What does membership mean in today’s business environment?

Skål was founded in 1934 by a desire for friends and business colleagues in the travel industry to keep in touch and share experiences.

Over the intervening 80 years little changed, however as we settle into the 21st Century the changes in the way we communicate and the globalisation of the travel & tourism industry have impacted on the nature of association membership. All membership organisations - not just Skål.

Some say “I don’t need a database; I use Linkedin, Facebook, Twitter, etc to find business contacts”. While others argue “the cost of membership is too high”.

While both may seem valid arguments, let’s address each in turn.

First, other forms of connection to find business contacts. While social media gives one contacts, in no way does it qualify them. To quote a quotation placed on Linkedin: “People do business with people because they choose to not because they have to. We can always find others doing the same thing or selling the same product. It’s the personal connection that makes the difference”

That personal connection is Skål! Attending local, national and international Skål functions and forums enables you to meet face to face with people and form the first step in any business contract – a relationship. The “Skål Family” is a known entity. A Skålleague looking for a business connection in another town, city or country always knows that by contacting a fellow Skålleague he or she has already established the relationship because they are both in the same organisation and have similar ideals. That is worth more than a simple database surely. And certainly worth more than scrolling through Linkedin or Facebook pages trying to ascertain if a person is genuine or not!

On the matter of cost – the above amply illustrates the business value for money. But what about personal value for money?

This is no better illustrated that by the quote from Skålleague Andrew Chan:

“I’m often asked why I’m involved in Skål, or why become a member - well, what other membership can you contact a Skålleague who you’ve not met, at 9am on a Sunday in a far away foreign country which you’ve never been to, and be invited to lunch and tour of their magnificent country by noon! That’s why!”

There are also many examples of Skålleagues assisting a fellow Skålleague’s family members, especially children, who have run into difficulty while travelling. And as any parent knows this type of assistance is priceless.

So what do you get from being a member of Skål?

• Speakers, Discussions, Tourism Forums and many opportunities to attend seminars and congresses internationally, nationally and locally.

• Approximately 18,000 tourism professionals worldwide with whom to network. Access through the Skål website http://www.skal.org
• The ideal way to make new professional contacts when starting a new business.

• An ideal opportunity to meet other tourism professionals when moving to a new city.

• The opportunity to meet colleagues and make new friends in the travel and tourism industry at Skål led functions.

• Skål International membership entitles members to discounts provided by Skål members and other companies in the travel and tourism industry.

• Young Skål gives young professionals the opportunity to network together with executives in the tourism industry and learn and get support and guidance from them.

• Skål International is an Affiliate Member of the World Tourism Organisation and thus has access to all major issues that tourism deals with worldwide and contributes by participating in its projects.

Skål International is a vibrant, relevant organisation in today’s world and is committed to be “A Trusted Voice in Travel and Tourism.”

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