

Why Join an Association?

Occasionally I get asked why someone should join a trade association? They may tell me that they are a member of the regional association, so why join the state or national association? Conversely they may tell me that they are a member of the state or national association, so why join the regional association?

Each provides different services for their members. The state and national associations raise legislative funds that pay to have a lobbyist monitoring legislative actions that may affect our trade and they assist us in making changes in the law as needed. Generally speaking, the national association is watching legislation at the national level and state association is watching legislation at the state level.

Regional associations don't have a lobbyist, but they are usually more involved with the local government and law enforcement. They work with the city and county to make sure that local ordinances do not conflict with state laws or hurt our businesses with unintended consequences. We work together to solve complex problems.

National and state associations generally meet once a year at convention. You can get a couple days of CEU's and attend their trade show, where you can see all the manufacturer's latest products. Conventions are a big ordeal where you can meet many new people from all over, along with all the sales reps for your products and service providers. They also have fun activities like casino nights to keep you entertained.

Regional associations don't have annual conventions, they have monthly meetings where you can get CEU's at every meeting, stay current with changes in city and county ordinances, get useful information from local law enforcement and fire marshals, learn from quality speakers and other business owners that might have a solution to a problem you are experiencing. Regional associations also offer networking events like golf and bowling tournaments. You have the ability to really get to know people in your profession and make life-long friends.

Each trade association plays an important part in your business' growth and well-being and is well worth the money. If we don't have lobbyists watching legislation and assisting us in making changes in the law, we will likely get pummeled by laws with unintended consequences and burdensome requirements making our jobs that much harder. If we don't go to monthly meetings to stay on top of local laws and ordinances and interact with law enforcement and fire marshals we run the risk of breaking those laws and getting penalized or arrested.

Join your National, State and Local trade associations and be active, serve on the boards and be a part of something greater than yourself.

Regards,

John C. Helweg