

{ CHAMBERS }

OF

INSPIRATION

5 Innovative Ideas for Chambers of Commerce



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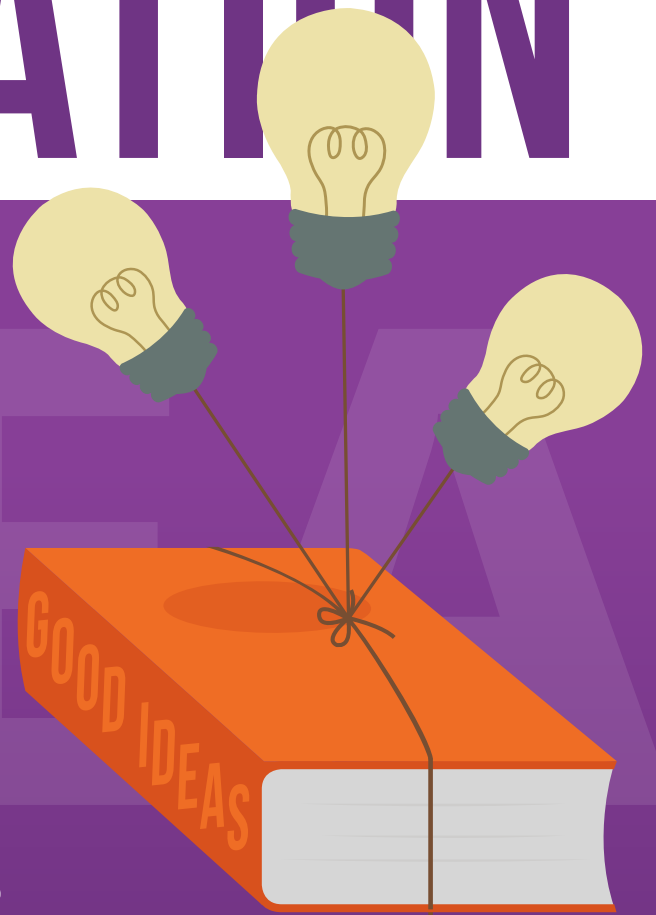


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Introduction

Chamber events don't have to be all about meat and cheese trays with a chaser of boxed wine. With a little imagination, you can put on an event or promotion members will talk about for years to come.

Last year, ChamberMaster teamed up with Startup Local and sponsored the inaugural "**Chamber Innovation Contest.**" With a \$1,000 cash prize and other great incentives on the line, chambers of commerce throughout North America were asked to submit their most innovative program idea to show how they helped breathe new life and energy into their communities.



chamber
INNOVATION
contest

Starting with the winning idea from the **Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce** in Ontario, Canada, we've assembled the best of the best to share with you in this ebook, **Chambers of Inspiration.**

That way, the next time you and your chamber staff sit down to plan an event or program, you can hit the ground running with great ideas to give your members something to talk about. Happy planning!





THE WINNING IDEA!



IDEA:

"Peterborough Business Exchange (PBX)"

CHAMBER:

Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

LOCATION:

Ontario, Canada

[Event Website »](#)

"The implementation of PBX has caused our attendees to **double in size** since inception & we are very pleased with the outcome."

Stuart Harrison, President & CEO
Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

GROW WITH NEW FACES

Want to see some fresh faces while taking your monthly after-hours event to the next level? Try the approach taken by the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce in Ontario, Canada with their winning idea, "The Peterborough Business Exchange (PBX)."



The folks at the Greater Peterborough Chamber shook up the same old grind by inviting a different group of people to join them every month, thus creating an opportunity to network with new people. They invited groups such as the Downtown Merchants, other chambers, the Green Business Community, Aerospace Cluster, and more.

As for the results? By meeting in different locations with different groups, the Greater Peterborough Chamber has doubled its numbers.

Think outside the lines and imagine what you could do by being creative with your upcoming events. In the case of the Greater Peterborough Chamber, next year's calendar is filling up fast due to some very specific targeting.



IDEA:

"Dancing with Prospect Stars"

CHAMBER:

Prospect Area Chamber of Commerce

LOCATION:

Prospect, KY

[Event Website »](#) [Event Video »](#)

"The members of PACC truly stepped up and donated their services with professional lighting, sound, photography, videography, floral and decorating. **We couldn't have asked for a better turnout.** It was a great evening."

Kathy Jacobs, Executive Director
PACC

{ KICK UP YOUR HEELS FOR A WIN-WIN-WIN }

"Dancing with The Stars" has been a big hit for ABC television. The Prospect Area Chamber of Commerce (PACC) of Prospect, KY decided to borrow a page from ABC and put its own spin on the popular idea by holding a very unique event called "Dancing with Prospect Stars."

A select group of "Stars" was selected and given professional dance instruction along with costuming, hair, and make-up assistance. Each "Star" then performed on behalf of a local charity. Community leaders promoted the event and helped raise money for the charities involved.

Local businesses, chamber members and other individuals throughout the community were invited to an evening of glamour, beginning with "Taste of Prospect" where PACC-member restaurant/caterers were on hand with samples of their most savory dishes.

The event was so successful, it was expanded to be even larger in scope the next year.

How was it a win-win-win? Member restaurants and caterers won through great exposure. Local charities won by increasing awareness and monetary donations. And PACC won by growing its member base due to increased exposure through community buzz in local media.



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IDEA:
"Monthly Membership Meeting"

CHAMBER:
Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce

LOCATION:
Old Saybrook, CT

[Event Website »](#) [Event Video »](#)

"We have seen tangible results from this program. In one instance, a member learned that by switching his business telephone systems to a member phone company he would not only improve his system, he'd also realize **significant monthly savings,**"

Meryl Tsagronis, Marketing Coordinator
Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce

**IT ONLY TAKES 30 SECONDS
TO OPEN DOORS**

The Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce in Old Saybrook, CT took dating to the next level. The chamber put an interesting twist on the popular 'speed dating' idea by turning it into 'business speed dating.' Businesses from across the area were brought together and given two 30-second spots to introduce their business to other attendees, turning the monthly membership meetings into a highly informative and energetic event. A moderator was present to keep things moving by ensuring participants adhered to the format of the program.

To add another twist, three members were allotted a 2-minute slot and were designated Featured Members of the Meeting.

Finally, one lucky attendee was randomly selected to be the Featured Member of the Month and received a color photo and article about their company in Old Saybrook's monthly newsletter.

Members benefitted by having a captive audience and platform from which to promote their business. People learned new things, met new people, and made lasting and meaningful connections.

What can **you** do with an idea like this in your chamber? You never know until you try.



your gateway to sound business



IDEA:

"Think Manufacturing Student Expo"

CHAMBER:

Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce

LOCATION:

Willoughby, OH

[Event Website »](#) [Event Video »](#)

{ THE FUTURE STARTS NOW IN
WESTERN LAKE COUNTY }



**Willoughby
Western Lake County**
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Chambers of Commerce exist to support and grow business in the communities they serve. So what better way to make a difference than by promoting the area's largest sector of business to its future workforce?

The Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce decided to think outside the box when creating the "Think Manufacturing Student Expo." By collaborating with the three other chambers in Lake County, as well as the area's consortium of manufacturers, an event was created where manufacturers were able to meet and greet area high school students in hopes of having them consider a career in manufacturing.

"With many Lake County manufacturers struggling to find trained youth to replace those who are retiring, we felt it was crucial to support them in their efforts to educate about the viable, well paid jobs in manufacturing," said Karen Tercek, President & CEO of Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce.

Nearly 30 manufacturers had booths at the Expo and were given an opportunity to talk with students about careers, internships, co-ops and part time jobs with their companies. As a part of the Expo, the chamber also hosted a teachers' reception, which included a roundtable discussion on how manufacturing careers and the environment have changed over the past 20 to 30 years.

Not only were students and parents being educated at the Expo, so were the teachers who play a critical role in students' career paths.

All in all, it was a great idea that was well executed. And the manufacturers of Lake County couldn't be more excited about the future.



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IDEA:
"Health Links Workplace Wellness Program"

ORGANIZATION:
Vail Valley Partnership

LOCATION:
Vail, CO

[Event Website »](#)

"We saw **increased member engagement** and helped local businesses get great visibility in the community by demonstrating the value they place on their employees."

Chris Romer, President/CEO
Vail Valley Partnership

{ COME ON, GET HEALTHY }

Colorado continues to rank among the healthiest states in the U.S. The Vail Valley Partnership (VVP) saw an opportunity and ran with it by launching its "Health Links Workplace Wellness Program."

With health and wellness comprising the area's second largest employment sector, it was brought to the attention of VVP that local area businesses wanted affordable and accessible workplace wellness programs.

Partnering with Health Links Colorado, VVP offered discounted workplace wellness opportunities to the entire community. Chamber members were offered 30% off a "Healthy Business Certification" which included an analysis of the program, a tailored report, evaluation by worksite wellness and safety experts, and a connection to online resources and local providers.

VVP promoted the program to all its members and hosted several educational seminars with Health Links professionals.



Conclusion

DREAM BIG. START HERE.

Chambers of Commerce exist to support and grow business in the communities they serve and are essential to economic growth. The way in which chambers engage and retain members has changed, making it essential to “think outside the box.”



Gone are the days when a business would join just because they were new to the area and needed to make connections. It’s crucial to stand out and go the extra mile to engage members. At ChamberMaster, it’s our hope that Chambers of Inspiration gives you a few ideas along with the courage to try something new in your chamber! Report back and let us know how it goes. We’re always looking to share great ideas!

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.

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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.

