



**“Discover Solutions”**

The attendees were divided into seven teams based on like-size chambers. Their assigned challenge was to identify a common problem/issue/challenge, then “discover”/develop a creative, out-of-the-box, “wow-factor” take-home solution. Thursday evening the teams were judged by their peers, based on the best take-home solutions (75% value), combined with the most creative presentation (25% value).

Following are the transcripts submitted by each team, starting with those judged as the top two.

**1. “LACK OF BOARD MEMBER INVOLVEMENT”** Team #4: Jill Becker, Roger Blackburn, Jen Dear, Genny Hart, Karen Haley, Doug Johnson, Joe Kleinknecht, Tommy Thompson, Dan Yahraus



**The Issue:**

Inactive board members in membership retention & recruitment, as well as attendance and volunteerism at chamber functions.

**Proposed Solution:**

Develop an attendance chart that lists all chamber functions and update the chart monthly, listing each board member and his/her attendance. This chart (possibly developed in Excel) should be e-mailed to the board prior to the monthly board meeting and then posted at the monthly board meeting. (See example chart attached as Page 4 of this report.)

Develop an additional chart that challenges board members to achieve the “Critical Few”. This should also be posted in the manner stated above. The “Critical Few” consists of any combination of the following:

New member recruitment - Sponsor events – Volunteering.

Each board member is required to achieve annually a minimum combination of 10 (ten) items. The “Critical Few” participation & involvement program is part of the board member “Commitment To Serve” form.

**2. “CHAMBER’S ABILITY TO CHANGE & ADAPT”** Team #5: Marla Akridge, Charlotte Keim, Eileen Leuby, Debra Lynn-Schmitz, Helen Mayle, Amy Nelson, Jeff Raible, Heidi Robson



**The Issue:**

Sustainability of the chamber; adapting to a new business environment; attracting & retaining members.

**Proposed Solution:**

Listen and be receptive to change based on your business community’s needs and expectations.

**Note:** Although the following teams did not place among the top two, they developed some great ideas. They are presented in the order of team numbers.

**3. “MEMBER INVOLVEMENT”** Team #1: Mary Jo Bockrath, Kirsten Gibson, Vicky Hawke, Bill Hoover, Cathy Hutton, Lorie Neal, Jenni Reusser,

**The Issue:**

Developing and maintaining membership participation in Chamber activities, programs and benefits.

**Proposed Solution:**

Make your chamber a “Community of Choice” by the following examples:

- The Fun Factor
- Get out of your rut by varying your times, styles, places, etc.
- Build personal relationships by not always staying behind your desk
- Be first, not last
- Share your success stories through testimonials

Resource References:

1. "Global Communications and Communities of Choice" by Marshall Goldsmith
2. [www.worldlaughtertour.com](http://www.worldlaughtertour.com)

4. **"I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME"** Team #2: Teri Edwards, Nancy Frankart, Randy Heath, Jeannie Marshall, Mike McNeil, Lori Reinbolt

**The Issue:**

Smaller chambers have limited staff to manage all chamber responsibilities.

**Proposed Solution:**

Maximize website technology to eliminate repetitive/routine tasks by providing members password access to update their own directory information, register for events, pay dues, link to benefits & calendar of events.

Make it more like the CCEO website!

Offset the cost to do this by selling banner ads.

Promote & educate your members how to use the website and all of its features at new member orientations.

Also promote it to members and the public as a source of information.

If you have members that are not computer savvy, don't create more work by reverting back to traditional methods (paper/phone) for them. Rather, offer a workshop in cooperation with your local college/continued education or library on how to use the internet, e-mail, etc. Workshops can also be sponsored by computer store and/or web designers who offer discounts on computers and website design.

Also, create a chamber Technology Committee by tapping into young professionals in your business community to keep your chamber a leader in technology.

5. **"FINDING/ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS"** Team #3: Angie Fallon, Melissa Krebs, Marci Martz, Michelle Masica, Kevin McCann, Kim Ranking, Mathew Wasserburger

**The Issue:**

You have a difficult time with recruiting and engaging enough volunteers from your membership.

**Proposed Solution:**

(Also see attachment as Pages 5&6 of this report.)

"C<sup>2</sup>P<sup>2</sup>" (Chamber Community Partnership Program). Potential sources of volunteers:

- Corporate- climbing advancement opportunities through corporate incentives
- Schools- high school interns/scholarships
- Non-Profits- utilizing support of current non-profit volunteers & giving back additional support from programs above

Have an annual "C<sup>2</sup>P<sup>2</sup>" volunteer recognition breakfast.

6. **"USE OF TECHNOLOGY"** Team #6: Gayle Bohman, Tina Gienger, Cheri Hottinger, Marvin Jones, Wayne Lawrence, Jed Metzger, Kathryn Paugh, Lori Smith, Janet Tressler-Davis

**The Issue:**

Staying High-Touch in a High-Tech World, or "30 ways to use technology of those under 30 to reach those over 30". Digital media and social interactive media (or Web 2.0) offer us many ways to be high-tech, but how can we use them to stay high-touch, the No. 1 obligation of a chamber to its members?

**Proposed Solution:**

(For a more complete explanation of each of these bullets, see attachment as Pages 7-9 at the end of this report.)

- Start a chamber blog (Web log)
- Ask your members if chamber events & services can be part of *their* blogs
- Ask your local newspaper or magazine to allow you to do a monthly column
- Upload video clips of chamber events or member testimonials to YouTube
- Send an e-newsletter even if you have a print or web-based one
- Create a subgroup for your chamber members using Linked In or a similar online networking service
- Sell "ad space" or sponsorships in graphical e-mails or e-newsletters

- Send e-mail blasts with weekly reminders of upcoming events
- Allow community groups or partnering organizations to post their events on your Web site
- Install a Web cam featuring scenes of interest to your members
- Hold “webinars” for your members
- Ask members to summarize their favorite books and post them on your Web site as “book reports”
- “Know before you go!” to create an incentive for your members to pre-register for events
- Post member-to-member coupons on line
- Make your membership directory searchable online.
- Allow members to submit job postings on your Web site.
- Have your members add a link from their website to yours with your logo as the icon link
- Enable online membership applications,, dues renewals, payments, etc. on your Web site
- If you have an auction or other fundraiser, e-mail a detailed list of items to your members prior to the event.
- Use podcasts to disseminate recorded narratives or script to your members
- Do a monthly talk show on your local radio station
- Send PSAs about chamber membership and events to your local TV and radio stations.
- Add a photo gallery to your website
- Use live opinion polling
- Online surveys can be used in many ways.
- Make your electronically generated messages look personal.
- Personalize the signatures of e-mails for every staff member
- Maximize the use of your on-hold or voice mail massaging
- Find free or discounted software and technology hints
- Handwritten notes on professional stationery still speaks volumes

7. **“MEMBERSHIP RETENTION ”** Team #7: Carrie Ankrom, Jacquelyn Barlage, Jeff Griffin, John Harris, Joe Hinson, Steve Millard, Angie Morgan, Kevin Nestor,

**The Issue:**

The challenge of maintaining a high member retention rate.

**Proposed Solution:**

*“The \_\_\_\_\_ Chamber Guarantee”*

Is there anything that you as a chamber leader can’t get done in your community?

You are a master navigator of your community’s key players, institutions and relationships. Too often your members don’t understand the vital role you can play in making things happen for them.

We believe leveraging your network, your resources and your community’s infrastructure on behalf of your members is what you are supposed to be doing. Why not explicitly “guarantee” the results for your members as they consider renewing? Tell them that you guarantee you can do something to help their business every year. List the regular benefits and add a line where they can write in something they want to see happen!

Maybe 10%-20% of them will take you up on it.

Then, as Captain Picard would say, “make it so”. And, heck, if you just can’t make it happen for them you’ll either have created great opportunities for the future, or entertained them trying!

**Check the following pages for attachments some of the teams generated for their presentations.**

2008 CCEO Summer Networking Conference  
 Team 4  
 Sample Board Participation Chart

	BAH-J	Dodge Ball	Bridal Show	Annual Banquet	Bus. Expo	BAH-F	Board Mtg	Golf Outing	Spring Fest	Board Mtg	BAH-J	Summer Fest	Board Mtg	BAH-A	Taste of	Holiday Open House	BAH-D
Foghorn Leghorn	x			x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		
Mickey Mouse	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x		x		x		x
Betty Boop			x	x		x				x		x	x		x		
Wylie Coyote		x					x	x		x			x				x
Bugs Bunny		x		x	x		x			x					x	x	
Donald Duck		x		x	x		x		x	x		x	x		x		x
Ronald Reagan				x		x	x	x		x			x		x		
BJ Wiberg	x		x	x	x		x	x		x			x	x	x		x



# Finding Volunteers

By Team #3

teamwork

teamwork

# Solution: C<sup>2</sup>P<sup>2</sup>

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## Chamber Community Partnership Program

- Corporate-helps employees climb the corporate ladder and gain incentives by donating time and energy to the community
- Schools-helps high school students to get into the business community and gain life skills that are not taught in traditional classroom settings
- Non-profits- helps to utilize current volunteers in different capacity and gain new volunteers for the non-profit

Additionally:

teamwork C<sup>2</sup>P<sup>2</sup> Annual Volunteer Recognition Breakfast

## Discover Solutions Challenge – Team 6 response

Our team's topic:

Staying High-Touch in a High-Tech World (or “30 ways to use the technology of those under 30 to reach those over 30”)

Description of common issue or problem:

Get a clue, or 30 of them! Digital media and social interactive (or Web 2.0) media offer us many ways to be high-tech – but how can we use them to stay high-touch, the No. 1 obligation of a chamber to its members?

Take-home solution: “30 ways to use the technology of those under 30 to reach those over 30”)

1. Start a chamber blog (Web log), using either free software or a more sophisticated product like Compendium. Post items about your members and chamber events. Allow members to comment and start a thread of discussion. (Approve their comments first.) This will vastly improve your search engine optimization and Web traffic, as well.
2. Ask your members if chamber events and services can be part of *their* blogs. Real estate agencies are a good place to start. A mention of your event or service goes a long way to boost visibility of your chamber. (Be sure to “reward” your member who does this by mentioning it in your newsletter or on your Web site.)
3. Ask your local magazine or newspaper to allow your chamber's exec to do a monthly column. In each column, whet the public's appetite for more by luring readers to your Web site for more information, or to join your chamber, or to attend one of your events.
4. Upload video clips of chamber events or member testimonials to YouTube. Everyone can share in your chairman's speech at the annual meeting or the winning foursome at your golf outing. Members will start looking for footage of their companies. (No video resources? Use college interns or a local high school video class, or a chamber member with those skills.)
5. Send an e-newsletter even if you have a print newsletter or a Web-based newsletter. Use Constant Contact or Exact Target or a similar product, or create a simpler product in HTML. Summarize key news items with one or two sentences and include a link to learn more that directs readers to your print newsletter or to your Web site.
6. Are your members using Linked In or a similar online networking service? Create a subgroup for Your County Chamber Members and let the conversations begin. Use the best comments you observe as quotes in your newsletter or on your Web site. (Who wouldn't renew, with all that personal attention?)
7. Sell “ad space” or sponsorship in graphical e-mails or e-newsletters that summarize upcoming events or late-breaking news. One chamber in our group does this daily. One

of our group's vendor representatives has information about several chambers that do this weekly with the help of outside vendors.

8. Even if you have regular print or Web vehicles, send e-mail blasts with weekly reminders of upcoming chamber – and community – events.
9. Allow community groups and partnering organizations to post their events on your Web site. Have a clear policy for what is and is not acceptable – hey, remember that accreditation notebook and the importance of policies?
10. Install a Web cam (with the help of a sponsoring member if necessary). Lure Web visitors—members or the public – to your site daily to see the Ohio River, the town square/village commons with people passing by, a featured business with customers dropping in, etc.
11. Hold “webinars” for your members. Record seminars and workshops or speaker presentations and make them available on a members-only section of your Web site.
12. Can't read all of those recommended business books, can we? Ask members to summarize their favorites and post them on your Web site so everyone can learn the premise from the “book reports.”
13. Know Before You Go! (to a networking event such as a Business After Hours). Create an incentive for members to pre-register for an after-hours or other networking event. Knowing who will attend will enhance their networking experience. Allow them to pre-register online and view a list of those registered before the event; offer a preprinted name tag, no waiting in line, and a special door prize for pre-registrants.
14. Allow members to post member-to-member coupons online on your Web site.
15. Make your membership directory searchable online. Be daring, and make it your ONLY membership directory. Ask members to send an e-mail to colleagues with a link saying, “I noticed you weren't included in the [hotels] section ...”
16. Allow members to submit job postings on your Web site.
17. Provide your chamber logo to members to link to your Web site from theirs. Make it a downloadable JPG or GIF available on the members only section of your site.
18. Enable online membership applications, dues renewals and payments for sponsorships or event attendance on your Web site, using credit card services, PayPal and other means.
19. Having an auction or fundraiser? Send a detailed list of the merchandise to members before the event. Let them decide what they'll go after when they arrive – and they'll still have time for networking.

20. Use podcasts to disseminate recorded narratives or script from important meetings or events. Or videotape meetings for recordkeeping purposes; archive on your Web site if appropriate
21. Have a local radio station in your area? Do a monthly talk show – and archive it on your Web site.
22. Send PSAs about chamber membership and chamber events to local TV and radio stations, and make sure they are included on those organizations' Web sites, as well.
23. Include a photo gallery on your Web site, highlighting members and sponsors of recent events. Send out an e-mail blast with one great photo and a link to the gallery page (SOON, right after the event, to say thanks).
24. Use live opinion polling. At an annual meeting or seminar, project the opinions of those present on a screen so all attending can see the results of opinion polling on a “real-time” basis.
25. Use online surveying in many ways. Find out what members want ... how the community views redevelopment ... how members are surviving a tight economy, etc. Use Survey Monkey or similar tools. Many are free or inexpensive to non-profits.
26. Make electronically generated messages look personal. Use a free, cheap or donated font creator to make “handwriting” from your penmanship. Use it to send “personal” notes of thanks, congratulations, sympathy, etc., to members.
27. Personalize the e-mail signature for all chamber staff to include your logo, contact information, tag line or mission, and key dates for upcoming events.
28. Maximize the use of your on-hold or voice mail messaging so it includes invitations to chamber events or alerts about legislative issues. Tell the caller where to go for more details.
29. Use free resources such as [techsoup.org](http://techsoup.org) or Gifts in Kind to find free or discounted software and technology hints.
30. Don't forget about the value of low-tech. A handwritten note on professional stationery still speaks volumes. Add personal messages on renewal letters; acknowledge the death of a member's relative; say thanks with a personal touch. Make sure that high-tech is a complement to all of the traditional ways your chamber is high-touch.