



Attracting Younger Business Leaders and Volunteers to Chambers

A DISCUSSION LED BY:

BARBARA RIDDLE

CHAMBERWEST

Engaging Young Professionals – Why it Matters

- ▶ Community Influence:

- ▶ Young business owners and emerging leaders influence the future direction of the community

- ▶ Succession Planning:

- ▶ Today's young professionals are tomorrow's chamber leaders. The leadership succession of chambers depends on engaging professionals under 40

- ▶ Expanding Your Reach:

- ▶ Younger professionals are often well-connected and can help amplify your chamber's message to a wider audience

Industry Insights and Trends

▶ Millennials and Gen Zers in the Workforce:

- ▶ The number of Millennials in the workforce is 56 million, representing 35% of the total US labor force. There are 53 million Gen Xers in the US Workforce
- ▶ As of September 2023, 17.1 million Gen Zers were working full-time in the US, more than Baby Boomers but behind Millennials and Gen Xers. Expected to make up about 30% of the US workforce by 2030 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

▶ Membership Trends:

- ▶ Community Brands research shows most members join associations as students, new graduates, or within the first five years of employment

▶ Tech Savvy:

- ▶ Younger generations value digital engagement and tech-forward experiences. They grew up with computers and smartphones

The Challenges of Attracting Younger Members

- ▶ What Might Be Holding Them Back?
 - ▶ Perceived Lack of Value:
 - ▶ Younger professionals may not see the relevance of chambers to their needs
 - ▶ Traditional Structures:
 - ▶ Chambers with rigid hierarchies or outdated practices may feel out of touch
 - ▶ Competing Priorities:
 - ▶ Young professionals often juggle multiple commitments and may struggle to find time for traditional chamber events

Tips to Attract Younger Members



- ▶ Know Your Audience – Understand what Motivates Them
 - ▶ Transparency, Trustworthiness, Social Responsibility and Personal and Professional Growth are Some of the Factors that will Sway a Millennial or Gen Zer to your Chamber
- ▶ Offer Job and Career Enhancement Opportunities
 - ▶ According to Community Brands Research – Top Reason to Join Organizations
 - ▶ Mentorships
 - ▶ Connect Young professional with Seasoned Chamber Members for Career Guidance and Industry Insight
 - ▶ Internship Board, Online Career Center with Printed/Digital Resources
- ▶ Make Your Organization Easy to Join
- ▶ Provide Learning Opportunities
 - ▶ Offer Engaging Content, Organization Training and Certification Opportunities to Help Them become more Attractive in the Job Market

Tips to Attract Younger Members

▶ Engagement through Social Media

- ▶ Leverage platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram to reach younger audiences. Highlight member stories, success stories, and chamber events that will resonate with Millennials and Gen Zers

▶ Personal Invitations and Direct Outreach Direct Outreach

- ▶ Personal outreach is critical for engagement. Don't wait for young professional to come to you – reach out to them

▶ Targeted Marketing Campaigns

- ▶ Develop campaigns that speak directly to the interests and goals of Millennials and Gen Zer professionals
- ▶ Use clear, concise messaging that highlights the tangible benefits of membership

▶ Offer Incentives

Tips to Attract Younger Members

- ▶ Professional Development
 - ▶ Offer workshops, webinars, and networking events focused on leadership development, entrepreneurship, and skill-building
- ▶ Building Connections
 - ▶ Emphasize the value of networking opportunities and peer connections within the chamber
- ▶ Supporting Local Causes: Young professionals are often driven by purpose and social responsibility. Align chamber activities with causes they care about such as:
 - ▶ Supporting Ecofriendly Initiatives
 - ▶ Fundraisers/Support for Important Nonprofits
 - ▶ Opportunity to give back
 - ▶ Being Part of Something Bigger that Engages Emotion and Value

Tips to Attract Younger Members



- ▶ Collaborate with Local Colleges and Universities
 - ▶ Partner with local institutions to introduce chamber membership early through internships, co-op programs, and student discounts
- ▶ Student Membership Programs
 - ▶ Offer discounted or free memberships to students and recent graduates to get them involved early
- ▶ Young Leaders Committee
 - ▶ Establish a “Young Professionals” committee that gives younger members a voice in chamber decisions
- ▶ Engage Early Careerists
 - ▶ If at a loss about how to help your new generation of members and what they need, be sure to ask them! Use them as a resource

Discussion:

- ▶ What Initiatives or Programs have you Implemented to Attract and Retain Young Members in Your Chambers?
- ▶ Do you have Young Members at the Right Tables to Influence Programming?
- ▶ What Obstacles have You Encountered in Engaging Younger Business Leaders?
- ▶ What has been Your Experience with Engaging Younger Business Leaders? What have you Learned?
- ▶ Have you Experimented with Special Membership Pricing or Flexible Payment Options for Young Leaders Just Entering the Workforce?
- ▶ How Important is it for Young Leader Programs to be led by Millennials or Gen Zers and What Resources and Support do these Programs Need to Succeed?

Conclusion and Next Steps

▶ Key Takeaways

- ▶ Adapting Strategies to Meet the Needs of Younger Generations is Important
- ▶ Identify and Deploy Practical Ideas and Initiatives for Engaging Young Professionals in Your Chamber
- ▶ Understand that Chambers that Fail to Adapt to the Interests of Younger Generations Risk Losing Relevance Over Time

▶ Call to Action

- ▶ Continue the Conversation and Explore Implementing One or Two Strategies Discussed Today to Boost Young Member Engagement in Your Chamber

Resources and Further Reading

- ▶ How to Attract Young Professionals to Your Chamber
 - ▶ <https://joinsoca.com/blogs/attractyoungprofessionalstochamber>
- ▶ Strategies for Engaging Young Chamber Professionals
 - ▶ <https://www.glueup.com/blog/young-chamber-professionals>
- ▶ How to Attract Younger Members to Your Association
 - ▶ <https://www.yourmembership.com/blog/how-to-attract-younger-members-to-your-association/>
- ▶ Personalizing Chamber Memberships
 - ▶ <https://frankjkenny.com/personalize-chamber-memberships/>
- ▶ 6 Tips to Attract Younger Members to Your Association
 - ▶ <https://thenewslinkgroup.org/6-tips-to-attract-younger-members-to-join-your-association/>