

National Chamber Image Campaign



message infusion

toolkit

Leading Businesses.  
Leading Communities.™

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Dear Chamber Professional:

When today's business leaders need support or advocacy, they have many options to choose from, including trade organizations, local business groups, Internet-based resources – and the Chamber of Commerce. To effectively stand out among the ever-increasing number of choices, the chamber must clearly communicate the role it plays and value it adds to businesses and the community at large.

With this in mind, the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) partnered with the Quixote Group to develop a National Chamber Image Campaign for member use. The Campaign includes this Message Infusion Toolkit, an Advertising Toolkit and a Public Relations Toolkit, available in early 2006.

Ultimately, our goal is to help chambers of commerce better communicate the value they bring to their communities by helping increase their communications effectiveness and marketing presence in cities and communities across the country. Indirectly, this will help chambers increase member acquisition and retention levels, while reducing member churn.

We hope that you will use this Message Infusion Toolkit to develop an understanding of what the new chamber positioning means and discover the ways you can use it to improve your chamber communications internally, with your members, and with your community.

Fully demonstrating and communicating the new chamber brand positioning will take both dedication and time, but the result will be a more dynamic chamber image that has been updated to resonate with current and potential membership.

We hope that you find this Toolkit helpful in taking the first steps towards enhancing or developing your chamber communications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mick'.

Mick Fleming  
President & CEO

## Campaign Overview

The National Chamber Image Campaign began as an ambitious action item in ACCE's 2002-2005 Strategic Plan. In 2006, after a \$120,000 investment and countless hours of volunteer leadership, ACCE members have access to a full-fledged, comprehensive set of tools and the chamber profession has, for the first time, the beginnings of a grassroots campaign to raise the chamber's brand awareness within the business community.

A special thanks is due to the visionary leadership of dozens chamber professionals, including Tammy J. Carnrike, CCE (Detroit, MI); Perry E. Webb, CCE (Springdale, AR); Doug S. Kinsinger, CCE (Topeka, KS); Gary Toebben, CCE (Fort Mitchell, KY); Richard "Dick" Blouse, CCE (Detroit, MI); Michael V. Varney (Las Vegas, NV), Steve Higdon (Louisville, KY) – and a host of committee members, listed in this Toolkit.

Ultimately, the goal of the Campaign is to help chambers of commerce better communicate the value they bring to their communities. Three Toolkits – the Message Infusion Toolkit, Advertising Toolkit and the Public Relations Toolkit – will help increase overall communications effectiveness in respective communities across the country. Indirectly, this will help chambers increase member acquisition and retention levels, while reducing member churn.

To do this, the Campaign is designed to help all chambers:

- Be effective in explaining what chambers of commerce do and the value they bring to their communities.
- Build awareness for the quality and value of chamber programs and services designed to benefit individual chamber members.
- Deliver research-tested messages designed to position the local chamber of commerce as a primary business and community catalyst, convener, and advocate.

To meet member needs, the Campaign was designed to:

- Be scalable, flexible, affordable, easy to execute, measurable, and sustainable.
- Make quality marketing materials and strategies available to members at a fraction of what it would cost to create these materials locally.
- Grow over time. This is a multi-year effort that needs to be sustained.

## Year One

Members can expect to have several tools available as well as training in how to use them. In Year One of the Campaign, for instance, here's what we have planned:

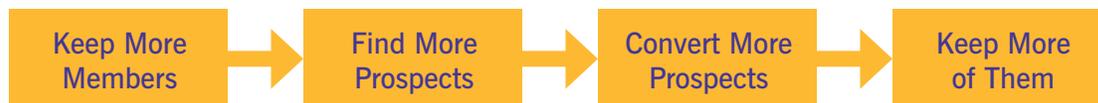
- **Brand Positioning & Key Messages:**
  - A brand positioning strategy that will help to define and differentiate the overall purpose and value of chambers of commerce: **Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.**™
  - A set of key research-driven messages that can be used by the chambers in their community presentations, promotional materials and event planning, media relations and conversations.
- **Message Infusion Toolkit:**
  - Communications and marketing templates such as member letters, elevator speeches, and mission statements using those key chamber positioning messages that can be adapted by local chambers to differentiate their organizations, and meet the needs of their market.
- **Advertising Toolkit:**
  - These elements will be available to chambers on an opt-in category. Chambers choose which category of elements (print and radio ads, consulting, etc.) they want and need, and can obtain these at a substantial discount.
- **National Public Relations Campaign:**
  - Periodic op/ed letters from Mick Fleming focusing on the Campaign messages will be distributed. Although these cannot be submitted to local media verbatim, op/ed samples and a template for local chambers to develop their own relevant articles will be included. Other elements will include press release samples and tips on working with the media.
- **Training, Education, and Information Resources:**
  - DIALogue teleseminars and breakout sessions at the 2006 convention will incorporate some topics (such as creating a media plan, creating a top-notch website, membership marketing, etc.) that support the Campaign goals.
  - *Chamber Executive* magazine articles, ACE award entries, publications, and/or samples in the online samples database that focus on communications, marketing, and PR will be made available to all members.

In 2007 and beyond, ACCE will provide additional tools, training, and resources. In addition, a recognition element will be added by incorporating evidence of Campaign implementation success within the criteria for the Chamber of the Year Award (to be launched in 2007).

## How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit is intended to help chambers communicate a more meaningful and relevant positioning by ensuring we are all delivering clear and consistent messages.

The information and resources contained in this kit are designed to help you:



In this toolkit you will find the following items to help you accomplish these objectives:

- Brand positioning and brand essence: An explanation of the overall chamber positioning, including the chamber brand essence – which is positioning in its most fundamental form. This positioning strategy was developed through a collaborative inquiry process that explored and identified the role a chamber plays and is expected to play in the minds of members, prospects and the communities they serve.
- Key message overview and worksheets: Background and discussion on the four recommended key messages that support the chamber positioning and brand essence. You will also find worksheets designed to help you incorporate the four recommended key messages into your everyday communications, including your web site, newsletters, speeches and materials used to support membership campaigns.
- Value proposition and value proposition worksheets: A format for developing talking points that help communicate the value of your chamber to the target audience.
- Samples: Sample elevator speeches, press release boiler plate text, and more.

These tools will help ensure that your messages are consistent with the chamber positioning, while enabling you to match the needs and expectations of each target audience.

# research behind the brand

## **Researching the National Chamber Brand**

ACCE and Quixote Group spent two years gathering data through online surveys and a variety of communications assessments. The team analyzed the competitive pressures chambers face, and then fielded additional research among chamber executives, as well as chamber members, to test the findings.

In addition to focus groups of chamber executives, an Internet-based survey was sent to chamber membership professionals and executives across the country, and from them, a membership version of the survey was fielded to chambers' members. The survey, which measured respondents' perceptions of chamber performance and importance against 20 key messages, garnered 499 completed surveys from chamber professionals and 795 surveys from businesses. The result formed a reliable, credible and projectable basis for evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to chambers, and became the platform upon which the new chamber brand image positioning was created.

## **Current Situation**

In essence, what we found was:

- Many business owners and executives do not understand what chambers do and how they benefit individual businesses and communities.
- Many chambers have difficulty articulating their value proposition to members and prospects.



**“This grassroots Campaign will help spread a uniform message about chambers – a message that will be seen and heard by big box retailer and other corporate execs as well as mom-and-pop establishments nation-wide.”**

Doug Kinsinger, CCE, President,  
Greater Topeka (KS) Chamber of Commerce

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- Competition for membership funds and volunteer time with other business, civic and social service organizations is fierce.
- Many chambers do not have as strong an advertising or public relations presence as they need due to limited professional resources and marketing funds.

Culturally, factors that impact the effectiveness of chamber communications were found to be:

- Chambers are often perceived as “generalists in a world of specialists” relative to both issues and professions. Business issues are perceived as too specific for chamber help.
- Today’s short-term focus requires immediate payback and a compelling way to articulate and measure ROI.
- New generations of young professionals, small business owners and entrepreneurs are not “joiners.” They are short on time and prefer new and different ways of networking.
- A focus on the global marketplace has led to reduced participation and commitment from high level corporate executives.
- Chambers are challenged to adapt to new communications technologies without losing traditional strengths in convening, networking, facilitation and advocacy.

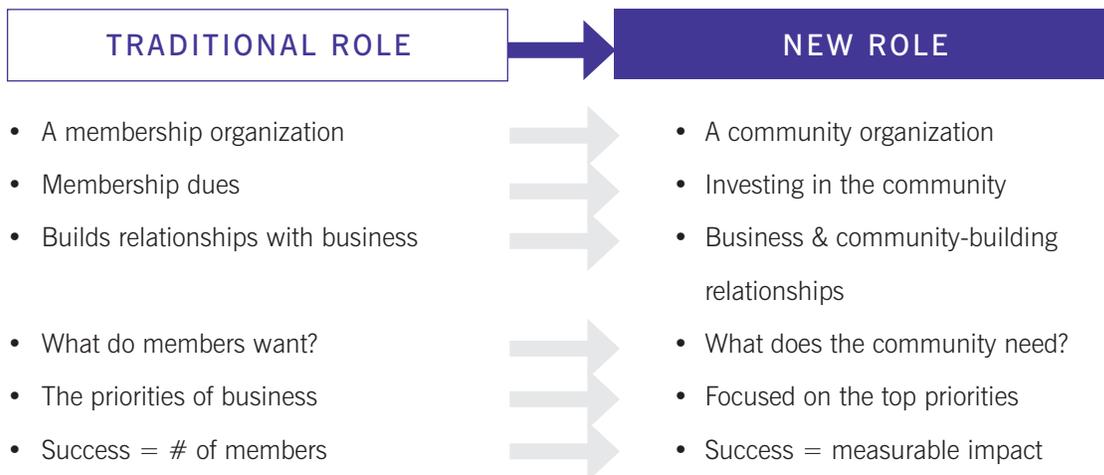
### **Uncovering the Chamber Brand Essence**

Companies today are increasingly concerned about education, transportation, healthcare, and cultural vitality – areas that have traditionally been perceived to be outside of the chamber purview. As such, the focus of many chambers is shifting from simply improving business success to improving quality of life for both the employees of member businesses and the community at large. To find effective solutions to the broad set of issues facing today’s communities, businesses, community leaders and local politicians are collaborating more than ever. The chamber is uniquely qualified to be the central resource and focal point to lead this collaborative effort, and to effect positive change for both



businesses and the community at large. However, developing a compelling new brand positioning and brand essence to communicate this role is critical in order to drive member acquisition, retention and satisfaction.

The “traditional” role that the chamber has played over the years continues to shape the perceptions of many businesses and communities, leaving them largely unaware of the expanded role that chambers play today. The new role recognizes the symbiotic relationship between businesses and the community, and places emphasis and resources against the needs of each:



### **Chamber Brand Strengths and Weaknesses**

Input for the chamber positioning and key messages was obtained using a web-based survey that was completed by chamber executives and membership professionals as well as chamber member businesses. Both groups rated their level of agreement with and the importance of twenty ideas that reflected the role and benefits of the chamber relative to the membership decision.

A total of 499 surveys were completed by chamber professionals and 795 surveys were completed by chambers' members. While both groups agreed on the overall level of importance of the twenty ideas, there was substantial disagreement in terms of the chamber's perceived performance. In fact, businesses that responded rated the chamber's overall performance against the twenty ideas 24% lower than the chambers rated their own performance, indicating the need for caution in terms of the positioning and key messages.

The twenty tested ideas were grouped based on the ability to claim and own them with credibility – in other words, how likely is a current or prospective member to believe that the chamber will perform well against the idea? The strengths and opportunities represent the strongest ideas in terms of equity and credibility, and serve as the basis for the development of the positioning. Weaknesses and threats are areas in which the chamber must work to establish credibility and change perceptions prior to using them as support for the positioning.

Please note that the ideas are grouped based on the nearly 1,300 responses received to the survey. There may be ideas included in the weaknesses and threats that are actually strengths for your chamber, and vice versa. Feel free to move ideas based on your chamber; however, please ensure that you do so with discretion.

## Chamber Brand – The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

### Rank Order (Businesses)



**Strengths** – These are the key ideas that can be leveraged in your positioning and communications.

These six ideas were rated highest in terms of importance and chamber performance, indicating that the chamber enjoys a high degree of equity and credibility for each.

- The chamber allows individuals to make a difference by connecting them to important community issues.
- The chamber creates a stronger, more dynamic and prosperous business community.
- The chamber is knowledgeable and involved in issues that are important to business members, such as education, healthcare, and the cultural vitality of the community.

- Today's leading communities are those that have a strong, active chamber working on their behalf.
- Through advocacy and action, the chamber creates a climate of success and growth in the community.
- A strong, active chamber leads the community.

**Opportunities** – These six ideas were also rated as important, but they also rated slightly lower than the strengths in terms of chamber performance. These six ideas can be leveraged into strengths through additional awareness of the chamber's role and success in each.

- The chamber leverages the resources and talents of its members to improve business and build stronger communities.
- The chamber stays focused on the top priorities of their communities.
- With their dues, members of the chamber are making an investment in the community.
- The head of the chamber is a well-respected leader within the community.
- Today's chamber is an advocate for its broad and diverse member businesses, providing leadership in critical business, social, and civic issues.
- The chamber improves the social and economic vitality of the community in ways that enhance the quality of life for all.

**Weaknesses** – Members rated the perceived performance of the chamber on these five ideas lower than the previous twelve ideas. This lower level of perceived performance limits the ability of the chamber to claim them with a high degree of credibility, thus limiting their effectiveness as key messages. By increasing performance and awareness of a chamber's performance against them, the chamber will be in better position to claim them as strengths.

- The chamber serves as one collective voice at the local, state, and national level, providing members a 'seat at the table' for issues impacting business and the community.



“The role of the chamber as the community’s primary business advocate has grown and changed. The messages we’ve used for many years are old. The campaign is designed to reflect the chamber’s expanded role, particularly its leadership in making the community a better – and more economically healthy – place to live and work.”

Tammy Carrrike, CCE, Executive Vice President,  
Detroit (MI) Regional Chamber

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- The chamber offers programs and services tailored to the unique and changing needs of the community.
- The chamber enhances a member’s opportunities for success by enabling them to do and achieve more.
- The chamber has a measurable impact on the success of its members and the community.
- The chamber is the leading catalyst and convener to address the business, social & civic issues that are critical to the community.

**Threats** – These three ideas were rated the lowest in terms of overall chamber performance by members, indicating that they face the largest hurdle in terms of creating credibility. It is important to remember that the ratings were based on perceived performance – but it is also important to remember that perceptions become realities. Chambers may suffer credibility problems if they base their communications and promotional efforts on these specific claims.

- The chamber offers members unique programs and services that they cannot find in other membership organizations.
- The chamber provides world-class programs and support to local businesses.
- Members enjoy a competitive edge because membership in the chamber matters to the community.

Examination of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats allowed the Quixote Group to get an accurate picture of where the chamber stands in the minds of its individual members and its executive leadership, all of which must be reflected in the recommended positioning and brand essence. The good news is that there are a number of positive and compelling strengths and opportunities that chambers can leverage immediately that will promote and differentiate their chamber from other business and civic organizations in the community.

The leverage points identified in our brand image research include:

- A chamber ensures economic vitality and opportunities by
  - Building stronger communities
  - Creating a climate of success and growth
  - Enhancing the quality of life.
- By being focused on the community, a chamber
  - Is knowledgeable and involved in important business, civic and social priorities
  - Connects members to important community needs.
- A chamber is made up of leading businesses that lead communities, and, by doing so, create leading communities.
- Chambers and chamber members make an investment in the community.

Leveraging may be as simple as the key messages used to present the chamber to the public or the way chamber employees interact with members or the community. Leveraging can also take the form of guiding the way chambers choose to operate, and adding purpose and impact to the way they prioritize actions, events and communications.

## Chamber Brand Positioning

### What is brand positioning?

Positioning is often described as the place that a product, company or brand holds in the minds of its target audience. Examples of well-known positions include:

Volvo = safety, while BMW = performance

Allstate = dependability (You're in good hands)

7-Up = the Un-Cola

Energizer = longest lasting (It keeps going and going...)

Strong brand positioning strategies reflect the equity, heritage and perceptions of the brand in ways that the target audience finds relevant and meaningful. Strong positioning strategies also help define your brand relative to the competition, and leave little doubt as to what you stand for.

The brand positioning strategy answers four key questions by defining who you are and what you do, as well as how you do it and why someone should care.

**Who:** The chamber is an advocate for its broad and diverse members businesses.

**What:** The chamber leverages and enhances the talents and resources of its members to create a climate of growth and success in the community.

**How:** The chamber offers unique leadership opportunities, volunteer efforts and business-building programs focused on critical business, civic and social priorities.

**Why:** The chamber improves the economic vitality and quality of life for its members and the community.

**Leading Businesses.  
Leading Communities.™**

### **The Chamber Brand Essence**

The chamber brand essence was derived from these positioning elements. The brand essence distills the positioning down to its most salient form, and oftentimes becomes the tagline for the brand, product or company. The brand essence adopted and trademarked by the ACCE for ACCE member chambers is:

**Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.™**

“Leading Businesses.” reflects the historic success and core equity of the chamber. It also represents what businesses become as a result of participation in the chamber and its programs.

“Leading Communities.” speaks to the expanded role that chamber’s play in today’s communities, as well as what communities become as a result of strong healthy chambers.

*Note: To use the trademarked tagline, Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.™, ACCE members must agree to adhere to the national usage guidelines. Please visit [acce.org/image](http://acce.org/image) for more details.*

# key messages

## The Four Key Messages

Four key messages were developed to help convey this brand positioning and brand essence, and reflect the ideas found in the strengths and opportunities identified by the research.

**Think of the phrases as the benefit the chamber provides in four key ways.** The four key messages are as follows:

### 1 Economic Opportunities

The Chamber enhances and leverages the talents and resources of its members to improve economic opportunities.

### 2 Advocacy

The Chamber is an advocate for its broad and diverse member businesses, creating a climate of growth and success.

### Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.™

The Chamber provides unique opportunities for individuals and businesses to make a difference by connecting them to important community issues.

The Chamber helps build stronger communities by staying focused and involved in the top business, civic and social priorities.

### 3 Impact

### 4 Focus



**“The competition for membership in most communities is fierce, and historically, most of us could do better at communicating our value to prospective - and current - members. The Chamber Image Campaign provides ACCE members with a variety of top-notch tools to systematically help overcome that challenge.”**

**Perry Webb, CCE, President & CEO,  
Springdale (AR) Chamber of Commerce**

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Using these key messages consistently will help the chamber establish ownership for the positioning, as well as create clarity and credibility for it.

Developing a list of support points for each of these key messages will help you tailor them to your specific needs and community. Support points include:

- Key facts and figures (remember, the media loves facts and figures!)
- Trends
- Case studies
- Testimonials

The key message worksheets included in this toolkit will help you frame each key message relative to the audience and the communications vehicle, whether it be a newsletter, membership campaign or speech. To bridge the gap between what chambers want to say and what members, prospects or targets are most receptive to hearing, the brand image team suggests chambers first look at what would provide the most value to the individual member, prospect or target audience. The development of such a “value proposition” is one of the first steps in tailoring these messages to specific targeted members – particularly as part of a membership recruitment or retention initiative.

# value

## value proposition

### **Developing Your Chamber Value Proposition**

When all is said and done, the chamber must be considered a value to each and every member. Without demonstrating a value, the chamber is at risk of losing current and prospective members to competing business, trade and local organizations. However, it is important to consider the fact that value can be defined differently by each member, and that value often goes beyond the financial definition.

To communicate a compelling value proposition, you must first determine the specific needs of the target audience – what are their specific objectives, issues and priorities? What question will the chamber need to answer in order to achieve the desired result?

The desired target audience beliefs identify what you want them to think after communicating with them. This belief should be meaningful and relevant to the target audience, and should motivate them to action if you achieve the belief.

The chamber promise bridges the needs and desired beliefs of the target audience. It should be simple, memorable and meaningful.

A sample of a general chamber value proposition is included below:

Target Audience Need	Chamber Promise	Desired Target Audience Belief
I need to see an ROI on all of my expenditures	Accountability	My chamber membership is a smart business investment
I want to be successful	Expands opportunity	My chamber enables me do and achieve more
I want to know that someone is looking out for my best interests	Advocacy & action	My chamber creates a climate for success and growth in my community
I want to be involved and make a difference	Community focus	My chamber connects me to important community needs
I want to be recognized for my commitment	Membership matters	The community values my membership

A value proposition worksheet is included in this toolkit to help you develop a compelling value proposition for each potential member or audience.

# delivery

## message delivery

### Delivering the Messages on a Local Level

Chambers speak to a diverse group of audiences each day, each of which care about vastly different things. For example, think for a moment about the different needs of these groups:

- Top company executives
- Middle management
- Growth company executives
- Small company executives
- Consultants
- Entrepreneurs

The chamber's task, therefore, is to determine where the worlds of these people, as well as the chamber and the community, intersect, and develop compelling communications points that are the right fit and the right format to position the chamber to its strongest advantage, and generate the most desired result – not just for the chamber, but for the recipient. In other words, the chamber must answer the question as to why their target audiences should care about the message, the material or the chamber at all.

**“This message infusion toolkit will help end our struggles to articulate the chamber value proposition to members and prospective members. These on-target messages will resonate with the business community.”**

Mike Varney, Former Vice President, Marketing,  
Las Vegas (NV) Chamber of Commerce

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Specific challenges faced by the chamber in recent years include:

- Potential chamber members are busy, with lack of time cited as the top reason for member turnover.
- The business leaders of the new generation (28-38 year olds) are not “joiners” – the chamber therefore needs to establish benefits that are appealing and motivating to the young, wired professional.
- A new way of networking (via the Internet) makes this key chamber benefit appear less important or valuable.
- There has been a trend towards reduced participation and commitment from high-level executives.
- The global marketplace has impacted the perceived relevance of the chamber, as well as the level of involvement.

It is important to understand where the audience is on the “buying” continuum, and tailor your messages and supporting points accordingly.



Among prospective members, the positioning, value proposition and key messages will help you increase interest in the chamber, and help drive preference for the chamber relative to other potential options. The following strategies and tools will also help you plan messages designed to retain existing members.

# tailor

## tools to tailor your message

### **For your use locally**

The materials included in this toolkit are for your use in tailoring message to the specific needs of each audience and the community.

They are:

- Key message worksheets
- Value proposition worksheet
- Elevator speech concepts
- Boilerplate sample

You can use the worksheets on the following pages to:

- Create a letter to prospective members (e.g., to a Fortune 500 company CEO interested in economic development or to a small business owner interested in immediate ROI, etc.)
- Write a speech (e.g., to the Rotary Club, to the CEO Roundtable, for a “state of the community” luncheon, etc.)
- Create or edit a page on your website (such as a member benefits page)
- Create a phone script for inside sales

- Translate a government affairs/legislative “win” into an op/ed for the newspaper and into language the member or community can relate to
- Prepare for a newspaper or television interview

Tips on using the worksheets:

- Think of the worksheets as “arrows in your quiver” that will help prepare you for any communications need, whether it be a conversation, a speech, a letter, etc. You’ll be ready to cite trends, case studies, and testimonials, and have all of your key talking points thought out in advance.
- You can mix and match the tools you need as appropriate to the need at hand – sometimes simply thinking through the value proposition is all you need, whereas other situations may require more preparation.
- Gather the worksheet elements in advance - key trends and facts in your community, testimonials from members or community leaders that support your case, case studies about the impact you’ve had, etc.

Specific examples:

- Preparing for that sales call to a prospective member, in your research you uncover that their greatest need is for procurement opportunities with large companies. Complete the key message and value proposition worksheet with this in mind.
- Preparing a letter to the editor about your chamber’s role in convening a big health care summit that resulted in big gains for the community as a whole, complete the key message worksheet with this in mind and develop media information and elevator speeches.

## Economic Opportunities – Key message worksheet

**Key message:** The chamber enhances and leverages the talents and resources of its members to improve economic opportunities for all.

**Target audience:**

**Media Channel/Materials Format/NewsBeat:**

**Key facts & figures:** Economic opportunity in your community.

**Key local economic trends:**

### Potential Examples of this Key Message

- Member-to-member discount programs
- Business supplier programs
- Cluster analysis
- Capital campaigns focused on community priorities
- Group buying programs
- Crisis response efforts
- Lobbying
- Networking programs
- Mentoring programs

**Programs:** List specific chamber programs that bring the resources and talents of your membership together.

**Case studies:** List specific examples that demonstrate how these programs or opportunities improved economic opportunities for the members and the community.

**Testimonials:** List members, community leaders and local politicians that can speak to the success of these programs and/or the results they have generated.

## Advocacy – Key message worksheet

**Key message:** The chamber is an advocate for its broad and diverse member businesses, creating a climate of growth and success that benefits all.

**Target audience:**

**Media Channel/Materials Format/Newsbeat:**

**Key facts & figures:** The chamber and its involvement in business development and community planning and growth.

**Key trends:**

**Programs:** List specific chamber programs that demonstrate ways in which the chamber serves as an advocate for its members and/or the community.

**Case studies:** List specific examples that demonstrate how these programs or opportunities created a climate of growth and success in your community.

**Testimonials:** List members, community leaders and local politicians that can speak to the success of these programs and/or the results they have generated.

### Potential Examples of this Key Message

- Lobbying
- Small business development
- Coalition-building
- Community or legislative report cards
- Inter-city visits
- Business retention and expansion programs
- Community promotion/marketing

## Impact – Key message worksheet

**Key message:** The chamber provides unique opportunities for individuals and businesses to make a difference by connecting them to important community issues.

**Target audience:**

**Media Channel/Materials Format/Newsbeat:**

**Key facts & figures:** The impact of the chamber and its members on top issues.

**Key trends:**

**Programs:** List specific chamber programs or opportunities that are focused on the issues that are most important to your community.

**Case studies:** List specific examples that demonstrate how individuals or companies became involved, and the personal and/or professional results that they achieved.

**Testimonials:** List members, community leaders and local politicians that can speak to the success of these programs and/or the results they have generated.

### Potential Examples of this Key Message

- Providing opportunities to interact with top community leaders
- Research and advocacy for quality of life and business issues
- Issue forums
- “State of the Community” forums
- Community leadership programs
- Helping members with appointment to government boards and commissions

## Focus – Key message worksheet

**Key message:** The chamber helps build stronger communities by staying focused and involved in the top business, civic and social priorities.

**Target audience:**

**Media Channel/Materials Format/Newsbeat:**

**Key facts & figures:** The priorities of the community and the chambers focus on them.

**Key trends:**

**Programs:** List specific chamber programs that demonstrate the chamber’s understanding, focus and involvement in the top priorities.

**Case studies:** List specific examples that demonstrate how the chamber’s involvement has helped make the community stronger and more vibrant.

**Testimonials:** List members, community leaders and local politicians that can speak to the success of these programs and/or the results they have generated.

### Potential Examples of this Key Message

- Researching, prioritizing, advocating top local issues
- Analyzing the business climate
- Benchmarking community progress
- Lobbying
- Coalition-building

## Value Proposition – Worksheet (use more than one if necessary)

Target audience:

Communications vehicle:

Target Audience Need	
Chamber Promise	
Desired target audience belief	
Chamber examples (programs, testimonials) to demonstrate success and establish credibility	

## Communications Strategy - Worksheet (expand or use more than one as needed)

Event, Project or Initiative:

Date:

Team Members:

1) **Project Objectives** – Discussion here should outline what the project is and the desired result.

2) **Value Proposition** – What is the key benefit to the organization you want the prospect to understand?

3) **Overall Key Message** – What is the key message you want the prospect to believe about your chamber?

**Supporting Key Messages** – You are claiming something to be true and accurate in your key message, and this is your chance to support it. Demonstrate how the program or news item you're discussing is better, improved, newsworthy, etc.

4) **End Audience/Target** – The audience you want to attract.

**Media Target/Targets:** Media channels, reporters and editors. These will be the gatekeepers of your message. Knowing who they are is fine. Knowing what makes them tick will also help define and hone your message, and those ideas should be listed here.

## Communications Strategy - continued

**Event Target/Targets:** Audiences you will be addressing. These are the people who will come to your event and/or receive your information.

**5) Competitive Preparation/Anticipating Questions/Answering** – What are the potential questions your target is likely to ask and how will you respond? Just like the Value Proposition, these answers will guide your communications to be more effective in reaching your target because they will be more in line with what the target audience wants to know.

**6) Supporting Trends/Research/Environmental Scan** – This section is to discuss what you know about the bigger business or community need. All research findings should be listed here. If you have reams of Internet research, encapsulate the relevant points of fact and trends that you have found.

**7) Actions or Materials are Needed** – Brochure, newsletter article, speech, press release, Op/Ed, Web content.

**8) Timing And Tasks** – What is needed by when – executive/committee/sponsor approval, printer, etc.

**9) Budget** – How much do you have to spend? What overages do you anticipate?

**10) Measurement/Evaluation Plans** – How will you track and measure your success?

## Elevator Speech Concepts

An elevator speech is traditionally a short paragraph that describes the essence of what you do in a brief amount of time, for example, the time it takes for an elevator to reach the top floor of a building. It allows you to quickly communicate the core essence of what you do in a clear and concise manner.

Use these as-written or as triggers for your own locally relevant descriptions.

### Sample elevator speeches for chambers in general include:

- The (local) Chamber of Commerce is the community's leading advocate and champion for business. Its primary objective is to create a climate of growth and success in our community.
- We provide leadership opportunities, volunteer programs, and business-building initiatives that focus on the critical priorities of our community.
- By leveraging the support, talent and resources of our members, the (local) Chamber connects business leaders to each other and helps to improve the economic vitality and quality of life for everyone.

### Elevator speeches that specifically pertain to “Leading Businesses.™” include:

- For nearly 100 years, the Chamber of Commerce has been the leading organization that represents the interests of American businesses.
- Today, the Chamber provides leadership opportunities, volunteer programs, and business-building initiatives that focus on the critical priorities of our community. And, by leveraging the talents and resources of members, Chambers improve economic opportunities for all.
- As the leading local advocate for business, the Chamber helps create a climate of growth and success in which all companies – regardless of size or industry – can prosper.

### Elevator speeches that specifically pertain to “Leading Communities.™” include:

- For nearly 100 years, the Chamber of Commerce has been the leading organization that represents the interest of American businesses.
- Today, as businesses and communities are more dependent on each other for their success, the Chamber's role has evolved. Today's Chamber helps build stronger communities by keeping its membership focused and involved in the top business, civic and social priorities of the community.
- The Chamber also provides unique opportunities for individuals and businesses to make a difference by connecting them to important community issues.

## Chamber FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions & Suggested Responses

### What does the Chamber do?

As the community champion and advocate for business, the Chamber leverages the talents and resources of its member businesses to improve economic opportunities for all.

### Why should I join the Chamber?

The Chamber connects members to important community issues and provides unique opportunities for individuals and businesses to make a difference.

### How can I maximize my return on investment?

Getting involved with the programs you care about connects you to the information and people that will unlock, clarify and increase the value of your membership.

### How are my dues used?

The Chamber provides opportunities for leadership, business-building initiatives focused on the critical priorities of the community, and a network of relevant tools and information that responds to members' most pressing business needs.

### How are you different from other business organizations?

Business and the community it serves are more interdependent than ever before. So the Chamber has evolved to build stronger communities by involving its membership in the top local business, civic and social priorities.

### Why should I join the Chamber instead of an industry organization that better understands my business?

The Chamber attracts business leaders from a range of businesses. This important advantage provides members with an opportunity to connect to vital economic and community issues beyond their individual organizations, and to volunteer with other leaders to make a positive impact on the local business environment.

### How does the Chamber benefit my business?

With its unique leadership opportunities, connections to local business leaders and business-building initiatives, the Chamber helps create a climate of growth and success in which all companies – regardless of size or industry – can prosper.

# evaluation

## measurement & evaluation

Armed with the research and resources provided through the ACCE Chamber Image Campaign, you will be in a position to more effectively reinforce top-of-mind awareness of your chamber, increase member and community understanding of the chamber's role and value and improve the image and perceptions of the chamber. How will you measure your success?

There are many ways chambers can measure and evaluate the success of your campaign aside from standard methods involving tracking through market research, advertising circulation, viewership and listenership. Some are lower in cost. Some are more perceptual than finite. But, they all can be used to guide your communications program and measure the infusion of the new chamber messaging.

Some of the opportunities to track message delivery and evaluate feedback cost little or nothing and are as follows:

### **News Media Coverage**

- Change in the number of meetings with news reporters
- Change in the number of chamber feature stories
- Change in the number of key message uses
- Change in the number of times chamber expert is quoted
- Change in the number of opportunities for op/eds
- Change in the number of television vs. radio vs. newspaper stories

- Comparison to the editorial share-of-voice received by competitive organizations
- Increase in the number of positive stories and mentions vs. controversial
- Increase in the use of photos to enhance the chamber's market visibility

#### Contacts/Visibility/Outreach

- Increase in number of personal membership contacts
- Increase in attendance at events & conversations containing key messages
- Increase in number of speaking opportunities & numbers of attendees
- Increase in the requests or mail out of literature with key messages
- Increase in the number of committees & participation in those committees that support key message areas
- Increase in outreach opportunities for information through sponsorship & bartering
- Increase in requests for chamber executives participation – “seat at the table” – as a center of influence in the community

#### Awareness Surveys

- Online or faxed survey of members to identify changes in awareness of chamber image and key messages as well as changes in perceptions of performance
- Online or faxed survey using available business & community lists
- Comment cards at events

Sometimes, it is just anecdotal feedback on elevators, at meetings or attending receptions that lets you know the target audience knows more, sees more and is more interested.

# questions

## frequently asked questions

### Frequently Asked Questions about the Campaign

#### GENERAL

##### **What is the National Chamber Image Campaign?**

The Campaign is a program that will provide tools, research, messages, ads, training, and recognition to ACCE member chambers of commerce so that they can better communicate their value to both businesses and the community at large.

##### **Why did ACCE create the National Chamber Image Campaign?**

The National Chamber Image Campaign began as an ambitious action item in ACCE's 2002-2005 Strategic Plan. In 2006, after a \$120,000 investment and countless hours of volunteer leadership, ACCE members have access to a full-fledged, comprehensive set of tools and the chamber profession has, for the first time, the beginnings of a grassroots campaign to raise the chamber's brand awareness within the business community.

##### **How did ACCE create the National Chamber Image Campaign?**

ACCE hired The Quixote Group, LLC, a marketing strategy firm located in Greensboro, North Carolina. Together with this firm, ACCE staff and many volunteers worked together to explore member needs, research the brand, and prepare materials that would enable chambers to better communicate their value. Volunteers included representative small, medium, large, and state chambers of commerce from communities across the country.

**What are the desired outcomes of the National Chamber Image Campaign?**

- Improved levels of understanding of the work chambers do based on a clearly articulated and differentiated market positioning
- Increased levels of relevance and perceived value
- Availability of quality marketing materials and strategies at a fraction of what it would cost to create these materials locally
- Clarity of the marketing message
- Indirect support of chamber membership recruitment and retention efforts
- Support for the leadership value of chamber membership and involvement
- Increased marketing presence in cities and communities across the country to raise the overall awareness of the role of the chamber of commerce.

**What Campaign materials do I get as part of my ACCE membership?**

First and foremost, ACCE members receive a \$25,000 + value in the Message Infusion Toolkit, available free of charge to all members:

- Custom national chamber brand research results
- Key brand messages
- Tagline
- Message infusion worksheets
- Samples of chamber communications and marketing materials

In the Public Relations Toolkit, members receive a \$5,000 + value in public relations materials and training, at no additional charge.

In addition, our research shows that ACCE members who buy the Advertising Toolkit receive an estimated value of \$4 for every \$1 invested in the Toolkit if just one ad is used. If four ads are used, members are receiving a value of \$16 for every \$1 invested.

Members also have access to training opportunities in DIALogue teleseminars and the annual convention, as well as dozens of samples and case studies demonstrating superior chamber communications and marketing, available on ACCE's website. In 2007 members will also have an opportunity to earn national recognition for their communications and marketing materials, both in the existing Award for Communications Excellence (ACE) program as well as the soon-to-be-launched Chamber of the Year competition.

**My Chamber of Commerce is not called “chamber of commerce.” Can I adapt or use the National Chamber Image Campaign materials?**

Yes. If the key messages apply to your organization, use them. The key messages will not apply to all chambers of commerce, so choose those that do. The advertising and public relations portions of the Campaign materials are customizable – simply replace “Chamber of Commerce” with the name you’ve adopted, such as “Business Council” or “Partnership”.

**Do you have training materials I can use to introduce the concept of the Campaign to my staff and/or volunteers?**

Yes. We realize that truly infusing the Campaign messaging into your existing communications will take some buy-in and training. Please visit [acce.org/image](http://acce.org/image) to download some “train the trainer” materials.

**Can state (or regional) chambers of commerce participate in the National Chamber Image Campaign?**

Yes. The campaign was designed to be useful for local, state, and regional chambers of commerce, and materials are trademarked but available to all ACCE members.

## MESSAGING

**Small businesses and large businesses find different values in membership with chambers of commerce. Does the Campaign address that?**

Key messages don't change – value propositions change. It's how you demonstrate value that matters. You tailor your value – in advocacy for a small business – perhaps on a more local level such as sign ordinance for a large company. The ROI messages on the worksheets are probably going to resonate more with small business; the larger chambers probably prefer the community aspects. Emphasize activities like “networking” for small business.

# reference

## samples

### Taglines

The following taglines are trademarked by the chambers using them. Note the universal appeal to community as well as business audiences and interests as chambers, partnerships, councils and other member organizations shift toward a larger and more far-reaching messaging strategy and focus.

Powerful Ideas. Positive Results.™

Greater Indianapolis (IN) Chamber of Commerce

Progress On Purpose.™

Darke County (OH) Chamber of Commerce

Leading Lexington Into the Future.™

Greater Lexington (SC) Chamber of Commerce

The City's Chamber of Commerce and Region's Economic Development Leader™

MetroHartford (CT) Alliance

Building Strong Businesses That Build Strong Communities™

Meadowlands (NJ) Regional Chamber of Commerce

Leadership, Opportunities, Results.™

Somerset County (NJ) Business Partnership

## Mission Statements

The following mission statements are copyrighted by the chambers using them.

The Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber of Commerce provides programs and services that meet the business & professional needs of our members while promoting efforts to make the community a better place to live & work.

– *Hagerstown-Washington County (MD) Chamber of Commerce*

To provide leadership that fosters growth and prosperity by ensuring the Nashville/Music City region is the best place to operate and grow a business, as well as the most desirable place to live, work, play and visit.

– *Nashville (TN) Area Chamber of Commerce*

To be one of the nation's most respected and influential regional networks of business leaders, committed to strengthening the economic vitality of our region and the performance of our members through research-based public policy initiatives, information services, and network-building programs.

– *The Business Council of Fairfield County (CT)*

To strengthen, enhance and protect business®.

- *Las Vegas (NV) Chamber of Commerce*

### **Boilerplate Sample**

A boilerplate paragraph is often helpful for quickly conveying the essence of your positioning. Use it as part of the closing paragraph in a news release, in brochures, on your website, and in other materials distributed to the public.

A sample of a boilerplate paragraph for a local chamber is:

Founded in \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ Chamber of Commerce is the community's leading advocate and champion for business. Its primary objective is to create a climate of growth and success in our community. The \_\_\_\_\_ Chamber provides leadership programs and opportunities as well as volunteer programs and business-building initiatives that focus on the critical priorities of the community. By leveraging the support, talent, and resources of its members, the \_\_\_\_\_ Chamber is one of the leading organizations helping to improve the economic vitality and quality of life for everyone.

# campaign

## committee members

### **National Chamber Image Campaign Committee Members 2002-2006**

Richard “Dick” Blouse, CCE, President and CEO, Detroit (MI) Regional Chamber

\* Tammy J. Carnrike, CCE, Executive Vice President, Detroit (MI) Regional Chamber

James A. Chavez, President and CEO, Clarksville (TN) /Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

Daniel “Dan” C. Colantone, CCE, President, Greater Akron (OH) Chamber of Commerce

Tamara Door, CCE, President and CEO, Downtown Denver (CO) Partnership, Inc.

Kim Doran, CEO, Quixote Group (NC)

Sherrie Gilchrist, President and CEO, Chattanooga (TN) African American Chamber of Commerce

Russell “Rusty” Hammer, President and CEO, Los Angeles (CA) Area Chamber of Commerce

Rex K. Hammond, CCE, President and CEO, Lynchburg (VA) Regional Chamber of Commerce

\* Stephen “Steve” Higdon, Former President and CEO, Greater Louisville (KY), Inc.

Douglas S. Kinsinger, CCE, President and CEO, Greater Topeka (KS) Chamber of Commerce

Steve Leahy, CCE, President and CEO, Greater Seattle (WA) Chamber of Commerce

Chuck Mattina, President and COO, Quixote Group (NC)

John S. Myrland, CCE, Former President, Greater Indianapolis (IN) Chamber of Commerce

Nancy Myrland, President, Myrland Marketing, Inc. (IN)

Joseph F. Reagan, President and CEO, Greater Louisville (KY) Inc. – The Metro Chamber of Commerce

Jennifer A. Schmiel, Vice President, Membership and Marketing, Nashville (TN) Chamber of Commerce

Blair Stanford, Group Vice President, Communications, Charlotte (NC) Chamber of Commerce

Gary Toebben, CCE, President, Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

\* Michael “Mike” Varney, Former Vice President, Marketing, Las Vegas (NV) Chamber of Commerce

Floyd Warner, President, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

\* Perry E. Webb, CCE, President and CEO, Springdale (AR) Chamber of Commerce

\* Former committee chairmen

Information in this booklet is accurate at the time of publication and consistent with the principles of good research and chamber management.

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ACCE's mission is to enhance the professional effectiveness and personal well being of chamber executives. The organizational vision is that ACCE be a visible, positive influence in the management life of every chamber professional.

On behalf of the chamber profession, ACCE has invested in the research and creative work needed to clearly define the "chamber of commerce" brand and its attributes, in order to support the two-fold chamber mission to lead both businesses and communities. This effort is known as the National Chamber Image Campaign.

ACCE member chambers of commerce in good standing may use the National Chamber Image Campaign Toolkits free-of-charge and may purchase Campaign creative materials, such as print and broadcast advertising, at a very significantly reduced cost.

This new member benefit will help chambers directly increase their levels of relevance and perceived value with the members and communities they serve.

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**Terms and Conditions for Use**

1. You must be an ACCE member chamber of commerce in good standing to use the Campaign materials.
2. Downloading the Content does not transfer title to the Content, or any intellectual property rights therein, from ACCE.
3. You may not redistribute or sell the content.

**Usage of Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.™**

- You must be an ACCE member chamber of commerce in good standing to use the trademarked phrase or logo.
- You must agree to follow the brand identity guidelines when using the phrase or logo.

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The American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) has partnered with marketing consultants Quixote Group, LLC, to bring members the most accurate and reliable branding and messaging resource developed specifically for the chamber industry.

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## About the American Chamber of Commerce Executives

Established in 1914, ACCE is the only national association servicing the professional development needs of chamber professionals throughout the United States and Canada. Representing more than 7,300 individuals, ACCE promotes the highest standards of professional excellence and integrity within the chamber profession.



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