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Subject: January 28 Tuesday Lead Share Minutes
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 11:20:38 AM

Notes on Community Networking

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Meeting Introductions (00:00 - 09:59)

- Dennis Donovan, Bowman Gaskins Financial Group
 - Works with clients seeking investment guidance.
 - Noted stock market decline due to a Chinese firm's development of a chat GPT version.
- Kelsey May, Spaces Organized and Styled
 - Focuses on residential organizing and building organizational habits.
- Russ Nagel, Lux Foundation Solutions
 - Specializes in foundation repair for commercial and residential properties.
 - Addresses issues like wet basements and sinking concrete.
- Benjamin Musser, Chamber Operations Manager
 - Announced business networking luncheon at 11:30 AM today.
 - Mentioned door prizes from Harry's at Airlies for the luncheon.
 - Promoted upcoming Greet and Meet New Member luncheon on the 4th.
 - Invited participation in the Young Professionals Council First Friday luncheon on the 7th.
 - Encouraged involvement in Chamber councils and committees.

Community Updates

- Laurie Bersack, Balker Community Theater
 - Announced opening of "The Play that Goes Wrong" on Friday.
 - Shared personal news about upcoming retinal surgery.
- Dr. Tom Nikolai, Fauquier Chiropractic
 - Encouraged maintaining New Year's health resolutions.
- Stephanie Teague, BEMER
 - Discussed longevity and health benefits of the Beamer device.
 - Shared anecdote about selling a Beamer to a 99-year-old.
- Scott Bricker, Orcata Media Group
 - Works with companies on social media, websites, and marketing.

- Judd Walls, Costant Water
 - Provides battery-powered emergency water systems.
 - Discussed recent cold weather impacts on water systems and electrical grid.

Introduction (10:01 - 19:54)

- Erin Bannister, Countryside Title and Escrow, offers unique customer service.
 - Available after hours and on weekends.
 - Example: Met a builder friend at the gym to sign documents.

Chamber's Year-End Report

- Purpose of the report.
 - Serves to measure success and provide value to members.
 - Chamber operates like a subscription-based business.

Measuring Success

- Importance of defining success.
 - "If you can't measure it, don't do it."
- Subjective vs. Objective criteria.
 - Different members may have varying definitions of value.

Data Utilization

- Capturing valuable data for members.
 - Members receive web stats with invoices.
- Click-through rates and page views.
 - Average click-through rate is about 10%.

Membership Insights

- Membership as a cornerstone of financials.
 - Critical for payroll and operational costs.
- Notable increase in membership.
 - 20% increase reported, exceeding initial expectations.

Membership Statistics (19:54 - 29:51)

- Membership is up 20%.
- 36% of new member applications were referred by an active member.
 - Last year, this figure was 46%.
 - The national average is 56%.
- Historical data shows:
 - 2019: 21% referrals before COVID.
 - Post-COVID: referrals dipped to 7% and 9%, then increased to 12% and 20%.
 - Closed last year at 36%.

Importance of Referrals

- Referrals indicate satisfaction with the Chamber's participation.
- Example given of selling Beamer:
 - Stephanie is knowledgeable and sells Beamer.
 - Tom endorses Beamer without vested interest, providing social validation.

Customer Reviews

- Increasing focus on customer reviews as a consumer.
- Verified purchaser reviews are valuable in marketing.

Future Goals

- Goal for referrals is 40% by 2025.
- Historical records are essential for understanding trends.

Metrics and Data Management

- Importance of data collection and management through CRM.
- Emphasis on centralized data for efficiency.
- Example of managing event data through the Chamber platform.

Event Management

- 160 vendors participated in the fall festival.
- One person managed the entire event.
- Challenges faced due to town restrictions on Main Street.

- Adjustments made to accommodate more vendors.
- The event created a central hub with entertainment and activities.

Festival Logistics (29:51 - 39:48)

- Discussion about pushing the festival down Falmouth street.
 - Concerns about the residential area being dark and unknown.
 - Importance of accessibility for residents.
- Bureaucratic challenges regarding Lee Street.
 - Request to use Lee Street denied due to it being a snow emergency route.
 - Emphasis on the unlikelihood of snow in October.

Vendor Management

- Aim to maintain a balance of vendors at the festival.
 - Focus on keeping the majority as crafters rather than other types of businesses.
 - Importance of spacing and staggering vendors.

Success Metrics

- Personal and business perspective on success defined by a 36% metric.
 - Comparison to personal experiences with dining and recommendations.
- Acknowledgment of Benjamin's contributions to social media growth.
 - Recognition of his expertise and youth in utilizing social media effectively.

Email Communication Strategy

- Caution regarding the frequency of emails sent.
 - Concern about recipients opting out if they feel overwhelmed.
 - Emphasis on quality of emails over quantity.
- Regular cadence of emails maintained.
 - Wednesdays and Fridays as standard days for communication.
 - Occasional one-off emails for special announcements.

Chamber Membership Insights

- Overview of member information center profile.
 - Each business has access to their own profile.
- Importance of tracking membership visibility and engagement.

- Focus on clicks to websites as a key metric.
- Encouragement for businesses to reach out for specific promotions or campaigns.

- Information allows for informed decisions.
 - Encouragement to review data with the team.
 - Assistance available for understanding marketing needs.

Value of the Chamber

- Networking is a core element of the Chamber.
 - Many layers of value provided by the Chamber.
 - Importance of aligning Chamber resources with business intentions.

Business Planning and Reporting

- Halftime report mentioned for business evaluation.
 - Emphasis on not letting plans gather dust.
 - Regular check-ins on business goals are encouraged.

Directory Page Optimization

- Importance of having an updated directory page.
 - 78,000 views noted; potential for growth to 158,000 next year.
 - Ensure correct logo, customer-facing information, and SEO keywords are present.