ChamberMaster surveyed nearly 500 chamber professionals across the U.S. and Canada. Topics included everything from health insurance coverage, to the Top 10 challenges holding them back, to what they wished their board knew. The results showed a number of trends impacting today’s chambers.

**Approximate Annual Operating Budget:**
- $250K & UNDER: 52%
- $250K - 500K: 19%
- $500K - 1M: 12%
- $1M - 3M: 14%
- $3M - 5M: 2%
- $5M+: 7%
- $5M+: 2%

**Number of Members:** (Predicted Member Count on 1/1/18)
- Under 100: 8%
- 101-300: 28%
- 301-600: 21%
- 601-1200: 9%
- 1201-2000: 1%
- 2001+: 1%
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

OVERALL MEMBERSHIP GROWTH:

- 3% Unsure
- 13% Decrease
- 36% Unchanged
- 48% Increase

NEW MEMBERSHIP:

- 1% Unsure
- 11% Decrease
- 30% Unchanged
- 58% Increase

RENWAL MEMBERSHIP:

- 4% Unsure
- 21% Decrease
- 49% Unchanged
- 26% Increase

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH LAST 5 YEARS:

- 7% Unsure
- 19% Decrease
- 23% Unchanged
- 52% Increase

49% of chambers report a decrease or no change in membership size in the past year.

88% of chambers have maintained or seen an increase in new memberships in the past year.
HOLDING CHAMBERS BACK:

We asked, "What's the #1 thing holding your chamber back?"

Top 10 Challenges:

1. Insufficient funding
2. Not enough staff
3. Member participation/engagement
4. Board of directors complacency/resistance to change (tie)
5. Shortage of time
6. Effectively communicating value
7. Community politics
8. Lack of volunteers
9. Outdated technology
10. Decrease in local businesses

What respondents said:

"Not enough staff to grow membership, not enough membership to add staff."

"Changing the culture of how the chamber is perceived."

"I am running out of businesses to ask to join the chamber."

"Apathy."

"Too much to do with too few people."

"Complacency and old school thinking."

"Lack of vision and a strategic plan."

"Board members not stepping up to the plate to do their jobs."
MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE

MEMBERSHIP MODEL:

- Traditional Dues Structure: 47%
- Tiered Dues Structure: 46%
- Hybrid Dues Structure: 4%
- Other: 3%

There was only a 1% difference between small chambers (600 or fewer members) vs. large chambers (601+ members) regarding dues structure.

PLANNING TO CHANGE MEMBERSHIP MODEL:

- No: 56%
- Considering: 22%
- Yes: 15%
- Unsure: 8%
CHAMBER OPERATIONS

MILLENNIAL MEMBERS:

(MEMBERS BORN 1983-2000)

32%

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS:

PRINTED MATERIALS

20%

NON-PRINTED MATERIALS

80%

(email, text messaging, etc.)

Respondents indicated that 80% of their chambers' communications are sent digitally.

CHAMBER EVENT ATTENDANCE:

LAST 12 MONTHS

5% OTHER/UNSURE

12% DECREASE

42% INCREASE

42% BASICALLY UNCHANGED

MEMBER RENEWAL SCHEDULE:

92% of chambers with 601+ members renew on rolling basis.

MEMBERS RENEW ON A ROLLING BASIS

67%

MEMBERS ALL RENEW ON ONE FIXED DATE

29%

OTHER/UNSURE

4%
We asked respondents “What do your members say is the reason they don’t renew?” and “Why do you think members don’t renew?” The biggest difference of opinion was in Lack of Engagement/Interest.

**Lack of Value / Little to No Return on Investment:**
- According to Members: 23%
- According to Chamber Staff: 18%

**Lack of Engagement/Interest:**
- According to Members: 5%
- According to Chamber Staff: 31%

**Never Had Time to Participate:**
- According to Members: 18%
- According to Chamber Staff: 30%

**Budget Cuts:**
- According to Members: 7%
- According to Chamber Staff: 6%

**Don’t Use/Like/Need Benefits:**
- According to Members: 8%
- According to Chamber Staff: 9%

**Company Closed:**
- According to Members: 8%
- According to Chamber Staff: 9%

** Unsure/Don’t Know/Other:**
- According to Members: 9%
- According to Chamber Staff: 10%

**Chamber Staff Says Top 3 Reasons Members Don’t Renew:**
- Lack of Engagement Interest
- Lack of Value/Little to No ROI
- Never Had Time to Participate
Only 27% of chambers have membership drives.

Of chambers that hold membership drives, 62% have seen an upward trend in membership growth vs. 31% that don’t have a membership drives (past 5 years).

66% of chambers with 601+ members do NOT have membership drives.

Almost 2/3 of chambers are using mobile credit card readers for events.

27% of chambers hold membership drives. Of those, 62% have seen an upward trend in membership growth vs. 31% that don’t have membership drives (past 5 years).

66% of chambers with 601+ members do NOT hold membership drives.

Almost 2/3 of chambers are using mobile credit card readers for events.
CHAMBER-SENT EMAIL

OPEN RATE:

- 42% for 21-35%
- 19% for 36-50%
- 14% for NOT SURE
- 5% for 51-75%
- 5% for OVER 75%
- 0% for WE DON'T SEND EMAILS

EMAIL RATE:

- 11 emails sent per month

NON-DUES REVENUE:

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL NON-DUES REVENUE

- 45%
WISH LIST

WHAT CHAMBER EMPLOYEES WISH THEIR BOARD REALIZED:

- Need them to attend events
- Amount of work vs. time/manpower
- Board needs to work, too
- Understanding what’s involved with the job
- How many resources events take
- How hard we work
- We need more staff

WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID:

- “I do more than just socialize.”
- “It would normally take 3 people to complete my job responsibilities at a for-profit company.”
- “Not everyone wants to be a member.”
- “That fact that asking for a donation is not an easy task”
- “Bigger committees aren’t better committees.”
- “Chambers are no longer a staple in company budgets.”
At ChamberMaster, we pride ourselves on listening to and focusing on chambers and the people who make them run. In order to provide the best possible product to industry professionals, we regularly seek data on the trends and issues facing chambers.

Thank you to the chamber professionals who took the time to respond to the survey.

ABOUT CHAMBERMASTER

ChamberMaster helps organizations grow and retain membership, engage and inform members and prospects, and streamline tedious tasks. The cloud-based system is powerful, easy to use, and designed to manage all the day-to-day operations of your organization. Guaranteed.

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