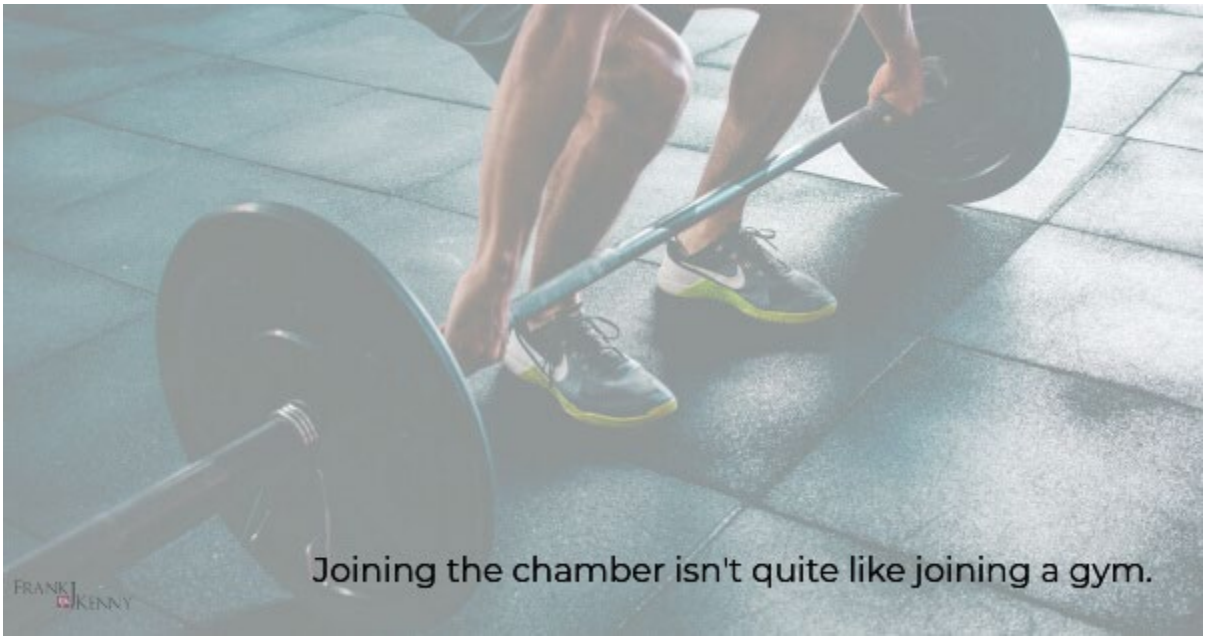
Welcome to the New London Area Chamber of Commerce. New chamber membership brings a lot of benefits, but also a lot of questions. We're here to help!

Keep reading if you're overwhelmed by the number of benefits. Find out how you go about exploring the components of chamber membership that are most beneficial to you and your business. And learn what to do if there are things you could benefit from that you know nothing about.

Or maybe you're wondering when you're going to see your first new customer. Any minute, right?

If you're a brand-new chamber member, there are a few things you should know about maximizing your membership benefits.

A Word About New Chamber Membership



Sometimes you'll hear that new chamber membership is like a gym membership, you need to use it to gain the benefits.

That's not *exactly* true.

Regardless of whether you attend a single chamber event, our chamber is still tirelessly advocating for you and your business on a legislative side, ensuring that the voice of business is heard in city council, at the state senate, and on the federal level.

Even if you never attend a single networking, our chamber is still referring inquiries about your industry or product to you. Community members and travelers often seek suggestions from the chamber on businesses in town.

Even if you never attend a ribbon cutting, our chamber is there to help you get back on your feet in times of natural disasters and other times of difficulty. It's not part of a membership benefit. It's just something we do because there's a need and we are uniquely connected to business and government. Our hardworking chamber staff and board are here to help in critical times because we're a part of the community too.

So, you see you needn’t do anything to partake in the benefits of chamber membership. But if you do, the return on investment for your business will be much richer.

You Joined the Chamber. Now What?

With a new chamber membership, what comes first?

Strategy.

Think about your goals for chamber membership. Why did you join in the first place? The reasons behind your chamber membership will give you some insight into how to make the most of your membership.

But first, some important advice:

1. **Read what our chamber gives you.** When you joined you should have received a Media Kit. Read through this and learn more about how you can take advantage of incentives and how and where you go about using them.
2. **Look at the calendar of events** and make note of anything that interests you.

3. **Follow us on social media.** We have outlets that will appease everyone. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snap Chat and Twitter

Assuming you've completed the steps above, it's time to think about what you want from our chamber. Why did you join? Some of the most common reasons include:

- Getting more customers / traffic
- Increasing your reach so more people know about you
- Improving your reputation or becoming a larger part of the community
- Meeting like-minded businesspeople

Or maybe you have your own reasons that you joined.

Whatever it is, the reason you joined, the goal behind your membership dictates what step you should take next to make the most of your chamber membership.

Ways the Chamber Can Help You Get More Customers and Increase Your Reach

If your goal in joining the chamber is more customers here are a couple of activities and things you can do right now.

1. **Go to the next chamber event.** Get to know people. Don't go there to sell. Go there to see how you can be of service to them. Bring business cards.
2. **Get listed in the member directory.** We take care of this, watch your SEO grow.
3. **Talk to us!** (If you haven't already as part of the membership process) and find out how they can help you get your name out there.
4. **Be a part of the member-to-member discount programs**. Provide exclusive deals just for chamber members or take advantage of them.
5. **Host a networking event at your place of business**. Business after hours allows businesses to open their doors to the community and build their network.

6. **Add valuable information in the Local Loop**. Use the weekly e-newsletter to share information, events, sponsorships or meetings with the community.
7. **Ensure the chamber has all the pertinent information** about your business including hours of operation, address, and specialties. Give us brochures, business cards, leave behinds or any marketing material for us to house in the Tourism Center which is open 24/7 to the community.
8. **Accept Chamber Bucks.** This program supports shopping local and creates zero risk for the business redeeming the chamber buck check.

Improve Your Reputation or Become a Larger Part of the Community

Some new members are looking for something other than more sales, although that may be part of their desire. Some have had PR problems in the past, they're new to the area, or they just want customers to see them as a valuable member of the community. If any of those are true, a new chamber membership is a great investment.

If that's why you joined you should consider the following activities first:

1. **Proudly display** your website badge or window cling.
2. **Get involved.** We have numerous opportunities to volunteer. There are subcommittees in specific areas or ambassador program opportunities. By volunteering you can get to know other businesses on a deeper level than may be possible at monthly chamber networking.
3. **Sponsor an event.** If you want to get your business name associated with our chamber, sponsoring an event is a good way to do it. Our chamber offers a lot of different levels of sponsorships so there's one that will fit your budget. Our events (and other opportunities) may draw slightly different crowds so talk with chamber staff to understand which one fits your ideal demographic.
4. **Host a ribbon-cutting**, open house, or anniversary milestone celebration. Another way to showcase your business is through a grand-opening, anniversary celebration, or an open house. The

chamber can help you organize one and will invite local government, businesses and media. Check with us to see how each of these special events is handled.

Meet Like-Minded Businesspeople

Another reason to seek a new chamber membership is to be able to associate with like-minded businesspeople. If that's your goal behind becoming a chamber member, consider the following benefits:

1. **Attend networking events.** These come in a variety of times and agendas. There are breakfast networking events, after hours events, and even speed networking events. If you want to meet more people, show up and bring business cards.
2. **Join the conversation on social media.** Become a part of the online community and comment on our chamber's Facebook page and other's posts. Be helpful. Give compliments. When you do it consistently, you'll get to know others in the chamber even if you can't attend the networking events.
3. **Take advantage of the Networking Pays table.** New members are invited to a chamber banquet to networking with the attendees. A free table is provided, and we encourage guests to mingle with new members.

Other Chamber Benefits for Specific Needs

In addition to the goal-oriented benefits listed above, our chamber offers a lot more benefits.

- certificates of origin
- sharing news and event announcements through email blasts, calendars, and newsletters
- Member mailing and contact information
- Logo creation – small fee included
- Poster creation – small fee included

No matter why you joined our chamber, your chamber membership is full of benefits to help you meet your goals. The best thing you can do for your investment is to get involved in a capacity that helps you advance your business. We've outlined some ideas here, but these are only the beginning. To get the most out of chamber membership, make sure we understand your business goals. They can help put you on a path to get there and ensure you get tons of value from your membership.