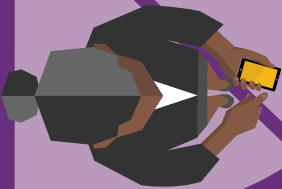
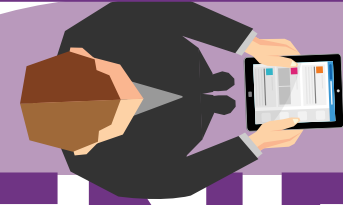


Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS TRENDS

2015 Survey Highlights



chambermaster

membership, marketing & website solutions



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Executive Summary

In the fall of 2014, ChamberMaster surveyed chamber of commerce executives from across the United States to determine **business trends & projections for 2015**. The hundreds of respondents represented a variety of chambers, from small, rural groups to large, urban organizations.

The survey asked 14 questions that covered chamber operations, collaboration with other chambers, member management, and plans for 2015.

Summary of Key Findings



Member Engagement

Member engagement is critical in order for a chamber to thrive. When member engagement rises, volunteerism increases, membership grows, and as a result, dues can increase to fully fund operations.



Data Management

Only 20% of chambers use an ultra-efficient all-in-one tool to manage member data.



Business Impact Projections

The biggest business impacts projected for 2015 include the way the internet and mobile devices affect small business operations, an economic recovery with less job growth, and increased government effects on the local economy.



Initiative Management

Chambers manage many initiatives, from a traditional chamber of commerce to leadership groups, tourism center, economic development, etc.



Advertising Income

Only 1/3 of chambers earn revenue through website ads.



2015 Investment Plans

Despite missing opportunities for increased revenue, member engagement, efficiency, and effectiveness, only 15% of chambers are considering purchasing a member management solution in 2015.

The Effects of Rising Member Engagement

When Member Engagement Rises:

The survey asked numerous questions that tie into member engagement, including challenges expected in 2015, trends that affect members and the chamber, and time spent recruiting new members and retaining existing members.

The responses indicated that as members become more engaged in the chamber, they naturally become more involved, often taking on volunteer roles. As their volunteer involvement grows, evangelism naturally occurs, which leads to an increase in membership. As membership grows, the value of the organization increases and gradual dues increases are not only embraced, but also expected. As dues increases go into effect, the chamber can operate more strategically, making investments where needed to support the growing organization.

Survey respondents indicated levels of engagement are challenged by several factors. About a third of respondents stated that increased competition from other groups and clubs is garnering the attention of chamber members. About 22% of respondents said they neither agree nor disagree on that point, and 43% of respondents stated that members' involvement in other groups does not affect their chamber membership.

The group that is identified as being the biggest challenge in terms of member engagement is that of younger business owners. About 2/3 of survey respondents said that younger business people are not as engaged in their chamber as older members. As the demographic shift is occurring and the younger members are less engaged, 63% of survey respondents stated that volunteerism is declining.



The Effects of Rising Member Engagement

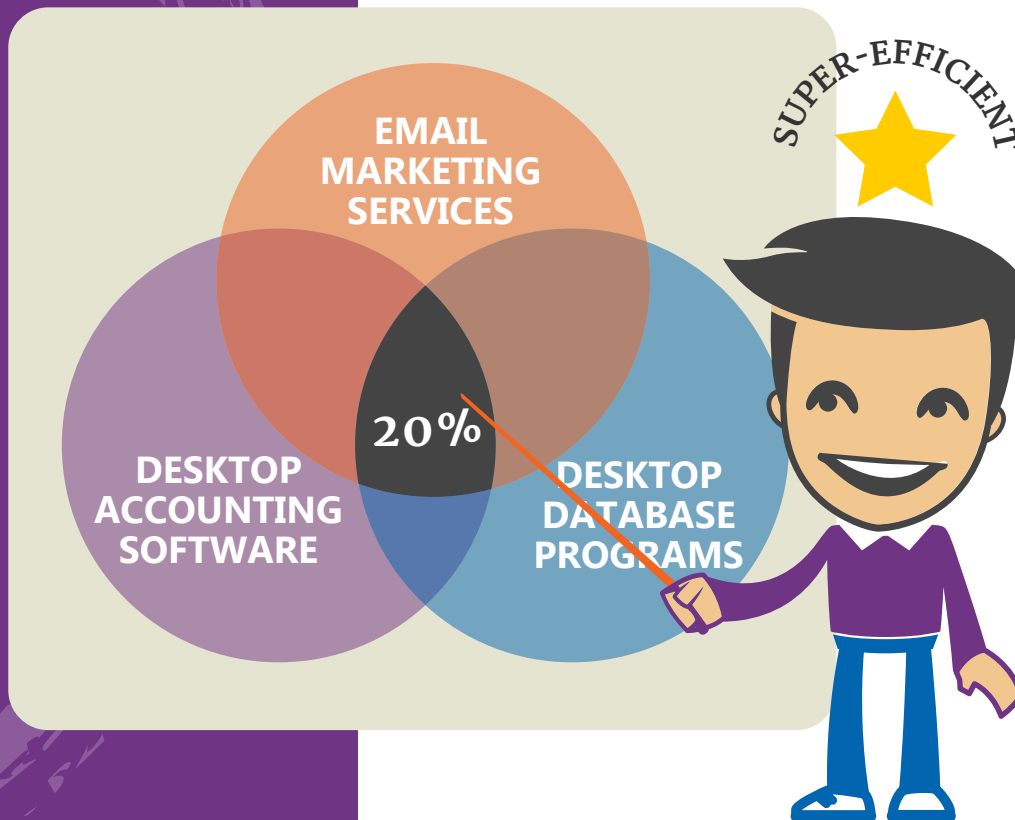
Continued

Survey respondents shared a range of time invested in retaining existing members. Fifteen percent said they spend less than 10% of their time in retaining membership. Another 38% said they spend between 11 and 30% of their time in retaining members. And another 39% invest between 31 and 50% of their time in retaining members.

When it comes to time spent recruiting new members, chamber respondents indicated they spend about the same amount of time on recruiting new members as they do on retaining existing members. Fifteen percent spend less than 10% of their time recruiting. Like the response about time spent retaining existing members, 38% spend between 11 and 30% of their time in recruiting new members and about 40% spend between 31 and 50% of their time recruiting.

Member Data Management Trends

Chamber members were asked what member management tools they use. Only 20% of respondents use an efficient, all-in-one data management tool such as ChamberMaster. The other 80% of respondents use only certain features from multiple programs to manage their member data, including a blend of the following:



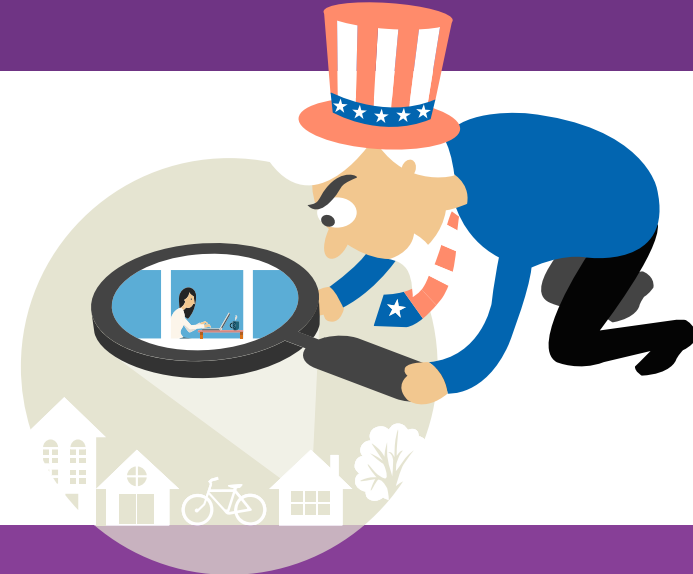
- E-mail marketing services, such as Constant Contact
- Desktop accounting software, such as QuickBooks
- Desktop database programs, such as Excel/Access



Chambers surveyed were asked which **macro trends** they think will affect them or their members in the next year. They indicated that the biggest trends that will affect them are an expected change in how businesses operate using internet and mobile devices and an economic recovery without a correlating robust job growth.



Survey respondents also stated that 78% of them expect that an aging employee base will not have an effect on business. They also indicated that only 12% of respondents expect demographic shifts with increasing minority populations to affect them.



About 27% stated that they expect government to become more involved in the local economy through healthcare, local regulations, etc., while about half said this might affect them and only 19% think government will not increase its involvement locally.



Scope of Initiatives Management

About $\frac{3}{4}$ of survey respondents stated that their chamber manages other groups, with 44% managing a tourism center or visitor bureau and 39% managing a leadership group, in addition to the chamber of commerce. Other groups they also manage include an economic development center, alumni group and other associations.



Managing & Serving Members

Logistically, most chambers have a significant amount of data to manage and members to serve.



Leadership Groups



Economic Development



Tourism Center



Other Associations



Alumni Groups

Generation of Non-dues Revenue

One third of survey respondents earn revenue through ads on their chamber website. Only 4% earn \$20,000 or more and only 2% earn between \$11,000 and \$20,000. Ten percent of respondents earn between \$6,000 and \$10,000 and another 15% are capturing between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in online ad income.

Thirteen percent of chamber respondents said they do not currently sell ads online, but are thinking about it. Another 12% said they do not plan to sell any ads and 43% said they currently make less than \$1,000 in online ad revenue.



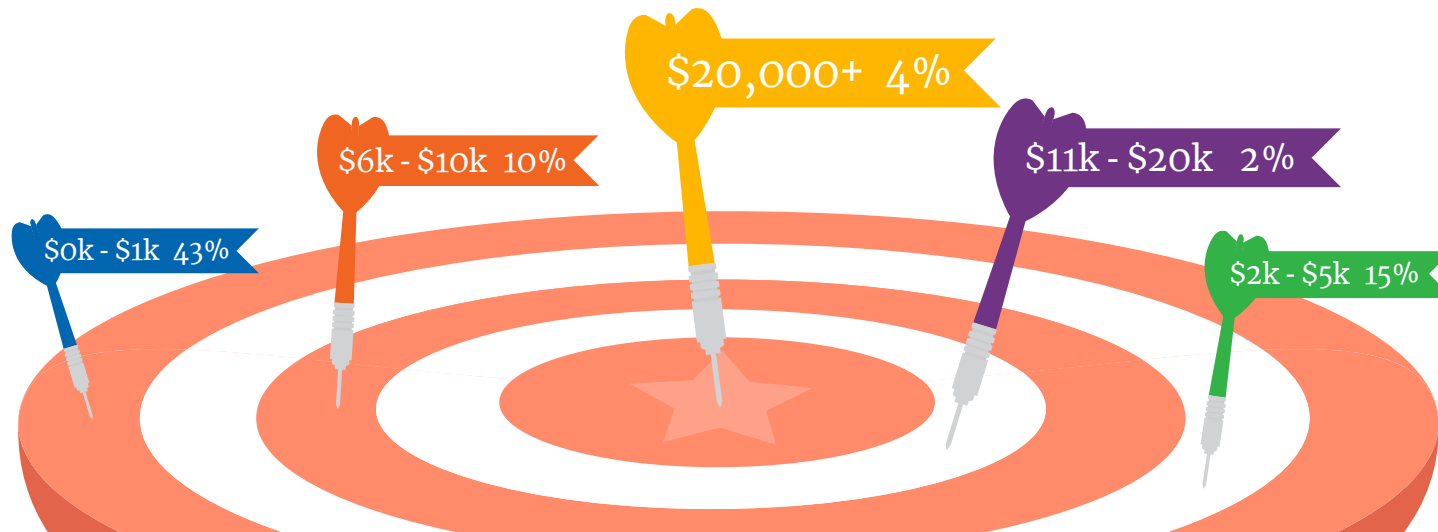
13% Do not currently sell ads online, but thinking about it.



12% Do not plan to sell any ads.



43% Currently make less than \$1,000 in online ad revenue.



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Plans for Solution Purchases in 2015

Despite missing opportunities for increased revenue, member engagement, efficiency and effectiveness, a small percentage of chambers are still not considering the purchase of a member management solution in 2015. A large percentage of these respondents indicated that they do not have funding in place for this type of investment.

58% of respondents indicated that they use smart phones or tablets to conduct chamber business. Also interesting to note is that 37% of chambers have not redesigned their website for more than three years.

Another 84% of respondents indicated that they would like to connect more easily with other chambers to collaborate.



Conclusion

About ChamberMaster

ChamberMaster Member Management Software is powerful, easy-to-use, and designed to manage all of the day-to-day operations of member-based organizations. Thousands of people trust ChamberMaster to manage their most important information, succeed with non-dues revenue generation and help promote and grow the communities they serve. See for yourself how the feature-rich ChamberMaster member management system can benefit your chamber.

Contact us today for a personalized product demo »

Key Focus Area - Member Engagement

The key focus area for chambers in 2015 needs to be member engagement, with special attention given to the engagement level of younger members.

→ Member Engagement

Increased member engagement will lead to **membership growth**, which in turn will allow the organization to increase dues and more fully fund operations.

As the chamber grows, it will be able to operate more effectively and efficiently by using tools available within the industry, including an all-in-one-data management system and the generation of more website advertising revenue. The more successful the chamber becomes, the more members will value it and be willing to invest themselves in the group. All it will take is the right focus on increased engagement.

Download a free copy of our Member Management Software Buyer's Guide today »

It's got everything you need to make an informed decision, including what criteria to look for and all the questions you need to ask.

For more information, visit **ChamberMaster.com »**