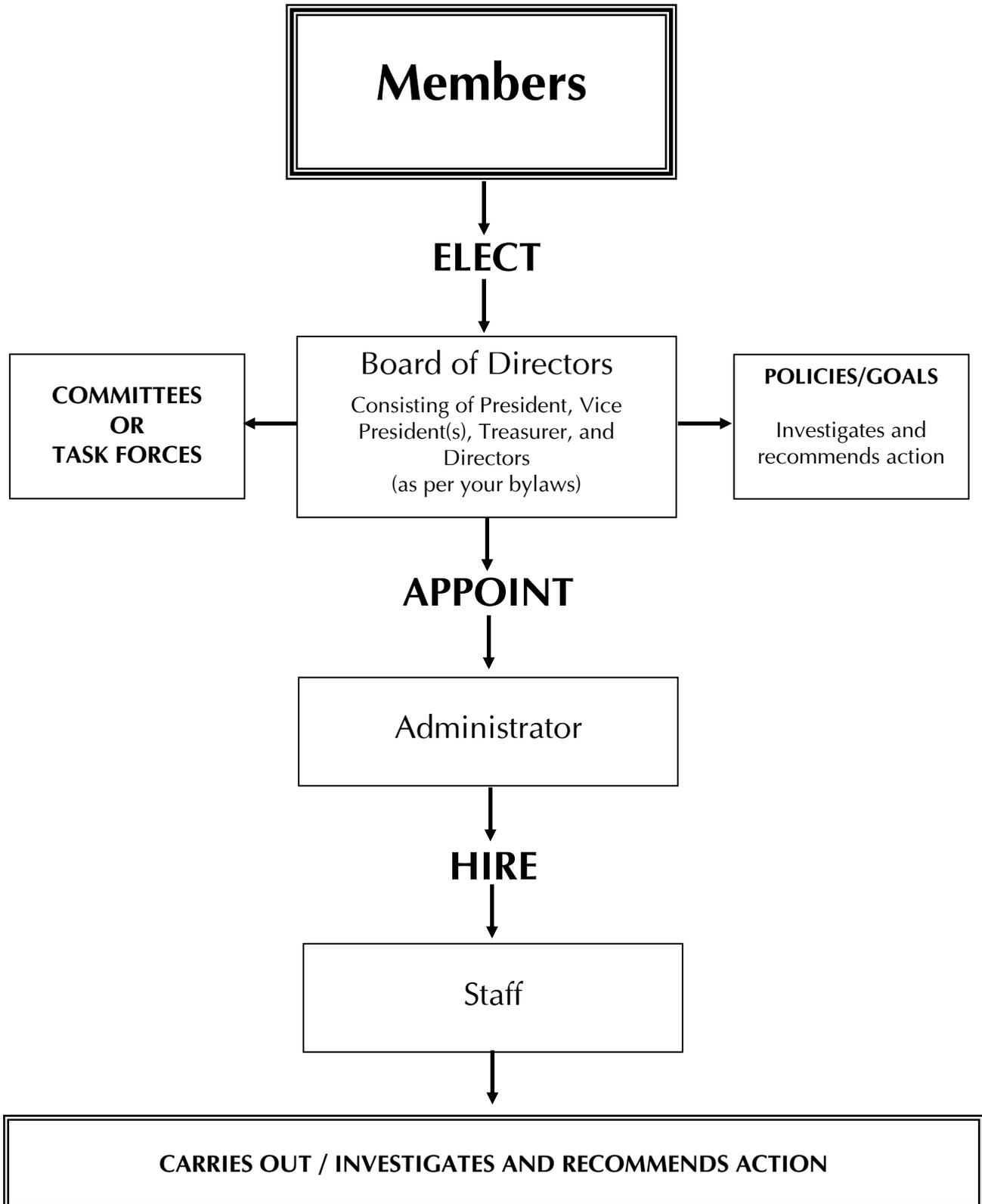


Chapter 3

Organization



Sample Chamber Flow Chart





Organization and Structure for Chambers and Boards of Trade

Directors

The governing body of a Chamber of Commerce or a Board of Trade is the board of directors. It is the Chamber's legislative body, and its primary function is to develop policy.

The board of directors helps determine and gives approval to the program of work and authorization to special activities. It is also responsible for the Chamber's finances. It considers and approves the general budget, as well as the appropriation of funds for special purposes. It determines the appropriate dues schedule necessary to provide adequate money to sustain the program. It either appoints or approves the selection of committee personnel and devotes considerable time to reviewing committee reports and recommendations. It returns approved recommendations to the respective committees for action.

Boards usually meet monthly, but some meet as often as once a week. A board should be neither too large nor too small — for small organizations, from 9 to 10; for larger ones, from 18 to 24.

Officers (Executive Committee)

The executive committee is usually composed of 5 or 6 members and quite often is also the finance committee (defined in the bylaws). Such a committee may be composed of the president, the vice-president(s), the treasurer and the administrator. The executive committee may transact routine business of the Chamber in the interim between board meetings, subject to final approval by the board of directors.

The executive committee may refer matters brought before it to an appropriate standing committee or to the board.

Election of Officers and Directors

Directors may be nominated through the action of the nominating committee. The nominating committee is appointed in accordance with the bylaws. The nominating

committee composes a selection of qualified candidates and gets their agreement to serve, if elected.

Usually, the general membership is accorded the opportunity to add names to the nomination list in accordance with the bylaws, providing a specified number of members sponsor the candidate. Members may vote by mail during a specified number of days. When the ballots are in, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes equal to the number of vacancies to be filled are declared elected.

The elected officers of the Chamber are those common to most corporate organizations. They are a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer. Their functions are generally described in the bylaws.

Committees or Task Forces

A committee or task force is a body of members elected or appointed as provided in the bylaws to consider, investigate, recommend, and as authorized by the board, act in matters within its terms of reference.

A Chamber uses both standing and special committees. They may be standing committees concerned with the Chamber's internal affairs such as finance, membership, agriculture, retail promotions, conventions, taxation, education, and traffic, and which function regularly from year to year.

Special committees are those established by the board of directors to complement the work of the standing committees and to carry out special activities not otherwise provided through the standing committees.

Program of Work

A program of work is a plan of future activities or objectives of a Chamber for a given period — usually one year, coinciding with the administrative year of the Chamber.

Generally, these objectives can be classified as:

1. Community or Area Economic Development
2. Local Community Improvement
3. Government Activities
4. Organizational Improvement Activities

The successful Chamber determines what objectives or activities its members are willing to support, organizes its resources, puts them to work to accomplish the objectives, and informs its members and the public of the results.

Examples of desirable projects in specific categories are:

Community or Area Economic Development

- a) Serving and expanding present industry
- b) Attracting new industry
- c) Promoting tourist trade and attracting conventions
- d) Developing retail trade
- e) Promoting business information programs

Local Community Improvement

- a) Development activities
- b) Educational programs
- c) City beautification
- d) Transportation, highway development and traffic
- e) Downtown development

Governmental Activities

- a) Election awareness campaign
- b) Political education
- c) Federal/provincial/municipal affairs
- d) Local government action
- e) Taxation in all areas

Organizational Improvement Activities

- a) Membership drive and retention
- b) Program of work
- c) Better Chamber premises
- d) Election and nomination committees

These projects are merely suggestions to assist a community in deciding what its needs may be. No one Chamber conducts all of these activities, but a well-rounded Chamber will have some activities in each of the four categories. For the most part, Chamber meetings will be of four distinct types: meetings of the board of directors, committee meetings, general membership meetings, and annual meetings.

The administrator and the chair of the meeting should make preparation for meetings. The chair should be consulted on the agenda, meeting time and place, as well as what emphasis is to be placed on key items on the agenda.

Municipal Government

To convince municipal councils to carry out a policy of the Chamber at the local level, it is first necessary to submit in written form all material pertaining to the subject, emphasizing the specific request for action. Sufficient copies should be submitted so that the City Clerk is not required to duplicate them for distribution to the Mayor and Council. The Chamber, with the city's administration heads, should make prior consultation so that the position of the Council is understood by the Chamber's board and taken into consideration in preparing the brief. A request should also be made for the appearance of a Chamber representative (president preferred) to address the Council in support and explanation of the brief.

Chamber members should be urged to attend this specific meeting to add weight to the presentation. If the matter is of vital concern to the Chamber and the community, a meeting with Council or a council committee prior to the regular council meeting should be sought, at which time the matter can be fully discussed. In such cases, a special reception supper meeting of the Chamber, to which the Council is invited, can provide a frank, less formal discussion of the Chamber and Council's viewpoints. Members of the executive of the board can also be designated to discuss the matter with councillors individually so that each is fully cognizant of the Chamber's request.

If the matter is of major concern to the community, an appointment should be requested of the appropriate Minister for a representative to be allowed to discuss the matter with them.

If attempting to influence a governmental department relative to action in the community, it is a good idea to invite the members of the department to come to the community to see first hand what the situation demands. Organize a tour with local dignitaries, followed by a reception and luncheon, at which time the subject can be more thoroughly discussed. At such affairs, members of the press should be invited so good coverage is obtained.

Probably the major concern of any Chamber is *how to motivate the business citizen to become involved in the Chamber?* Without this sense of involvement — both financial and personal — there cannot be any lasting or real value to any Chamber's existence. The Chamber as an organization must first demonstrate by words and deeds a leadership capability in promoting and developing the community.

The Chamber's worth can be demonstrated in four general categories, namely; services, projects/activities, membership, and finance.

This aspect of Chamber affairs can be broken into two parts — internal and external.

Internal Services

Internal services are those provided for the benefit of members and may include such items as value-added programs, bulletins, tourist promotions, retail promotions, trade contacts, certification of customs documents, business information contacts with government agencies, etcetera. In short, they are services designed to meet the day-to-day needs of the members. Some Chambers may provide economic stimulus to the whole community, such as tourist and retail promotion, which bring "new" dollars into the community or retain local dollars for spending in the local community.

External Services

External services are those available to all citizens of the community without regard for membership in the Chamber. Traditionally, these tend to be oriented towards the needs of the "average citizen". In this category, we find business information services, tourist services for outside the local community, assistance to convention groups, cooperation with other community service groups, etcetera. As it may be noted, these are essentially of a public relations nature and designed to create a "good image" of the Chamber.

Projects and activities are generally implemented through the various committees of the Chamber. As each committee is given objectives within its terms of reference, each will develop projects or activities aimed at achieving these objectives. It is in this role that your members can best be motivated to serve by "doing". Those energies and creative abilities, which provide the drive for economic or business success, are thus harnessed to the benefit of the community.

The Chamber's concern is essentially one of economic growth, which is basic to the prosperous existence of the community. The challenge to citizens is that, for the community to survive and develop there must be sound economic growth. Each community must be challenged to accept responsibility for guiding and promoting its destiny. A Chamber must be ready to be a leader, innovator, creator, and a catalyst for action. From the Chamber members should come the definitions of community needs and from there the actions to meet those needs. The Chamber should have the capacity to draw other groups in the community together to act jointly in resolving community problems. It is not necessary that a Chamber continue to function in these matters, but rather should aid the formation of new co-operative groups to continue so that the Chamber may be free to pursue new endeavours.

The previous sections have outlined the "action role" of your Chamber. If these aspects are well founded and energetic, then the expansion of membership should not be difficult.

Prospective Members

The primary motivations for a prospective member should be:

1. **Self-interest as a business person**
2. **Community interest as a resident citizen**
3. **Recognition of the Chamber as a competent organization**

A prospective member's self-interest is stimulated by the traditional Chamber role as chief spokesman of private enterprise. Their community interest is a matter of recognizing that business has a responsibility to participate in community development projects. Indeed, this might be described as enlightened self-interest, as a healthy and growing community depends on a viable economy for the area to provide the employment opportunities essential to continued existence. The recognition of the Chamber is, of course, dependent on the manner in which the Chamber has told its story and discharged its responsibilities. With these three factors identified, the prospective member can readily recognize the need for involvement in your Chamber.

The money required to support an effective Chamber would be readily available if the prior conditions have been met. However, it is essential that your Chamber be adequately financed.

Finances are the lifeblood of your Chamber and an under financed Chamber cannot function adequately. Your Chamber's program should be based on clear-cut objectives, a realistic program, and ample finances to achieve them. All too frequently we find the Chamber Officers feel *we can't afford it*. Instead, their view should first be *will it be good for our community?* If the answer is *yes*, then the Chamber should get on with the job, including raising the necessary funds.

A Chamber of Commerce is a group of citizens who have the ability to plan, the intelligence to initiate, the courage to enunciate, and the energy to execute those things that will make for a healthy business economy in their community.