

## Why Consumers Support Chamber Members

The study, which was commissioned by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives with support from Small Business Network, Inc., used several different experiments to determine the real value to companies in terms of consumer outcomes of joining and being active in their local chamber of commerce. So the question is: Do consumers really support businesses *because* they are chamber members?

The results of the first experiment shows that being an active member of a local chamber of commerce is indeed a good strategy for businesses for making specific impressions on consumers. Chamber membership proves to be a good way to convey a company has good business practices, is reputable, cares about customers and is involved in the community; no matter what the consumer may or may not have already thought about a company.

The next experiment shows *why* chamber membership enhances a company's reputation. First, the study shows consumers comparing a chamber involved company to a competitor that is not a chamber of commerce member, feel the chamber involved company's products are better than the company that is not a member of a chamber of commerce. It is because consumers believe a chamber involved company is trustworthy, involved with the local community and is an industry leader. Secondly, consumers think more favorably of a company that is a member of a chamber because, to the consumer, a chamber membership infers trustworthiness, community involvement, customer care, success and leadership in the business community.

The third experiment shows the impact of consumer outcomes for large businesses. When a chamber membership is a known facet of a company's reputation, it will yield positive outcomes. Patronage frequency, favorability and purchase intent increase for all types of businesses who make their membership known.

The last experiment focuses on the impact of consumer outcomes for small businesses. Again, the results were similar; in fact, the results prove more consistent and more powerful than the impact for large businesses. If the consumer is aware a small business is involved with its local chamber of commerce, great benefits emerge resulting in a 44% increase in its consumer favorability, a 51% increase in consumer awareness, a 57% increase in its local reputation, and a 63% increase in the likelihood that consumers will patronize the business in the future.

So, do consumers really support businesses *because* they are chamber members? Yes! If consumers are aware of a company's chamber membership, they will and do support that company.