



THE BRIEFING ROOM

By Business. About Business. For Business.
June 19, 2013

Lions and Tigers and Bears... Oh My!

By Dida Clifton

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Now that I have your attention, let's talk for a minute about some of the options out there to grow, market and network your business.

Radio, done that. TV commercial, done that.
Pay per click on the web, done that.
Magazine advertising, done that. Newspaper, done that.
Paid sales associate, done that.

Business Mixers and Expos. Still doing that.
Professional Organizations. Doing that.
Chambers of Commerce. Doing that.



All great ideas. Some more cost-effective than others. We got one client out of an \$8,000+ set of television commercials and it turned out to be one of those clients that actually cost me money. Love those!

What's important to notice is the last three on the list that we are still doing. Many of you have heard my story about joining the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce 13 years ago when I started my business. It was DidaVa.com then but that's another story on branding. Anyway, I started my home business and joined the local chamber of commerce. Then I did nothing.

I didn't go to any new member briefing. I didn't attend any events. I didn't get involved at all. Well... guess what? I got no business from the chamber, and when renewal time came around, I didn't renew. I didn't renew for 10 years and I tried all those other things on the list above.

About two years ago, something interesting happened. I was invited to join the chamber again by an associate that I'd come to know quite well. With a few years of networking and business under my belt, I tried again. I joined, went to the events, volunteered as an ambassador. Guess what? My business got business! It only cost me yearly membership, lunch once a month and time to have a little fun.

Why the Urban Chamber? Here are my top 3 reasons:

1. **Cost.** They had a special deal the month I joined... duh! Maybe they'll have another.



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2. **Small town feel with Big City presence.** You can actually get to know people involved. It's not so big that you get lost in the crowd.
3. **They make me feel special.** OMG... the first month, I was invited to tour the Chamber, write an article for the newsletter, and put in a free advertisement. Oh... and I got an award!

And now more reasons!

4. **Networking Opportunities:** This is one of the most important benefits of membership. Networking and new business contacts help your business grow.
5. **Credibility:** 69% of consumers believe that chamber membership is a sign of a reputable, stable business. 70% believe that it demonstrates that you use good business practices. Being a member of the chamber gives your business credibility.
6. **Publicity & Exposure:** Chamber members receive real exposure through the web site, and newsletter. Use the coupon to get your business out there.
7. **Resource Center:** Experts from SCORE, as well as NxLevel, and the Business Success Center work closely with chamber members providing help to achieve your business goals.
8. **Value Added Benefits:** Enjoy member to member discounts, individual and group health insurance, energy costs savings, discounted office supplies from Office Depot and more.

Final words: Get Involved! Don't make the same mistakes I did. Don't wait 10 years to get involved and grow your business.

Dida Clifton is a member of and ambassador for the Urban Chamber of Commerce, and is the Founder and CEO of TheOfficeSquad®. www.officesquad.com

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