

Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Sets and Reaches New Membership Goals with WebLink

Background

The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, located in the northwest region of Arkansas, is one of the premier places for both business and leisure in the South. Its location in the striking Ozark Mountains has made it a prime tourist destination, but more recently the abundance of Fortune 500 corporate headquarters has made it a hotspot for business travel as well.

- Small businesses comprise over 93 percent of membership
- Small business owners are crucial to the Rogers-Lowell economy
- Over 1,700 members

The Chamber of Commerce was struggling not only to communicate with its growing membership, but also to keep up with the demands and provide the support these businesses so desperately needed.

The Chamber staff realized that its current membership management database was no longer able to keep up and feared membership would wane if something was not done. The Chamber would need to employ a stronger database, one the Chamber would not outgrow, that would be able to integrate with the website, other software systems, and the accounting program.

Objectives

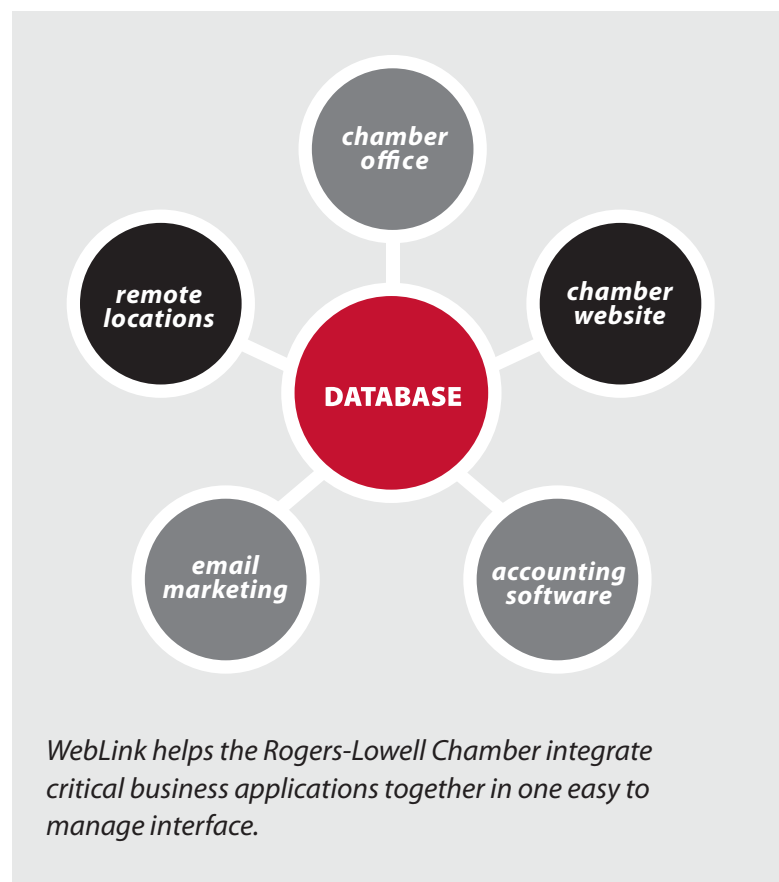
Before the search began for a new membership management database, the Rogers-Lowell Chamber established objectives that would guide the future of the Chamber and its membership.

- Increase use of the website by membership
- Increase the number of new memberships
- Increase electronic communication with members
- Decrease membership drop-out rate

Action

Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce CFO Janine Springer decided to have the Chamber staff conduct demonstrations of the top three providers she identified. After evaluating and surveying all three, WebLink was selected as the software that best met the needs of the Chamber.

“We were growing, and we had a goal to increase new membership. With our old system, it was so hard to extract the data we needed,” said Springer. “Plus, our old system didn’t integrate with our accounting software, which made invoicing very difficult. WebLink integrates seamlessly with all of our software, which makes it so easy.”



Results

The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce has not only been able to more effectively communicate with its growing membership, but the software has enabled the Chamber to:

- Add multiple incentive programs to increase traffic on its website
- Increase traffic to its members' websites
- Evaluate web analytics and quickly, easily and accurately extract data for reports
- Demonstrate tangible value to members.

"Thanks to the referral reports, we've been able to retain members who weren't planning to renew their memberships," said Springer. "We sit down with them, report in hand, and show them, 'this many people have contacted you using the site and this is what they've clicked.'"

By providing these measurable results to their members, the Chamber has seen a major impact in their retention rate with WebLink.

"Our retention rate is really growing," added Springer. "Although we had a good website, we knew when we added the capabilities of WebLink we would get a great benefit package and members could look up our events, add reminders for themselves, pay invoices online, just about everything. Everybody loves it!"

Along with ease of use and membership retention, the Chamber has also gathered nearly 100 percent of the membership's email addresses, which allows for invoices to be sent and registration to be conducted electronically and communication to be distributed far more quickly and easily. Beyond that, it has saved the Chamber time, paper and financial waste.

After implementing WebLink, the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber's goals have increased dramatically. By the end of the year, the Chamber has plans for membership to reach 2,000 and representatives to reach 4,500, which is crucial for attracting advertisers.

"The bang for your buck is priceless. Everyday I use WebLink I think 'Wow! I really should be paying more for this!'" exclaimed Springer. "As we continue to grow, I know the WebLink products will take us as far as we need to go, and I didn't see that with any other membership management software."

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.