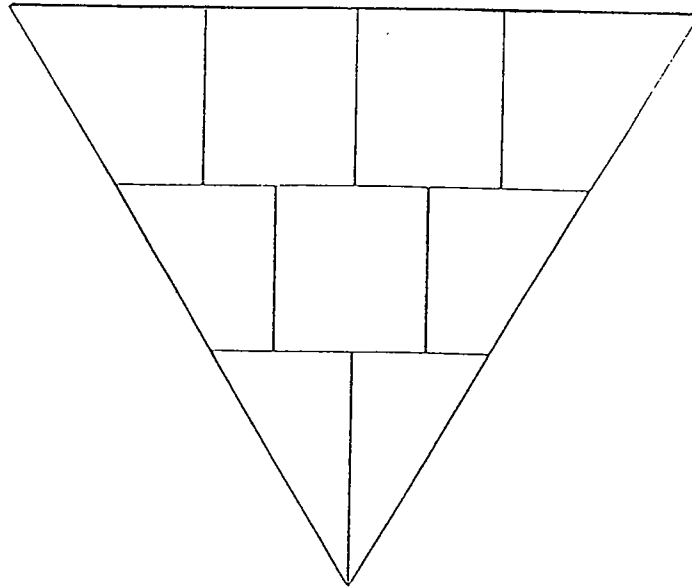
The Chamber "Niche" in Your Community

Applying Criteria to Chamber Performance (Understanding the Pyramid)

There are three major resources available to all volunteer organizations, and it is through their abundance or scarceness that the ability of the organization to carry on projects is determined.

The three resources by which the organization succeeds or fails are: volunteers, dollars, and staff. These are the resources the organization can spend in accomplishing its objectives. Since they are all in short supply, the leadership of your organization needs to make sure that none of the resources are wasted.





This inverted pyramid represents the three levels of projects that a volunteer organization takes on during its year of activities. The size of the pyramid and, therefore the number of blocks, will vary. Each block represents a project.

The most important level, Level One, includes the most number of blocks and therefore indicates that the largest amount of the organization's resources is spent at this level. The level in the middle, Level Two, represents projects on which less emphasis is placed, but have importance to the organization nevertheless. Level Three projects, the fewest in number, are still important but should consume even less time for the organization.

It is also significant that the pyramid is inverted. Early humanity amazed the world in constructing these giant monoliths. Even today, exactly how it was done is shrouded in mystery. I now place before you, the key staff member of a volunteer organization, a much greater challenge: Keeping an inverted pyramid on point, not shifting to either side, and most certainly not taking the easier route of sitting with the largest part of the pyramid as the base.

Taking the Lead-Speaking Out.

Checklist for Chambers

Why Chamber Execs & Staffs Stay in the Profession (Cashing the Psychological Paycheck)

The psychological paycheck is the sense of accomplishment that the individual receives from his or her work, the knowledge that the work of the organization is "making a difference" in their community or in someone's life.

Basic Operating Principles

- 1. Use “our” rather than “my” to describe the organization.**
- 2. If your leadership “writes” programs, they will “underwrite” them.**
- 3. Programs should create budgets, not the other way around.**
- 4. A budget is a “road map”, not a “blank checkbook”.**
- 5. Always give “bad news” early ... and “good news” late.**

6. **Someone, somewhere, has done what you are thinking about doing.**
7. **Never pick the “right” person for the “wrong” job in your organization.**
8. **Know more about your organization than anyone else in town.**
9. **Build an “inclusive” organization rather than an “exclusive” one.**
10. **Habitually communicate ... and usually in writing.**

- 11. Allow way too much lead time for planning.**

- 12. Praise others in public, criticize them alone and in private.**

- 13. Don't ever call meetings without a need (goals) and a plan (agenda).**

- 14. Help people succeed by showing them what the goal is.**

- 15. Give the credit to others, accept the blame yourself.**

- 16. Be a community model of openness, honesty and fair play.**

- 17. Remember that the organization is a business; run it that way.**

- 18. Build an attitude of "can do" rather than "we can't".**

- 19. If it's not in the plan, don't do it ... or change the plan.**

- 20. If the horse is dead ... dismount!**

THE PROGRAM OF WORK

Generally, in not-for-profit organizations, the program is a linear "process":

MISSION

GOALS

OBJECTIVES

PROGRAMS, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

BUDGET

LEADERSHIP

FINAL DEVELOPMENT

PUBLICATION

IMPLEMENTATION

ADJUSTMENT AND FINE TUNING

EVALUATION

DOCUMENTATION

Generally, good programs of work/plans of action require "critical input" from a variety of your "publics":

1. Key Leadership
2. The Board of Directors
3. The Organization's Membership
4. The Community/Public
5. "Significant" Other Groups

WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

"Who Does What Around Here...?"

POLICY:

1. The BOARD sets it.
2. The STAFF carries it out.
3. The MEMBERSHIP endorses it.

PROGRAMS:

1. The MEMBERSHIP recommends them.
2. The STAFF clarifies them.
3. The BOARD approves them.

BUDGETS:

1. The STAFF requests them.
2. The BOARD approves them.
3. The MEMBERSHIP meets them.

RESOURCES:

1. The STAFF requests them.
2. The BOARD solicits them.
3. The MEMBERSHIP invests them.

LEADERSHIP:

1. The BOARD contributes it.
2. The MEMBERSHIP contributes it.
3. The STAFF contributes it.

COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The heart of a good organization is a strong task force and a committee structure, whose mission is a part of the Chamber's Program of Action and spelled out in writing in detail. Everyone in the group will then know exactly what is expected of them.

If a project is of an on-going nature that will carry over or be repeated in future years, then the terminology committee is used. Conversely, if the assignment is an accomplishment of a specific task that will be handled in a short period of time, then the terminology task force is used. Members of a task force will be dismissed and available for other service upon completion of the assignment.

All task force and committee chairpersons are appointed by the Division Vice President, with the concurrence of the President. Together with the Executive Vice President, the Division Vice Presidents and Senior Staff outline and organize the assigned activities.

The chairpersons are responsible for seeing that the activities assigned to their respective groups are carried out on time. They must evaluate the progress of both the group as a whole, as well as, its individual members.

They must be willing to give their time and energy in guiding and stimulating the group to produce. Chairpersons are directly accountable to the Division Vice President; however, the Executive Vice President serves to coordinate the efforts of all volunteers.

Although Vice Presidents appoint the chairperson, committee volunteers come from the general membership. Members designate their committee preference then serve on the committee of their choice.

Task force/committee members are responsible for carrying out the assigned projects as set up in the Program of Action and approved by the Board of Directors. Each member is responsible for his/her phase of the work as outlined by the chairperson.

No committee or task force or other Action Group of the Chamber shall represent the Chamber in advocacy of or opposition to any project without the specific consent of the Board of Directors.

While the Board of Directors is the policy making body of the Chamber of Commerce, recommendations for new policies emanate from the committee and task force level. For this reason, the task force/committee level, comprised of volunteer workers, is one of the most important segments of the Chamber's operations.

GUIDELINES FOR TASK FORCE/COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson of a Committee of the Chamber of Commerce is not a task to be taken lightly. A Chairperson is an obligation to the members of the Committee, the members and directors of the Chamber of Commerce, and the community itself. The membership and the community will look to you for leadership and performance in the role you have accepted.

Being a Committee Chairperson is an opportunity to showcase your talents and your concern for the community. It's an opportunity to lead and perform worthwhile civic endeavors.

Committee Chairpersons must remember that all the members of their Committee are volunteers. These are busy, willing people who have volunteered to give their time and their talent toward a worthwhile community project. They expect to work toward and achieve worthwhile goals. These members are willing to give their time if they receive personal satisfaction from the work of the Committee and do not feel that their time is wasted.

The busiest people in the community make the best workers. These are people who are achievers and who have the drive and desire to make some worthwhile contribution to their community as well. To these people, time is precious and they schedule and use it accordingly. They will be very intolerant of meetings that consistently start late, that turn into wide ranging discussion sessions, and that do not end on time. These Committee members will be lost at an early date unless their time and schedules are respected.

Respect is a key word for an effective Committee Chairperson. The Committee Chairperson who is respectful of the members' time, feelings, aspirations and ideas will be very successful. He/she will have good attendance at meetings and will not find it difficult to find workers from within membership

Unfortunately, most of us have been trained and have practiced the art of working with employees, not volunteers. As employers, many of us do things out of habit that are extremely detrimental to motivating volunteer workers. Volunteer workers will be inspired and will be motivated to work only through real qualities of leadership. Tactics that work well with employees in the office may not work at all with volunteer members of the Chamber of Commerce. The thoughtful Committee Chairperson would be wise to mentally review some basic rules of leadership before meeting with his/her committee.

The Chamber of Commerce operates on the premise that Committees should strive to fund their projects through the revenues of the project itself. In other words, with but few exceptions, there is no money budgeted from within the Chamber's general revenues to fund Committee work. The Committee should develop funds for special projects by obtaining sponsors, selling advertising or whatever action is appropriate for that special project. Committees should get projects approved in advance by the Board of Directors and will be held accountable for ensuring that their projects at least break even. The Executive Vice President will be glad to offer assistance and counsel to any Committee Chairperson on this subject.

The wise Committee Chairperson will ensure that all conceived projects are carefully planned, tightly controlled and well executed. Since both revenues and expenditures can vary widely from those anticipated, Committees should plan for at least a 10% reserve. There is nothing wrong with a Committee actually planning to produce revenue for the Chamber general fund budget.

Committee Chairpersons or members will not enter into purchase agreements or expend funds in the name of the Chamber of Commerce without advance written approval of the Executive Vice President or President of the Chamber of Commerce. Purchase orders must be obtained from the Chamber office for authorization prior to any purchase. The Chamber of Commerce will not recognize, pay or honor any agreement for purchase not so cleared in advance.

Committee Chairpersons will find they receive the best support from the staff of the Chamber when adequate time is allowed to perform the requested tasks. The Chamber staff schedules its workload several days in advance. With approximately 30 committees it is very difficult for the staff to be effective with last-minute requests.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Unplanned meetings begin nowhere and end nowhere. Committee meetings will be just as good as the Chairperson makes them and will be no better than his/her planning. The Chairperson should always remember that the success of any meeting largely depends upon his/her ability to preside and guide the meeting to a definite conclusion.

Reasons for calling a meeting

1. To receive reports from participants.
2. To reach a group judgement as the basis for a decision.
3. To discover, analyze, or solve a problem.
4. To gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision.
5. To achieve a training objective.
6. To reconcile conflicting views.
7. To provide essential information for work guidance or for the relief of tensions.
8. To assure equal understanding by all present.
9. To obtain immediate reactions when a speedy response to a problem is important.
10. To have an excuse for taking up a matter which has gotten stalled.

Don't bite off more than you or your Committee can chew. In fact, don't do anything that you are not willing to carry through to its completion by yourself. To try to be all things to all people and to solve the problems in the world is folly. A wise Committee Chairperson is guided not only by enlightened selection but also by great restraint.

List three things you would like to accomplish. Pick the one that is of highest priority. Start and complete that one alone before going on to the next objective. One job well done is far better than many unfinished.

Conducting Meetings:

Anyone who works with organizations has been exposed to painfully long meetings, rigidly chaired, with no direction, and banal speeches. A Committee Chairperson can avoid these pitfalls by developing an agenda, reading the necessary materials in advance, and mentally exploring various positions. The more complicated the subject, the more important it is for the Chairperson to give directions. Every Chairperson should strive for the three "F's": Firm, Fair, and Fast.

Never interrupt or demean a member while speaking. Once a member is recognized, listen to him attentively, and patiently. To expedite a meeting, develop the technique of sensing when adequate debate has transpired. At such times, you may ask, "are you ready to vote?". You may even ask for a show of hands of those who are ready to vote. Don't be afraid to exercise the authority of the Chair. A Committee Chairperson should strive for smooth, crisp sessions. That will be accomplished by thorough preparation, presenting proposals, and recommendations on every important issue, minimizing the tendency toward prolixity in debate, and sensing when the "house" is ready to vote.

CHECKLIST FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

1. Have you allotted time to give adequate notice to committee members for the meeting?
2. Have you checked with the Chamber of Commerce office to avoid conflicts in scheduling?
3. What is the purpose of the meeting?

(You should be able to write this in one sentence. The purpose of the meeting should be given to the members along with the notice. Meetings scheduled without a purpose will not be well attended.)
4. As Chairperson, have you done your homework to accomplish this desired purpose?
5. Have you gotten the information you need?
6. Have you developed a plan for conducting the meeting?

(The discussions should be kept on target in order to accomplish the objectives within the time allotted.)
7. How long will the meeting last?

(This should be communicated to the members with the announcement and the meeting should end on time. This will encourage good attendance. The purpose of meetings vary, but few properly planned and conducted meeting can justify a length in excess of 45 minutes.)
8. Will your schedule permit you to show up and start the meeting promptly on time?

(Repeated failures to start meetings on time will result in poor attendance and tardiness of other members.)
9. As Chairperson, are you sure you can attend the meeting?

(Unless there is a Committee Vice Chairperson who is advised in advance to chair the meeting, no Committee Chairperson should ever call a meeting they cannot attend.)
10. After this meeting, what will be the next step? Will this require another meeting?

(The Chairperson should have the likely alternatives in mind at least one meeting in advance.)

11. When will this next meeting be held?

(Adequate time should be allowed for committee members to accomplish the assigned work prior to calling the next meeting.)

12. Some Committees and task forces have vice chairpersons assigned--others do not. Chairpersons should select a vice chairperson from within the committee or recruit one with whom they would like to work.
13. Chairpersons should expect to run and be in full charge of their committees. They will refer to the written objectives of their committees in the Program of Action to determine assigned goals. Once a task force has completed its assigned goals, its duties are over and the task force will sunset. Task forces will limit themselves to the objectives assigned and will not invent new projects to extend the life of that group. Any questions about a committee or task force objectives should be directed to the Executive Vice President or the Division Vice President.
14. Committee and task force chairpersons will be responsible for scheduling and arranging the place and times for their committee meetings; however, the Chamber office should be advised as soon as possible in order to get the meeting on the Chamber calendar.
15. The Chamber staff will be glad to mail notices to committee members for meetings. Please set meetings up sufficiently in advance so that such mailings can be worked into the staff's schedule. Please do not expect staff to make last minute calls to committee members to make up for late meeting notices. We have far too many committees and far too few staff to assume this responsibility.
16. Chairpersons are encouraged to call upon the Executive Vice President or the Division Vice President whenever they need assistance. Unfortunately, the demands upon the time of the EVP and the Division Vice President are such that they cannot attend every committee meeting. Staff attendance at committee meetings will be on an "as needed" basis.
17. Chairpersons are expected to keep the minutes of their own meetings on the committee report forms provided. The report forms should be completed promptly after each meeting and a copy sent to the Executive Vice President at the Chamber office. He will insure it is distributed to the Division Vice President and the President. These committee report forms will be the primary method for communicating committee happenings to the Division and the Chamber officers.

Questions to be Answered After the Meeting

1. Did you complete a Committee Report Sheet?
2. Did your meeting accomplish the purpose for which it was called?
3. If not, why?
4. Did it start and end on time?
5. Was it well attended?

Attendance at meetings is a direct reflection upon the planning, execution and leadership of the Chairperson. Thoughtful, dependable Chairpersons get good attendance.

COMMITTEE REPORT

(This form should be completed immediately following the meeting and returned to the Chamber office for duplication and timely distribution.)

NAME OF COMMITTEE: _____

DATE OF MEETING _____ TIME: _____

ATTENDEES: _____

ABSENT: _____

PURPOSE OF MEETING: _____

MEETING RESULTS: _____

DATE, TIME, PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: _____

PURPOSE OF NEXT MEETING: _____

HAS COMMITTEE FINISHED ITS WORK: YES _____ NO _____

This report will be distributed to:

- Members of the Committee
- Division Vice President
- President and Executive Vice President

" S.M.A.R.T. " GOAL FORMATTING

Setting goals that are "*SMART*" goes a long way to insure that they will be understood, accepted and accomplished. A goal is "*SMART*" if it is:

Strategic

Measurable

Assignable

Realistic

Time-Specific

Thirteen Unlucky "DANGER" Quotes For Non-Profit Executives

1. "I'm very pleased with *my* organization and *my* programs."
2. "It's really easier for *me* to do this myself."
3. "I've finally gotten all the changes made that need to be made."
- ~~4. "I'm the leader of this organization.... that's why they hired *me!*"~~
5. "We need to make this organization more exclusive, too many cooks will spoil the stew !"
6. "What we accomplish is really all that matters. My motto is, '*Whatever it takes to get the job done!*'"
7. "We need to focus our financial resources on fewer sources.... it's easier to deal with and more predictable."
8. "We have always done it that way !"
9. "We tried that once..... and it didn't work."
10. "I like to keep the same volunteer leaders.... it's easier than all the effort and time that it takes to train new ones."
11. "Usually, *I* have to remind my leadership that we just don't have the time or the resources to do that."
12. "We have a real problem with attendance at our board and committee meetings. Our people just hate meetings."
13. "I wish we had more time for planning..... but there are always more important things that need to be done."

(If you've used three or more of these statements in the last month or two.... you may want to get your resume out and start polishing it up !)