

Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant 2018 Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Action Step: Develop a Formal Strategy for Recruitment

Introduction:

I have completed detailed research, analysis and outreach to other Chambers of Commerce to identify and create a list of techniques, ideas and methods for recruiting new Chamber Members.

Of the various membership recruitment methods I reviewed, I selected 3 to focus my efforts on for 2018 which include:

- 1 - Economic Development - City of Brantford & County of Brant
- 2 - Cancelled Chamber Members Report
- 3 - Other Member Associations/Organizations/Chambers

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The Economic Development staff from both Brantford & Brant County are a great resource in assisting me to connect with potential new businesses.
- I have signed up for their respective newsletters, attend events, tradeshow and welcome the opportunity to receive updates on business growth in Brantford-Brant through interaction.
- Both the Brantford and Brant County departments have been helpful in providing me with electronic files of their respective business directories. However, each resource is formatted differently which causes some challenges when manipulating the data. I can sort the City of Brantford list by total number of employees ie. 40+, 60+), which is very helpful. However this list only represents "industrial" type business and is not reflective of the total number of businesses in Brantford. The County list does not include employee numbers and is not current, but does provide a good starting point.
- Once I have the data sorted accordingly, I start with online research to identify business criteria to help me qualify the business as a viable lead ie. products, services, challenges, owners, primary contact info etc. Gathering this information is crucial in determining if the business is a fit for membership and where I would start when recruiting them.

CANCELLED MEMBER REPORTS

- Presenter at one of our Chamber Executives of Ontario Conferences, Cathi Hight, Hight Performance Group Inc. Austin, TX has written an interesting article "We Want You Back - Courting Dropped Members". Utilizing this article and other information from Cathi's website has been very helpful in identifying and creating criteria for targeting cancelled Members.
- Using Membee, our internal database, I accessed our "Dropped Members" report, by year.
- I then reviewed each report/year in detail to identify and target potential cancelled members that would be a good fit to possibly re-join the Chamber. Determining factors include type of business, possible benefits to the business, changes to business structure/growth etc.
- I then composed and forwarded a personalized email to these individuals/businesses (main contacts) to touch base, target a few great things the Chamber is doing, invite them to a complimentary event etc.
- I targeted the years of 2016 and 2017 and have, to-date, received interest from approximately 4 cancelled members and am at various stages of follow-up in securing them as new Members.

OTHER CHAMBERS/ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

Chambers of Commerce:

- Research the online Membership data of other area Chambers to get an idea of what businesses, organizations, non-profits etc. are their Members
- If the respective business is a member else-where, and has a presence locally in Brantford/Brant, there is a good chance they will be interested in membership, supporting their local communities.

Associations/ Organizations

- Target other membership associations and organizations and their Members that may be a fit for or, have interest in Chamber Membership and benefits ie. Brant Human Resources Network, Brant Pros, Brant Womens Networking Group, Truck Drivers Assoc., Electrical Association. A great example of this is reaching out to the Truck Drivers Association as many of their members would be interested in the Chamber Group Insurance program.

Summary:

A formal recruitment strategy has many moving and constantly changing parts. As illustrated, there are many ways of connecting with and targeting new members. Although I am focusing on the 3 highlighted methods of recruitment, I will also be utilizing the other techniques and innovative methods to secure new members; thinking strategically and outside the box.