

MSP Checklist

- _Meet Staff**
- _Check Calendar**
- _Attend Regularly**
- _Ask Questions**
- _Networking Plan**
- _Have One on Ones**
- _Give First Referral**
- _Follow Up**
- _Volunteer**
- _Leadership Role**

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Chamber of Commerce MSP Member Success Program

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1. Meet the Staff at the Chamber.

The staff at your chamber of commerce is here to help you get more from your chamber membership. Make certain that the staff understands what you do and what you wish to accomplish by being a member of the chamber.

Most people who join the chamber do so to meet other people. While the chamber serves as a meeting point for key business and community leaders, it also serves as the meeting place for business people from all walks of life.

When the staff knows you and understands what you are looking for, they will be better equipped to help you in your endeavors.

When you meet staff members, take a moment to understand what they do for the chamber so that you will know the right person to go to when you have questions or needs.

Knowing the people who will be working on your behalf is a vital step in successful chamber membership.

10. Take a Role in Leadership.

The chamber is the most respected business organization in the community. It brings together business and civic minded individuals who share a common goal of promoting commerce in our community.

This doesn't happen without the talents and abilities of our members. Regardless of your talent, using it in a leadership capacity will reap great rewards for you and your business.

When you are a leader within the chamber you are a leader within the community. You and your business become recognized as leaders.

Taking a role in leadership in any organization requires an investment of time and an understanding of the organization. Leadership in your chamber is no different.

If you are interested in a future leadership role at the chamber, we encourage you to contact the staff for further details.

9. Volunteer—Offer to Help

Relationships are built on trust and familiarity with others. Being seen often is good, but being known as someone who is always willing to help is better.

If your time permits, volunteer to help with events or programs of the chamber. There are numerous volunteer activities that require as little as a few minutes a month.

Whether it's volunteering for a committee or just helping move some tables around at a chamber function, your help is needed and appreciated.

You may find that you have a special interest in one or more of the initiatives of the chamber. Volunteering for committee work is very rewarding. Working side by side with others who share your interests is a great way to meet people and build relationships while doing important work for the community.

Relationships built in a common cause are strong and valuable. Volunteer.

2. Check the Chamber Calendar

The best way to get value from your investment is to attend chamber functions. The best place to find out what is going on is the chamber calendar.

Most members find that there is more going on at the chamber than they have time for. Therefore it is wise to check the calendar and make certain to attend the programs and events of interest to you.

If you've taken step one and met the staff then you have met the people who can advise you which events will be the best investment of your time.

You've invested in the chamber with your dues, it just makes good sense to ensure that investment returns a profit.

Chamber membership gives you access to the people you need to meet. Attending chamber programs will give you opportunity to meet those individuals to whom you are seeking access.

Check the calendar and mark yours. Attend events often.

3. Attend Meetings Regularly.

Once you have attended a chamber event or two you might be tempted to take a break. One simple word of caution: Don't.

Chamber membership gives you access to people you need to meet, but meeting people is only part of the plan.

People do business with people they know, like and trust. When you meet someone at a chamber event and they don't see you again for several weeks or months, they don't have the opportunity to get to know you.

Being known is the first step in being liked and trusted. You will become known by attending meetings and events regularly.

Once you find the event or events that work for you, commit to attending them over and over again. When people begin to realize that you are there all the time, they will trust that you are consistent in all things, not just event attendance. Be consistent.

8. Follow Up and Follow Through

Chamber membership provides you with a great opportunity to build your business so long as you follow up and follow through.

When you meet new people you must follow up with a card, call or email. Tell them you enjoyed meeting them and look forward to seeing them again. That's why in your networking plan it is important to limit how many people you will meet.

When you refer someone, follow up and be certain that the referral was valuable for both parties. Make sure you're referring someone who is following up and that the referrals you are giving are good ones.

When you are referred by someone, make sure to follow through within 24 hours. Give the referral a call and then let the person that referred you know that you have made contact and that you appreciate the referral.

Follow up and follow through and you'll get more referrals.

7. Give the First Referral.

You have your plan in place and you are holding one on one meetings with the right people. The next step is to build a relationship. It begins with giving the first referral.

Sometimes when you meet people at events you will learn enough about them to have a prospective referral for them when you hold your one on one meeting. Other times the one on one will spark an idea. Either way, your task is to think of someone you know that would be a good fit for the person you are developing a relationship with.

When giving the first referral it is wise to advise the person you are referring that you will be sending someone their way. This ensures that when your new networking friend calls, he or she will be greeted warmly.

Giving the first referral gets things going in the relationship and shows your new friend that you are thinking of them and wish for them to succeed. They'll do the same for you.

4. Ask Questions and Take Notes

Being a great conversationalist is often just being skillful at asking questions and listening to the answers. People like to talk about themselves and when you show an interest in others, they will naturally think you are interesting too.

As you meet people at events and programs of the chamber, ask them questions about their business.

- What do you do?
- How long have you been doing it?
- What got you started in that line of work?
- How long have you been in the area?
- Who would be a good referral for you?

When you get the answers, jot some notes on the back of their business card. This will give you the ability to remember who you met and what is important to them.

You'll meet a lot of people at events. Knowing about them will help you decide if they are a good fit for you.

5. Develop a Networking Plan

You have met the staff and they understand what you hope to accomplish by joining the chamber. You have access through membership. You are meeting people by attending events. Without knowing it, you've begun a networking plan.

What you do next will determine the effectiveness of your efforts and the return you will have on your chamber investment.

- Who do you wish to meet?
- Who can you help?
- Who is missing in your "network"?
- What events do the people you need to meet attend?
- What interests do you have that your target audience has?
- How many people should you meet at an event?

While there are many other important factors to consider, the easiest way to be successful in networking is to build relationships before you need them. Holding one on one meetings will do just that.

6. Have One on One Meetings

Once you have identified the types of people you wish to have in your networking plan and begin to meet them, you'll want to get to know them better. Now is the time to invite people to a "one on one" meeting.

One on one meetings are casual and informational. They are an attempt to get to know the other person well enough to begin to refer and be referred to others.

Once you meet someone at a chamber event that may be a good fit, simply invite them to have a cup of coffee with you so that you can "learn more about them and what they do".

By meeting one on one you will get to know them better and you will be able to understand what they are trying to accomplish and how you can help. You can tell them about you and your business as well.

One on one meetings can be as short as fifteen minutes and they are a powerful way to grow your business.