

Employing Membership Opportunities



Last year I was elected vice president of the American Society of Business Publication Editors—Chicago Chapter. Since then I have learned just how imperative it is to be part of an organization that promotes your industry and teaches you how to excel at your job. This has made me an advocate for such organizations. As a member of the Water Quality Association, I also get a first-hand look at how the water purification industry can capitalize from its associations.

For some people the membership may serve a great duty as being an extra line on a resume. However, for many others, they discover a much more fulfilling and enriching service that they apply each day in their jobs, and often it is what launches them ahead of the competitor across town.

Some of the benefits that I receive from memberships in my organizations include advice for career and business strategies; current information on events, legislation and other timely topics that affect my business; networking opportunities with peers and competitors; solutions for problems; and further education. It also is an excellent chance to get many third-party views about a particular issue or question. In addition, your activity in these organizations displays your true interest in promoting and maintaining your industry and its livelihood to consumers, management, peers and even government officials.

Most often the choice is obvious, join all that you can, but in times of a slowed economy, professionals tend to sweep such expenses as trade shows, seminars and other travel as well as membership expenses under the carpet. In such times, it is quite the opposite that should happen in order to promote ourselves to current markets and reach out to new ones. Our trusted associations could be the key to getting our businesses back into full swing.

I advise you to be proactive. Contact your associations—local, state, regional and national. Find out what they offer and how they can help you and your business. Make a list of what interests you and what will help you turn a profit. Then, take advantage of those opportunities. I think it is safe to say that each of these organizations welcomes input from its members. So, don't be afraid to tell them what else they can be doing for you.

If you have been wondering why you or your employees should begin your membership and how to capitalize on such an endeavor, give the headquarters or a member you know a call and get those questions answered. It could just be the first step to strengthening your business.

Best Wishes,

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