

## **Chamber Membership: More Important Than Ever**

### **Part 3 – Stick Close to Home**

As a businessperson, it makes sense to spend money locally because you're likely to see it again in the future. In addition, buying locally can help control shipping and inventory costs. Higher risk is involved when businesses choose to purchase or sell goods and services to faraway consumers. Multiple advantages, such as relationship building, partnership opportunities, and community support accrue when you spend company dollars in the regional economy.

Often, it is easier to find business-to-business customers close to home. And once those accounts are established, they are easier to monitor and maintain.

Finally, sticking close to home can mean saving money on travel.

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### ***Buy locally.***

Employing other local business owners helps circulate money within the business community. Conducting business with local companies that provide products and services that your company requires is an investment in your company's future. Many times, businesses that receive local revenue spend that revenue locally, which can increase profits for all businesses in the Knoxville community. The Chamber recommends researching which local companies may help your business meet its goals before buying outside the region.

An excellent place to find local businesses is in the Chamber's membership directory. Like you, these companies are committed to Knoxville and they are interested in growing their business.

***Make sure your online business directory listing is up-to-date. Add keywords, make sure your website is linked, add a logo.***

The Chamber's online Business Directory is frequently visited by Chamber members and by members of the Knoxville business community. People use the directory as a tool to purchase products and connect with other businesses in the region.

Double-checking your company's online business directory for accuracy is a good way to make sure companies and consumers that require your business's goods or services can find you easily. Many visitors search the online business directory using "keywords" that help them quickly find a company of interest. Make absolutely certain that your business's keywords are accurate, up-to-date, and fully describe all your products and services.

Linking the Chamber's website is another useful idea. By linking the Chamber's website to your company's website, you increase your web traffic. Linking the two sites is a simple, cost-effective way to help potential customers find the goods and services your business offers.

An efficient way to increase your company's branding message is to add your company's logo to its business listing on the Chamber's online business directory. Consumers are more likely to purchase from companies they recognize and trust. Added visual aids can also contribute to increased inquiries and connections.

### ***Build your ShopDineStay listing.***

ShopDineStayKnoxville.com is a service of the Knoxville Chamber. It is an outstanding resource for finding the best retail, dining, and hotel accommodations in the Knoxville area. If your business is a member of the Chamber and operates in the retail, restaurant, or hotel arenas, make sure your complimentary listing contains all the information it should. In addition to address and phone numbers, you can include a logo, menus or featured promotions, coupons, and hours of operation.

ShopDineStayKnoxville.com is an interactive, web-based tool that can drive customers to your door. The Chamber resource combines reviews, 24-hour access, full business listings, special promotions, and interactive forums to provide a single source for customers and visitors.

If you have questions about this website or need help updating your listing contact Tonya Harper at (865) 637-4550.

### ***Use demographic information from the Chamber to locate local customers.***

What is your company's target market? What age group is most likely to use your services? If you're in the process of starting a new business, or if you already have one and you're trying to expand it, chances are good that you've asked yourself these tough questions. Businesses that know these answers can set themselves up for success. Demographic information is vital to many members of the Knoxville business community.

The Chamber's research department can assist members with no- or low-cost statistical data that can increase their bottom line. Pinpointing which consumers are more likely to do business with your company can be the difference between economic prosperity and marginal success.

The types of data the research department can provide include major employers lists, corporate headquarters lists, and many others. One item many businesses find valuable is a customized business list, which can be tailored based on zip codes, employment size, sales volume range, industry, or SIC/NAICS code. These lists can be produced for any geography in the nation including county and metro areas. Companies often use this data in direct mail campaigns or sales efforts to design specific and focused strategies for securing new customers and clients.

***Limit business travel – hold teleconferences or videoconferences. Take advantage of the Chamber’s no- or low-cost meeting spaces.***

Business travel can cost thousands of dollars. To avoid high travel bills, the Chamber suggests conducting teleconferences or videoconferences whenever possible. Meetings that previously *had* to be conducted face-to-face can now occur by using secure telephone lines and video servers, thereby eliminating high travel costs.

If larger face-to-face meetings are required, the Chamber encourages its members to use one of the many low- or no-cost meeting spaces located in the Chamber building on Market Square. Holding meetings at the Chamber offers members a centralized location with rooms of various size that can accommodate many types of meetings. The Chamber’s large Market House Room, with space for 75 people and access to audio-visual projection screens, can accommodate many types of business meetings. The Chamber’s Board Room, featuring a large plasma screen for presentations, is available for small- to medium-sized meetings. Smaller conference rooms are also available for members that want to take advantage of the Chamber’s downtown location.

For more information about meeting space at the Chamber, call Barbara Teague at (865) 637-4550.

**Call (865) 637-4550 to make any information changes  
to your Chamber membership  
or if you have any questions about your membership!**