

Grand Openings/Ribbon Cuttings

Helpful Planning Tips

Because your ribbon cutting is your event, there are no set guidelines. What follows is an assembly of steps to help you plan a successful event.

Date Selection

- ~ Choose a date that avoids major conflict with community events or holidays.
- ~ Give yourself plenty of preparation time. Three to four weeks is sufficient.
- ~ Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays are usually best days during the week for business people.

Time

- ~ Careful consideration of the time of your event determines the atmosphere of the celebration.
- ~ Morning events should start no earlier than 8 a.m. as a general rule.
- ~ Avoid late evening functions where people will have to go home between the end of their work day and your event (unless your business is best suited for this type of event).

Invitations

Who you invite to your event is as important as hosting the event. Your invitations may be as simple as an e-mail or as elaborate as a formal invitation. Be sure to include the: who, what, where, why, and when as well as a RSVP method to help plan accordingly for food and beverage. The Chamber is happy to assist you with members that can help with your printing and public relations needs. The following are some suggestions of people to consider when creating your invitation list:

- ~ Current, past, and potential customers
- ~ Family and friends
- ~ Suppliers
- ~ Your employees and their spouses/guests
- ~ Media
- ~ Those that helped you get started: banker, accountant, lawyer, architects, builder, Realtor, etc.
- ~ Neighboring business people
- ~ Key local government officials
- ~ Fellow Chamber members

Refreshments

Providing time-appropriate refreshments is very well received. For example, during a morning event it is nice to offer coffee, juice, bagels, or pastries, while during a lunch or evening event offering light hors d'oeuvres or finger foods is appropriate. Enlisting the help of a caterer is often helpful. The Chamber is able to assist you with a list of current members that are happy to cater your event.

Program Planning

- ~ Create an event agenda. A brief program adds focus to the event. It provides not only valuable recognition for you and your key people, but it makes the event more purposeful and permits you the opportunity to explain more about your business.
- ~ Ideas to consider include: introduction of key people that helped you make this milestone possible, speeches from leaders in the community (keep these brief), and possibly a tour of your facility if time permits and is necessary with your type of business.
- ~ Conclude your program with some ceremonial or symbolic activity to commemorate the event such as a ribbon cutting for a ribbon cutting/grand opening ceremony or shoveling the first load of dirt for a groundbreaking, or the cutting of the cake for an anniversary. This is a nice way to let guests know that the program has concluded and allows for great photo opportunities.

Additional Suggestions

- ~ Have plenty of brochures, business cards, and handouts available for your guests. If possible have promotional items such as pens, magnets, mugs, etc. available to hand out.
- ~ Have a drawing or giveaway. Winning a sample of your product or a gift certificate to a nice restaurant can add to your guests' enjoyment and perhaps build attendance.
- ~ Presentation of the Chamber membership plaque for new members.