Innovative New Ideas: Zionsville Chamber of Commerce

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ICEA Chamber Awards 2020

We have really embraced some unique ideas this year! Our Chamber loves standing in the space of innovation and creativity for our members. Between social media, “Working for Our Members”, Microgroups, “Keep the Lights On”, Chamber Chat, a new logo and new membership benefits and levels, we look very different than years past!

We started the year with the initiative of creating Microgroups, the distilling of our membership down into practice groups and “neighborhoods”. These eight initial groups were designed to focus on the needs of our members in these areas very specifically, addressing what our members want with intention. These groups have been so well received that we have increased our number of Microgroups and during the COVID crisis were an exceptional way to communicate and learn from our members how best to respond. These groups make us more nimble and are a portion of what our Ambassador program oversees.

We accelerated our design for a blog that we call “Chamber Chat”. These blogs are for and about our members, ranging in subject matter from finance to fishing, marketing to making a garden. We want readers to find ‘something for everyone’. In the first few months of the blog being active we have thousands of viewers from all over the globe (we have had our blogs viewed in Ireland and Romania!). Business and business interest, we are finding, come from a wider reach than we ever realized.

When I came on as Executive Director for the Zionsville Chamber I made a pledge to work once a week for a member for at least two hours. This had led to stronger relationships with members and increased loyalty. Once a month a videographer follows me to my “Working for Our Members”, creating a video series (think “Dirty Jobs” tv show) for members to see. I have worked in a bean plant, scooped stalls at a therapeutic riding center, taught crafts to adults with disabilities, washed dogs for the humane society, worked in retail during the holiday season, served meals to the hungry during the COVID crisis and much more. If my members are doing the work, I will do the work, too. This gives perspective members a view into what wide array of businesses we represent and that we are not afraid to get in and work for our members… literally! (You can find these videos, and others, on our Facebook Page)

We started the “Keep the Lights On” Campaign as a result of the need to help our retailers in the COVID crisis. We showcase a different business each day at 2pm on Facebook Live, selling products in real time. We have sold pie, shoes, clothes, home décor, wine and furniture (which landed us a morning segment on an Indianapolis tv station!). In the first 10 sessions we had over 21,500 views!

Our social media campaign for this year has been dominated by the need to highlight businesses during a very tough time. The strategy that was initially set forth was amended to become reflexive to the needs of our members, showcasing those businesses that needed visibility due to COVID closure. **We reached over a quarter of a million people in our first quarter on social media**, bringing measurable exposure and monetary benefit to our businesses. We are incredibly proud of our efforts and adaptability that has directly helped our members and community at large.