

8 Great Responses to Chamber Membership Sales Objections

If you actively pursue membership sales at your chamber, then you will run into plenty of membership sales objections from businesses receiving your membership invitation.

There are some people who just can't see the value in chamber membership. Maybe they're just not joiners.

But more often, their "no" is likely based on a misconception or a misunderstanding of what the chamber does and what it can offer.

We collected the most popular sales objections to joining the chamber and have compiled some great responses you can use to change the course of the conversation.

A blurred background image showing two men in a meeting. One man is seen from the back, wearing a light-colored shirt, and the other is facing him, wearing a dark shirt. They appear to be sitting at a table in a bright, modern office setting.

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The Power of the Negative

Have you ever seen the movie Time Bandits? It's a Terry Gilliam classic from the early '80s.

At the end of the movie, the main character (a little boy) tells his parents not to open the toaster and look inside (it's a rather silly classic, just stay with me here). Guess what his parents do?

Of course...

they look in.

Boom!

People have a natural inclination to do what they're told not to do—and it's not just teenagers.

That's why a very powerful sales tool when responding to a membership sales objection is to relent and agree that the chamber may not be a great fit for them.

Now, this is a secret weapon.

You don't pull it out every time. After all, you don't want to discount the value of chamber membership. Think of the negative as a dose of black pepper. You don't want to dump it on your dish, but used strategically it can liven up any meal.

People don't want to be told they can't do or shouldn't do something.

When you say, "You're right. Maybe the chamber is not a great fit for what you're trying to accomplish," you're doing two things:

- telling them they probably shouldn't do something, which immediately sharpens their interest and you're not discounting their argument,
- and you're agreeing with them. This will surprise them because they're expecting you to disagree and try to "sell" them.

Suddenly, they're listening because you're on the same side—trying to do what's best for their business.

Top Chamber Membership Sales Objections and How to Respond

If someone doesn't need chamber benefits because they are bringing in money hand over fist, don't need new customers, don't need to grow their network or their influence, don't want to make the business community a better one, **and** never needs to worry about hiring anyone or influencing government action in their favor, then by all means don't waste your time speaking with them.

They're either lying or they think they are a unique entity.



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Most people who decline chamber membership just don't understand the value and investment that it provides.

You can *usually* change that with a great response.

When using these membership sales objection responses, make sure you choose ones that fit the type of business they are in or what they have identified as top concerns or needs for their business. And remember, every membership conversation should begin with what *they* need, not what *you* want to sell.

When we buy software, for instance, we are often looking for one thing, like invoicing. The rest is icing. As a business owner, there's something they need from the chamber. If they confidently believe you can provide this solution, they'll join. If you muddle the conversation with a barrage of benefits, you'll miss what's important and they likely will too.

"I don't have time (to go to events)"

As any chamber pro knows the chamber is more than any one benefit like event invitations. In fact, in the case of events, most members don't attend them with any regularity. If you know your percentage of members who never attend an event but still find value from membership, share that and continue the conversation by talking about what they do need.

Responses:

“When COVID hit, did you need someone to go to bat for your business to help keep you open or allow you to expand in ways that would allow you to continue to be open? The chamber did that.”

“Do your employees have professional development needs or would your employees like to attend events and represent your company? That’s included in the membership. We offer webinars, events, and learning opportunities for everyone on your staff. Professional development is a top-ranking perk for most employees.”

“I don’t need to network”

Responses:

“Is that because you have all of the customers you need or do you have an extensive, established networking group already? If you don’t need to network, what do you need?”

“Tell me more about how you sell if it’s not about relationships.” Listen intently. Ask pertinent questions. Then try the power of the negative. “Maybe you’re right. Maybe you have enough people in your network and all the clients you need. I just hate for you to miss out on the business community we are constructing here in <insert your area>.”



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"I'm already in several chambers"

Response:

"Wonderful. Then you understand the value of chamber membership. I'm glad to hear that."

They will then agree or disagree with your statement. If they agree, continue the conversation by asking what they like best about these other chambers.

If they disagree, ask them what their chamber experience is missing. Use this knowledge to insert how your chamber does these things. Don't disparage the other chamber. Simply look to answer the potential member's needs.

"Chamber membership didn't do anything for us"

Response:

"I'm sorry to hear that. Where did your experience fall short? What were you expecting that you didn't receive?" Listen to their answers and consider how your chamber might offer a different experience.

When you do this, they may be distrustful of what you're saying as they've been through this sales pitch before. In these cases, you could offer a trial or a monthly membership. If you respond to this sales objection, you need to make sure you have a strong onboarding program so they don't have another "nonstarter" experience.

"I grew up here" or "I already know everyone."

If you are in a very small town and people truly do know everyone, then these types of sales objections can be met with robust benefits besides networking.

Quite often the people who know everyone have done so by joining the chamber, but if you've met that one person who isn't and still thinks they're the most connected person in town, focus back on the non-networking benefits.

Response:

"That's terrific. Relationships are how business gets done these days. But we offer a lot more than introductions..."

Then talk about one of the chamber benefits that your prospect identified as a key concern such as marketing assistance, training or **legislative issues**.



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“We have more business than we need”

“That is a wonderful problem to have, isn't it? Sounds like you're growing. That's a testament to you and your business that you are experiencing that level of sales when so many businesses are struggling. How are your hiring needs? Are you attracting the right people and do they have the skills you need? One of the things we're always working on at the chamber is workforce development. We want our area to be a showcase for best practices and attract the best employees in the area. Your input could be very important in shaping the type of skills our area becomes known for.”

If workforce development doesn't apply to this business, consider how you might compliment their expertise and get them involved in the chamber from a sponsorship perspective. If the community has helped them thrive, it may be time for them to give back ... and keep growing because of it.

They may not be ready to be a member but keeping them connected to you is a way for them to see the good work you are doing and...eventually...want to be a part of it.

A Final Word About Chamber Membership Sales Objections

Membership sales has gotten harder over the past decade, partly due to the internet and the idea that businesses can do a lot of what the chamber does for themselves. Many sales objections are based on misjudging how much more efficient a chamber can be at certain activities.

Plus, the reality is that even if they believe they can do it for themselves, they likely won't end up doing it. It's okay to tell them this because most business owners are realistic about their schedules. They're busy and they know this. They have good intentions but deep down understand their limitations when someone has a frank conversation about them.

Most of us need an accountability partner and the chamber can be that for a business. Plus, the chamber is in the business of business. Making business better is the primary job. Even if an organization *can* do those things for themselves, business gets in the way.

The chamber will always prioritize member benefits and they will be available whenever the business wants. The business doesn't need to put its work on hold to create what's already been created by the chamber. While the organization could do it, it becomes a conversation about efficiency and any business owner can appreciate that.

By: *Christina Metcalf*



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[See full bio.](#)

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