

Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce

Fully-Integrated Software Allows Chamber to Reach More Members, More Effectively

Background

The city of Eau Claire is known as northwest Wisconsin's premier place for education, health care, recreation and business.

- City of 65,000
- Growth in the computer hardware industry spawned new local and national business ventures, allowing the local economy to prosper
- New area industries would mean the demand for its services would increase
- The Chamber saw an increase in membership numbers
- Increased demand from the business community to provide networking, education and overall support

In 2005, the Chamber was using a variety of vendors and tools to work with its membership database. This made reporting difficult, forced them to update the Web site manually and made communication with members more complex than it needed to be. They knew that they would have to find a way to accommodate the increasing membership and align with the new tech-focused local landscape if their members were to get real value out of their membership.

Objectives

"We wanted a system that had all of the components that would work as one," said Cheri Weinke, membership and marketing director for the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce. "Streamlining was key. We wanted to enter information into our database and get it out in many different ways, eliminating the redundancy of our current system."

The Chamber identified a set of objectives that would guide its selection process and best meet the needs of the Chamber, its membership and the citizens of Eau Claire. Those objectives included:

- Implement a membership management software that would grow with the Chamber
- Eliminate database redundancy under one software
- Communicate more frequently and more effectively with members
- Increase membership retention and acquisition



WebLink helps the Eau Claire Chamber integrate critical business applications together in one easy to manage interface.

Action

The Eau Claire Chamber had been using WebLink International products for several years, including the calendar of events and business directory, in conjunction with other vendors for database management and website hosting. The multitude of vendors made integrating the information difficult, if not impossible. After researching potential software providers, the Chamber realized that WebLink could cater to all of its web hosting, database and web application needs and would make integration seamless.

The Chamber knew that implementation of any new program, especially a new technology, was going to be a potential growing pain but would be worth it. The WebLink training process and the promise of a far easier road ahead made the switch a near necessity and an easy choice. In December of 2005, the Chamber went live with the new software solution.

Results

Since going live with WebLink in late 2005, the results have been dramatic. Internally, the switch helped staff easily complete jobs that would have taken much longer with the numerous vendors involved. Externally, WebLink's solutions are increasing Chamber membership value.

- WebLink also allows the staff to survey members to determine what each member needs, which makes communication and information dissemination more personalized and relevant
- Personalized options and the simplified applications, including the frequently-used Calendar of Events application, are more accessible and convenient than past systems
- Even after three years, the Chamber staff is still coming up with new uses and benefits
- The WebLink user community provides support and shares best practices

"Just recently, I sent a referral report to all of our members saying how many times each member's name was listed on the website," Weinke said. "Each time I do that, I usually get at least 20 e-mails from members saying, 'Wow! What a great report!'"

About WebLink

WebLink provides comprehensive online software and service solutions to support the needs of member-based organizations. WebLink delivers a powerful software suite that integrates the operations, marketing, finance, website and member management functions of business associations.

The software solution allows clients to automate and streamline operations, reduce costs, optimize data for business intelligence, communicate and collaborate effectively, generate non-dues revenue and add significant value to the members they serve. WebLink is a Microsoft Certified Partner. To learn more about WebLink, visit www.weblinkinternational.com.