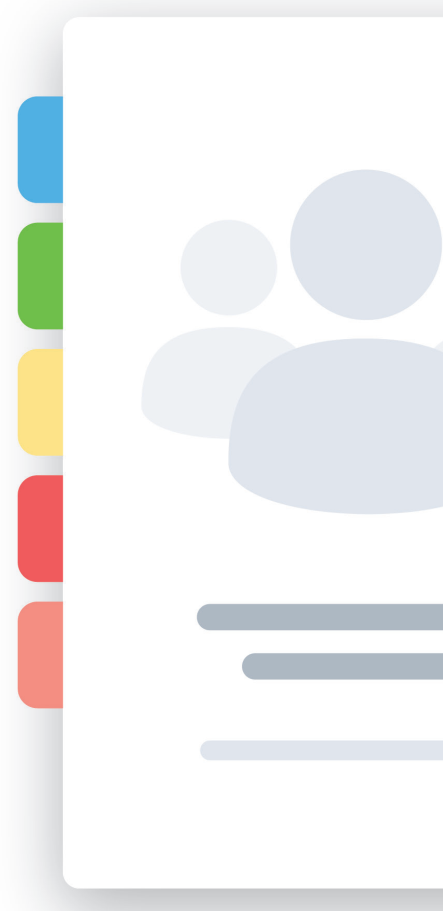
Getting the Most *Out of Your Chamber's* Online Directory

MemberClicks

A common benefit to chamber membership is being included in the chamber's directory. To a member, it means endorsement for their business from a leader in the community, exposure to the rest of your membership, and leads, leads, leads!

Before we had the Internet, chambers were in the practice of annually printing and distributing their entire membership directory. But then a little entrepreneur came along and created a way for chambers to display their directory online, forever changing the way this benefit provides value to chamber investors.

Now that chamber directories are (mostly) all online, you have the flexibility to squeeze even more value out of them — value for investors and for the chamber itself. In this guide, we'll uncover a few ways your chamber can get more out of its online directory!



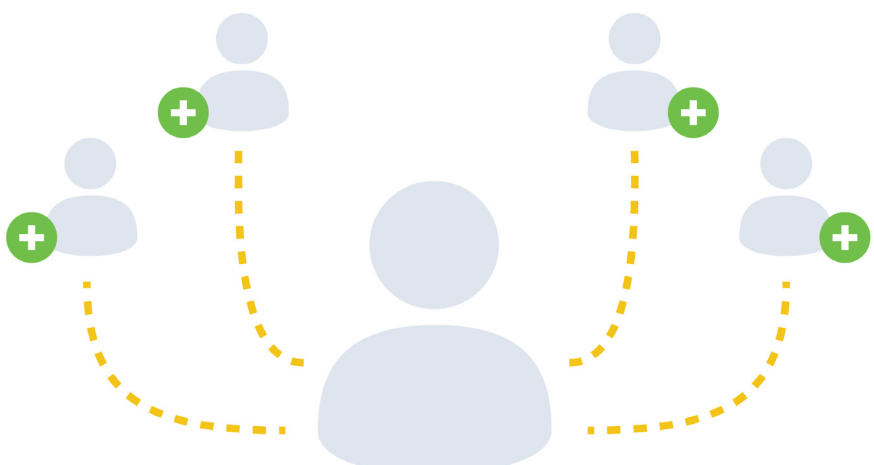
Demonstrate those referrals

In the days of print directories, a member never really knew where a referral to their business came from (unless they asked, of course). With an online directory, chambers can lend a helping hand! Be proactive and dig into that directory to show investors the referrals that you're sending their way.

Not only is this an easy way to demonstrate value on investment (VOI) for that particular member organization, but it also gives them some intel on what kind of people are searching for the product or service they provide. Making regular practice of doing this for each member will do wonders for their happiness with (and loyalty to) your chamber.

Pro tip:

Check out your membership management system to see if some kind of referral report exists so you can easily pull this information!

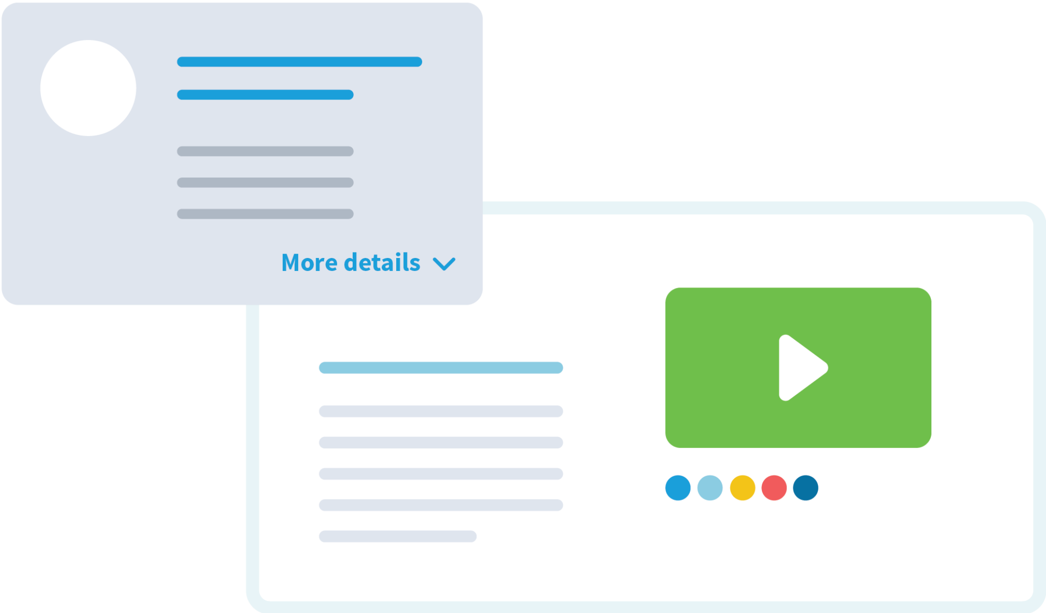


It's all in the details

Typically, each directory listing will include the member organization's name, contact information, and a short description of their product or service. Thinking about your own directory — what happens when a visitor clicks through on a listing and goes to the "details" page? Do they actually get any more *details* than what was on the listing itself?

A details page is another great place to build investor value. This page can be viewed as a members' own mini website within your website. Help them use it to its fullest extent, with videos, social buttons, a longer description, a contact form, and more.

That being said, you may want to reserve certain enhancements for non-dues revenue opportunities of your own.



Did somebody say non-dues revenue?

Develop different levels of listings (or extra details page enhancements) that investors can spend a little extra to upgrade to. Level 1 will be your standard listing, with each higher level adding more features and ways to make them stand out. Some of these extras could be:

- **Company logo**
- **Icons for coupons, amenities, social media, and more**
- **Colors that contrast the standard listing**
- **Better listing position**
- **Longer/more detailed descriptions**
- **Additional contact information**
- **Links to online reviews**
- **A "View Map" link**

Alternatively, depending on your membership structure, these levels and enhancements could be reserved for members in higher tiered packages (aka, businesses who are already investing more in your chamber).

Pro tip:

Directory enhancements are also a great addition to sponsorship packages!

Prospecting

Turn your online directory into a chamber investor prospecting machine with two easy strategies:

Be directory-all-inclusive

Consider adding every single business in your community to your online directory (with some kind of distinction or enhancement for your members). This will give those non-members a taste of what it's like to be a part of the chamber. Give them a heads up, and then watch your phones and inboxes light up with messages from prospects once they see the referrals start rolling in!

Look at popular categories

While you're digging into your directory to show member organizations the details about their referrals, pay close attention to what kinds of businesses are getting the most referrals overall. Then take that data to a non-member in the same category and show them what they're missing!

A case study:

Exceeding non-dues revenue expectations

The Southern Colorado Apartment Association was looking to increase non-dues revenue through sponsorship opportunities, and — while they aren't a chamber — we thought this was a pretty unique and powerful example to share that any membership-based organization needs to consider!

Check out how they used their online directory to blow their advertising expectations out of the water:

"The Power Player program is one we have used to sell bulk advertising and other exclusive opportunities to our members who make a certain event sponsorship commitment. By creating exclusivity for these package holders (a value that last for a full 12 months), I have had some VERY positive results. We have also had great renewal rates.

Without our membership management system's online features like priority listings, added directory logos, and other enhancements, I'm sure the program would not have been as successful. The user training I attended in the fall of 2015 really helped me see how every 'impression' an organization makes for a sponsor creates value. Once we started tracking & promoting those little things as something worth investing in, members understood and were eager to participate.

For a third year in a row our Power Player program is sold out and has generated over $28,000 in print/digital advertising revenue. That does not include the event sponsorship dollars they are required to commit to. It also doesn't include the print/digital advertising we sell to members independently, for example a single ad in the directory or an online bundle of features. I'm very pleased to share that we are on track to hit $40,000 this year alone in advertising revenue."

— The Southern Colorado Apartment Association

Beyond your online directory, there are a ton of ways you can expand your benefits into different levels of investment, and develop membership packages based on value — yep, we're talking about a "tiered dues" structure!

Allowing investors to self-select into a package of benefits that makes the most sense for their unique business needs will improve your member engagement, retention, and overall satisfaction.

For do's & don'ts, tips for setting up benefits packages, and guidance on communicating the change to members,

check out our free guide, **How to Increase Chamber Membership Value by Implementing Tiered Dues!**

Click here to check it out!

More about MemberClicks

MemberClicks offers all the tools that membership organizations need to make the most of the web. From online databases and event registrations to custom-designed websites and member communities, our products are tailor-made for professional associations, trade associations, and chambers of all sizes.

For more information:

- **Visit us at memberclicks.com**
- **or call us at 800.914.2441**

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