



# Connection Pros

A few weeks ago, I bumped into a guy I knew through the Phoenix Chamber. I mentioned I hadn't seen him in a while and he told me that he was no longer a member of the Chamber because he wasn't getting any business from it. I asked him if he was regularly attending the Business for Breakfast functions. He said no. I asked if he went to many of the Business After Hours mixers. He said no. It was then that I realized he had NO idea what the Chamber could do for him.

The biggest mistake people make when joining a Chamber of Commerce is they send in their check and then they sit at their desks waiting for the phone to ring. When it doesn't ring, they immediately think it's the Chamber's fault when, in fact, the fault lies with them.

To be successful in a Chamber of Commerce, you need to dive right in the moment you become a member. The sooner you start meeting people, the sooner you will start making connections and the sooner your business will start to take off.

Someone who has taken this approach to heart is Mark Appelbaum from Tradia Commerce Network, formally CompassCard. Mark joined the Phoenix Chamber about eight months ago and hasn't stopped going to events.

"I run a trade/barter exchange and I'm always looking to connect other businesses with my clients. My commitment is to connect businesses that I know and can trust their integrity. When I first joined the Chamber, people kept saying "Don't expect anything for at least three months; people want to know they can trust you and that you'll be around." GOOD! Because that's what I expect from them too. So every month I attend the Jillian's event, the La Quinta event, my Thursday morning Chamber leads group, and hopefully one or two more events that month. I also joined the Ambassador committee to be more involved in the Chamber and be of service to new Chamber members. Joining the Chamber was the best investment I could have made in starting my business."

As you can see, when you start to attend networking events as soon as you become a new member, the sooner people will get to know about who you are, not just what you do. Plus, once they feel REALLY comfortable with you, you'll get to see your business take off, just like Mark's.