

CHAMBER BENEFITS

- Referrals
- Legislative input
- Networking opportunities
- Consumers are 63% more likely to buy from chamber members
- 57% of consumers are more likely to believe credibility of chamber members
- Opportunity to be an engaged citizen
- Business advocacy on local and state levels
- Reciprocal business
- Volunteerism to promote activities
- Leadership development
- Chamber unifies the spirit of a community
- Chamber promotes the community bringing people and revenue to businesses
- Chamber is the gauge of a city's prosperity
- No individual business can prosper without collaboration of other diverse businesses; the chamber pools efforts for greater results.
- Chamber office is information central
- Additional website presence
- Monday Memo keeps members updated
- Educational seminars
- Membership list and information
- Connection of resources
- Chamber staff available to help with research/information gathering
- Opportunity to benefit the community as a whole

The Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber of Commerce

(Study Overview by the Shapiro Group)

Advocates of chambers of commerce have long believed that when a company is active in its local chamber, it is doing the right thing not only for the community but also for its own success as well. While there is plenty of evidence to show the impact of chambers of commerce on their communities, it is much harder to find data that quantify the impact of belonging to a chamber. This study, commissioned by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives with support from Small Business Network, Inc. is designed to do just that: determine the real value to companies in terms of consumer outcomes of joining and being active in their local chamber of commerce. Do consumers really support businesses because they are chamber members?

Data for the study comes from a scientific web-based survey of 2,000 adults nationwide.¹ What makes the study unlike most, however, is that almost every question on it is part of one of several embedded experiments. This means that respondents were randomly assigned to different groups at several points during the survey. Each group reads something slightly different—like a description of a company that changes only a little for each group—but then everyone is asked the same questions thereafter, regardless of which company description they have just read. Therefore, when there are statistically significant differences in how different groups answered the same questions, we know exactly why it happened.

This approach yields powerful results because it bypasses the subjectivity of most opinion polls. A sampling of some of these results proves this to be the case.

- Most consumers (59%) think that being active in the local chamber of commerce is an effective business strategy overall. It is 29% more effective, however, for communicating to consumers that a company uses good business practices and 26% more effective for communicating that a business is reputable.
- If a company shows that it is highly involved in its local chamber (e.g. sits on the chamber board), consumers are 12% more likely to think that its products stack up better against its competition.
- When a consumer thinks that a company's products stack up better against the competition because the company is highly involved in its local chamber of commerce, it is because he or she infers that the company is trustworthy, involved in the community, and is an industry leader.
- When consumers know that a restaurant franchise is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 40% more likely to eat at the franchise in the next few months.
- When consumers know that an insurance company is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 43% more likely to consider buying insurance from it.
- When consumers know that a small business is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 44% more likely to think favorably of it and 63% more likely to purchase goods or services from the company in the future.

A copy of the complete report is available at the chamber office and will be used by the Membership Committee in its recruiting efforts.

¹Unlike for probability samples common in telephone and mail surveys, it is not possible to compute a margin of sampling error for web-based surveys that rely on panels of survey respondents. Nevertheless, the

respondents to this web-based survey are demographically and geographically representative of the adult U.S. population.