

FIRST 2 YEARS OF CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP RETENTION STRATEGY

MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER PRESIDENT

BRAD GRUHOT

CAREER

- 11 Years at the Southdale YMCA
- Chamber Career began in 2009 at the SouthWest Metro Chamber
- 2011-2014 - Bloomington Chamber (Membership)
- 2014 - Named Membership Director
- 2016 - Marshall Area Chamber President

INVOLVEMENT

- Boards & Committees
 - Southwest Minnesota State University
 - Holy Redeemer Church
 - Hope Harbor (Chair)
 - SWMCCE Group
 - (Prior) MCCE Board
 - (Prior) MACE Board

ABOUT ME

- Married, 2 Children
- Enjoys Traveling & Visiting Friends
- Minnesota Sports Fan



BRAD GRUHOT

PRESIDENT, MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER

MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER

LOCATION

Located in Southwest Minnesota
Downtown Marshall on Main Street

All are welcome to join our
Chamber - hence, "area!"

SIZE

617 Current Members
41 Courtesy
163+ Prospective

Ample opportunities to grow our Chamber, but we
avoid overstepping into another Chamber's area.

OUR TEAM

Staff of 4
Interns, Job Shadows
Ambassadors
Board Members
Committees

INVOLVEMENT

50-60 Chamber Events Per Year
Community Involvement
Partnerships
Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies

- Increased community exposure
- Networking opportunities
- Business credibility
- Civic engagement
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Online and printed directory
- Legislative voice
- Invest in a business community
- Access to partnerships and community leaders
- Special events
- Communication resources
- Ambassador visits
- Accepts Chamber Gift Checks

MAIN BENEFITS

OF JOINING OUR CHAMBER

- **Chambers are Trusted:** 81% of U.S. adults agree that their local chamber is a trusted resource and partner for businesses. 90% feel that their local chambers has an impact on growing the local economy.
- **Chamber Membership Strengthens a Business's Reputation:** 64% of adults who are familiar with their local chamber are more likely to purchase goods and services for a business that they know is a member of their local chamber. 63% of these adults are more likely to recommend that business to someone else.
- **Chambers Serve Businesses and Communities:** 76% of U.S. adults agree that local chambers are stewards of a strong local economy. 74% believe local chambers create jobs and promote local community development. 72% believe local chambers play a key role in addressing community challenges.
- **Business Owners See the Value:** 65% of business owners see their local chamber as an advocate for initiatives and policies that are in the best interest of their business. 62% believe the chamber supports the growth and prosperity of their business.
- **People Want to Learn More About Their Local Chamber:** 70% of U.S. adults wished they knew more about the work their local chamber does in the community. Specifically, they are most commonly interested in learning more about the type of impact local chambers have in their community (49%), more general information about chambers of commerce (43%), and which local businesses are members (42%).

STATISTICS

IMPACT & VALUE OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE POLL - ACCE (SEPT. 2024)

INITIAL VISIT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

Potential member applies online or stops in the office.

Meeting is set up with the President.

Scheduled meeting takes place.

Make a point of listening intently to what the prospective member is saying to you about why they're considering joining. Use this information to determine the direction of the conversation.

Why do they wish to join?

What benefits are they looking for?

What can we do for them?

Offer the application if it needs to be completed + discuss payment and membership type.

If they're unsure, provide time for them to think about it. Follow up with them at a later date to see if they have questions or still want to join.

MAKE SURE JOINING YOUR CHAMBER IS AN EASY PROCESS TO NAVIGATE!

YOU JOINED OUR CHAMBER, NOW WHAT?

Learn all about your Chamber membership benefits.

Visit Our Website
Attend Chamber 101
Meet with Chamber President
Create Your Chamber Profile

You're invited to all our events.

Added to Emailing List
Given Events Calendar
Register via Chamber Profile
Free or Discounted Rates for Members

Marketing and promotion done.

E-Newsletter
Newspaper Mention
Social Media New Member Post
Ambassador Visit & Ribbon Cutting
Other Publications
Media

We assign you a mentor.

A Board member will be in contact with you throughout your first year to ask how things are going, personally invite you to events and happenings, and to check -in.

Given resources to help you.

Connect to Other Members
Connect to Local Leaders
Chamber President as B2B Resource
Statistics from Chamber Profile
Marketing and Promotion Options

Follow up with you & check -in.

Mentor or President Check -Ins
Find Current Needs
Help Get You More Engaged
Provide Info on Sponsorship or Other Promotional Opportunities

MEMBER RETENTION

YEAR 1 & 2

Our 2024 -2025 Retention Rate: 92.44%

- Good Membership Retention:
 - Increase engagement! Keeping members engaged by encouraging them to participate in events and other opportunities, join committees, and more.
 - Follow their membership journey. Understand their reason for joining, their engagement, renewing, and why they'd consider leaving. Meet their need at every stage.
 - Make them feel their value. Include them in your welcome program (Chamber 101), express appreciation, offer referrals and member -only perks / events.

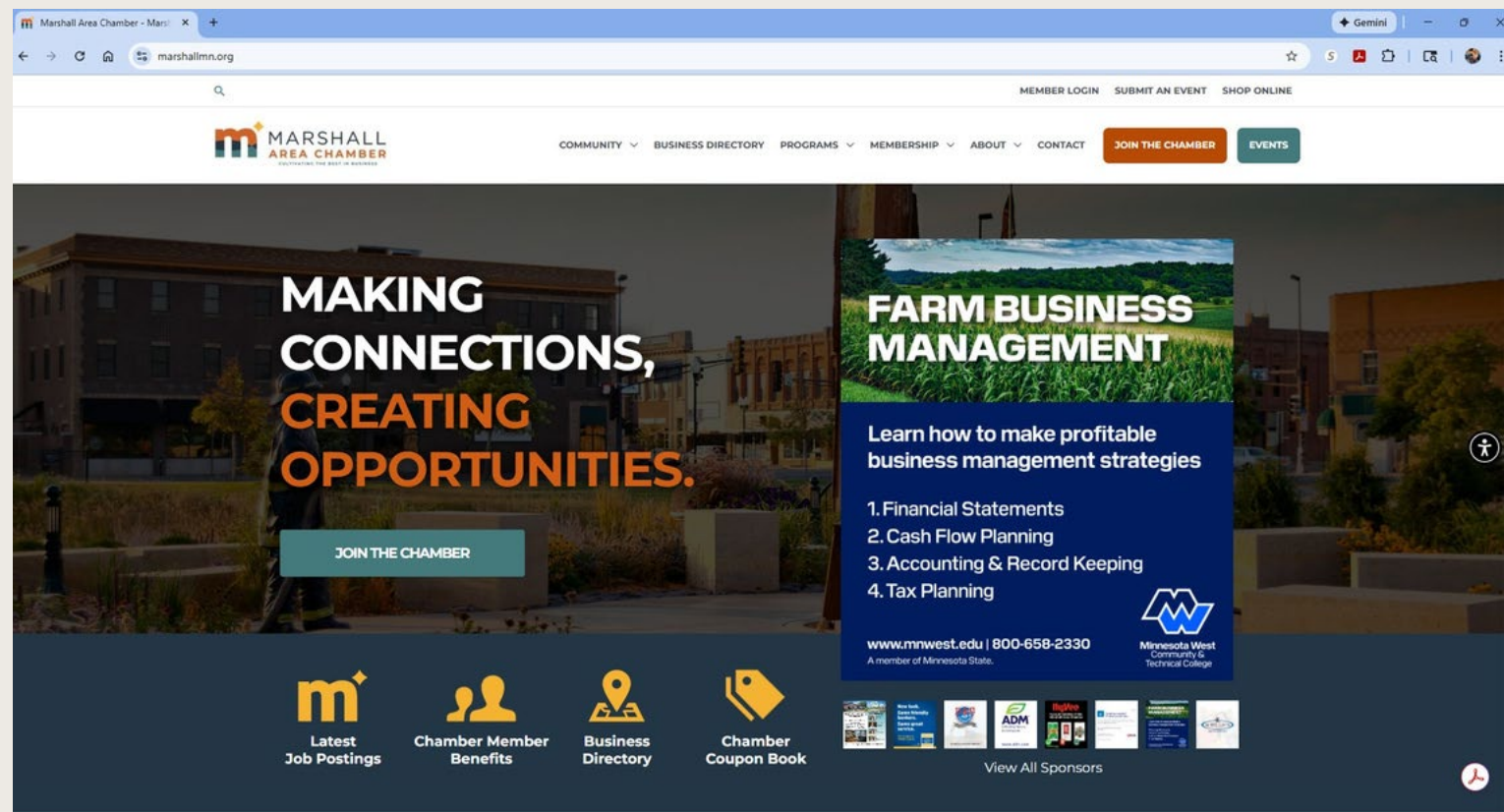
IMPROVE RETENTION

- Review your current renewal process.
- Find any gaps then help fill them in.
- Reach out to former members to find out the reasons they left or ask prospective members their reasons they do not wish to join / re-join.
- Use a mentor / mentee program.
- Keep a calendar and checklist of members you need to engage with, meet with, or follow up throughout the year.



THE CHAMBER LEARN ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

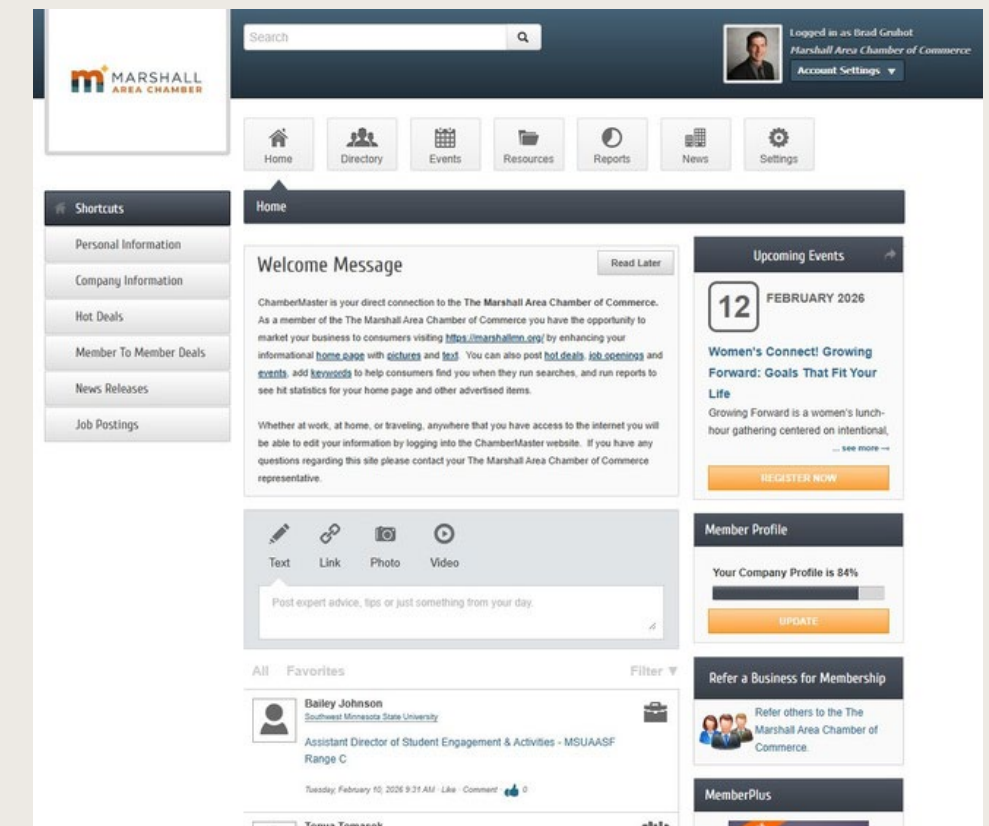
Learn all about Chamber membership benefits and how we can help.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE



CHAMBER 101 +
MEET WITH PRESIDENT



CREATE CHAMBER PROFILE



INVITED TO CONNECT EVENTS & MORE

The member is invited to all our events and to engage with us in other ways!

- Added to Emailing Lists to Stay in the Loop
 - Friday E -Newsletter: Always includes our upcoming events.
 - Added to Other Relevant Lists: Women's Connect, Primary Contacts, Hospitality, etc.
- Given Chamber Events List for the Month
 - Printed + Found on our Website
- Encouraged to Attend Events to Network and Meet Other Members
 - Free Events or Discounted Rates for Chamber Members
 - Register for Events via Chamber Profile Login

INVITED TO CONNECT EVENTS & MORE

WOMEN'S CONNECT



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



ANNUAL MEETING



TASTE OF MARSHALL



MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Marketing completed from staff -end to promote the new Chamber member at no -cost to them.

- **E-Newsletter:** name included in E -Newsletter that goes out to over 2,000 people weekly.
- **Newspaper Mention:** name included in monthly publication in local newspaper (Chamber Connection).
- **Social Media Post:** if desired, member sends photo(s) and a description that we use to post on a Monday feature (“New Member Monday”). Business is tagged and contacted to let you know it was scheduled so you can share once posted. Posted on Facebook, our private Facebook group (Live Local), Instagram, and X. Reshared to our Downtown Marshall page if also a Downtown member.
- **Ambassador Visit & Ribbon Cutting:** President schedules a First Dollar Award with you; our Ambassadors attend. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is also an option if applies.
 - These are also posted on our Social Media, included in E -Newsletter, put in the local newspaper 2x.
- **Other Publications:** information included in City Map, Marshall Community Guide, and more.
- **Media:** business could be discussed on Chamber Chatter (radio), Community Connect (TV), or included in other areas if relevant to what we are promoting.

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

2026 MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER COUPON BOOK
Valid January 1 - December 31, 2026

Big Savings in
Marshall
& Surrounding Areas

Shop & Support Local
SAVINGS FROM 120+ BUSINESSES • 220+ COUPONS INSIDE!

\$30



MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER
CULTIVATING THE BEST IN BUSINESS

Chamber E-Connection
Weekly News & Events Newsletter
February 6, 2026

ON AIR
UNITED WAY
Wednesday February 18, 2026
7:00 am - 4:00 pm

2026 Chamber Coupon Books are HERE!
2026 MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER COUPON BOOK
Valid January 1 - December 31, 2026

Community Connect

Chamber CONNECTION
The Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce Connection to Local Business, Public Policy, Economic Development, & Community Events

A Word from the Chamber President...
Have you noticed the large number of youth entrepreneurs in the Marshall Area over the last three to four years? Thanks to the Lyon Murray CEO program and the SMSU Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, our student members have grown from a single member (Cash's Candy) to 25 student members as you read this. There is a certain energy surrounding these student businesspeople that has been fun to watch. I have served as a mentor for the Lyon Murray CEO program for four years. Some of the alumni are still running their own businesses, like Wings Ave Company & Silver Dollar Auction Company. Not only are we seeing entrepreneurs coming out of the CEO & SMSU Center programs but now I am seeing youth entrepreneurs coming out of everywhere! Most recently, a new high school grad out of Marshall started a gutter cleanup business, along with snow removal and yard cleanup, called Outdoor Overhaul. He does this on the side while he works full-time at Geske Home Improvement. Do you know of any young entrepreneurs that has started their own business? We have student membership available and I would love to keep growing this group of young members. Take a look at the directory on our website at www.marshallmn.org and filter student members. Some of them have moved on from their student membership to a traditional membership as well. *Brad*

RECENT CHAMBER EVENTS & HAPPENINGS
Young Professionals Networking & Card Making for Seniors | Let's Connect Members Give One Minute "Commercials" | SMSU Chamber Day SMSU Meetings Celebrate the Chamber! | Marshall Leadership Academy (MLA) Community Safety Day | Women's Connect Let's Talk Finance! Panel of speakers | Chamber 101 Learn the ins and outs of the Chamber!

WELCOME NEW CHAMBER MEMBERS!
Alex Farms & Baking | WB Excavating & Septic LLC | RiverRock Cleaning Co. | Brad & Joyce Strotdorn | Jordan Bakes Treats

Never Miss Out on Local Event!
Our Chamber member events-based newsletter goes out every Friday morning. Sign up using the QR code now!

Marshall Area Chamber
Published by Shelby Buchholz • 3 days ago

New Member Monday!
"Hi everyone I'm Sarah! I am the owner of Little Mill Bread Co. here in Marshall, MN! I started my bakery in January 2024 as a little side hobby, but little did I know it would grow into so much more! My goal is to create good and nutritious bread while also offering a fun and unique experience for my customers! Because I work entirely out of my home, I utilize an online storefront. Each week I post a new menu and customers are able to order for pickup. A ... See more

See insights and ads
168
10 comments 6 shares



CHAMBER CHATTER

Tune into Marshall Radio every Friday to hear about this week's local events & Chamber news!

8:40AM | 8:50AM | 11:40AM | 3:40PM

MARSHALL AREA CHAMBER
CULTIVATING THE BEST IN BUSINESS

MARSHALL RADIO
VOICE OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA





CHAMBER

MENTOR & MENTEE PROGRAM

- We will (internally) assign you a mentor - typically a Chamber Board member.
 - We keep track of assignment on a spreadsheet.
 - The mentor will keep the Chamber President updated when they reach out and what was discussed.
 - We recap this information at our Board meetings and discuss new ideas based off what we are hearing from members.
- The mentor is encouraged to reach out after the member first joins to connect, see if they have questions, ask how things are going, personally invite the member to events and Chamber happenings, and general check -in on the business.



RESOURCES JUST FOR MEMBERS

After you join, we will provide or offer resources to help you however relevant to your business or organization.

- How you can [connect with other Chamber members](#), whether to partner, use their services, learn from them, or just to connect with other community members.
- How you can [connect with local leaders](#) with challenges you're facing, questions you have, or how to get more involved locally.
- Use the [Chamber President](#) as a resource! The President can do B2B connections, help you get involved with our community, or make introductions.
- We will provide statistics from your [Chamber profile](#); how much traffic you're getting and more.
 - This is a great way to have their own "webpage" if they don't have their own site to utilize. We offer options to upgrade their pages as well.
- [Marketing and promotion options](#) - free (as previously mentioned) and purchase options.
 - Extra cost but effective at getting the word out: banner ads, marketing package, advertisements (print and online), sponsorship opportunities, event involvement, and more.



CONNECTION

FOLLOW UPS AFTER JOINING

We will follow up with you and check -in throughout your first year and beyond to see how things are going.

- Mentor or Chamber President check -ins.
- We will discuss the member's current needs.
- We want to help the member get more engaged, especially if we don't see they've been using their Chamber profile (posting events, jobs, webpage, etc.) and not attending events (find out why).
- We will provide the member with information on our sponsorship or promotional opportunities if we feel they may be a good fit.

- We continue to monitor how active our members are. Watch if a member suddenly stops attending events, is not engaged online, was previously in -touch often but no longer responds, or stops providing support to the Chamber in general. These are ones you want to follow up with personally to see if there is something going on.
- Chamber President sets up business visits to meet with owners occasionally to check -in.
- New ideas are discussed at staff and Board meetings on how to keep members engaged, review what we are doing as a Chamber that could be improved, and how to appeal to members are aren't reaching / aren't being engaged. We always want to improve what we are doing so we can make sure we offer something to benefit each member in some way to help retain our members.
- Our hope is always that the member continues to renew their membership , but we understand sometimes a member can no longer keep a membership (funds, business closing, change in ownership, etc.).

What if they are considering dropping for other reasons?

NEXT STEPS

AFTER THE FIRST 2 YEARS

HOW TO KEEP A MEMBER

IF THEY CONSIDER DROPPING

- The Chamber President will follow up with the member to have a casual discussion about their membership and the reasons they're considering dropping membership.
- Provide statistics from their Chamber profile and any relevant advertising we've done (if applicable and available) to show traffic, clicks, interest from viewers, etc.
- Provide a list where we've mentioned or promoted their business whether online, print, radio or TV.
- Review the benefits and things relevant to their business they may not be taking advantage of as part of their membership. They may not have that information or have known about it!
- Discuss ways we can help get them engaged or promote them (at no cost if funding is an issue), and offer assistance (if able to) with any issues they may be facing.

If a member does drop, then what?

- Attempt to get a reason why they are dropping and make note.
- Add them to our Prospective Member (marked as a prior Chamber member) list.
- Review these members annually and discuss at Board meetings to see if a mentor or Chamber President can reach out to see if there is interest in re-joining.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Review your current processes and check your numbers - they don't lie! There is always room for adjustments and improvements.
- Review your Chamber as a whole - are you offering things that benefit a wide variety of businesses and organizations? Are things you're currently offering working or being used? If not, reassess. Find gaps and help fill them in!
- The first year of membership is the most important and will set the tone for their membership. Take extra time to follow up and make a connection with new members to ensure a renewal year after year.
- Get your Board and committees involved in retaining members - having that support will only benefit you and your members.

QUESTIONS?



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Facebook | Instagram | X