



Planning a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce

Ribbon Cuttings mark a very significant moment in a business history. Whether celebrating the opening of a new business, expansion or relocation, the Hillsborough Chamber is excited about your success. As a value-added benefit of membership, we are proud to offer assistance in this momentous occasion as a service to you.

Businesses typically celebrate with a ribbon cutting ceremony if the company has:

- Opened its doors in the last 12 months or to recognize a Grand Opening
- Celebrated an anniversary or special achievement
- Offered a new service or product
- Been remodeled or expanded at its present location
- Moved to a new location

What the Chamber will provide:

- Official Chamber Ribbon Cutting Scissors
- Ribbon (color of your choice)
- Ribbon cutting added to the Chamber Events Calendar
- Picture in Chamber Weekly Newsletter 'Hillsborough Happenings' and social media outlets

What are the benefits of a Chamber ribbon cutting?

- Introduce both the public and Chamber members to your business
- Begin a customer base
- Familiarize the public and Chamber members with your product and services
- Published photo of your ribbon cutting in Chamber's newsletter to approx. 800 member representatives and potential customers.

Ribbon Cutting Checklist

- ✓ **Select a date:** Be aware of major holidays and coordinate with the Chamber well in advance to avoid conflicts with other Chamber events. We recommend a two to three week notice.
- ✓ **Program and Planned Activities:** Welcome guests and introduce any other speakers

The shorter, the better. As a rule of thumb, no program or official ceremony should last longer than 20 to 30 minutes, with 10 to 15 minutes being ideal.

- Your program should be led by a good, effective master of ceremonies. He or she can keep your program moving smoothly, and inject some humor when needed. If you like, the Chamber CEO can serve in this role.
- Limit the number of speakers and the length of their speeches. People get bored easily when speakers ramble on for too long or are repetitive. Set a time limit for all those you ask to take part in the program.



- Speakers taking part in any formal program should include appropriate city or county government representatives, a Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce representative, and you and/or your board chairman or designee if appropriate. Be sure to give each of your speakers a call the day before the event as a reminder.
 - Introduce only those who need to be introduced even though the temptation will be to acknowledge nearly everyone in attendance whom you know. You may want to verbally recognize and thank those that have played an active role in your project—banker, contractor, architect, Economic Development director, but these people generally don't need to be asked to speak. Often a simple “group” thank you to your friends and family is adequate.
 - Conclude your program with the appropriate ceremonial or symbolic activity to commemorate the event: THE RIBBON CUTTING. This is a nice way to let guests know the formal program is over and they also create good publicity photos.
 - If your event includes an open house or tour of your facilities, be sure friendly and knowledgeable employees conduct group tours. Unguided self-tours are not nearly as valuable as guided tours.
 - While not necessary, if you do plan to give a favor to your guests, designate someone to be responsible for giving them to your guests. You as the owner, host/hostess have other responsibilities. Favors might be a specialty item, flower, brochure about your business, sticker, menu, business card, etc.
- ✓ **Invitations:** Evites, flyers, formal/informal letters are just a few examples of how to get the word out. Your guest list can include staff, clients, business associates, neighboring businesses, volunteer associations, community leaders, elected officials and the media.
- Once you have identified your guest list, here are some tips to remember when sending out invitations:*
- Prepare a basic invitation that is simple and to the point. Make sure all the basic information is included – who, what, when, where and why.
 - If desired, include an RSVP. This will give you an idea as to how many people can attend and how much food/beverages to have on hand.
 - Allow a sufficient amount of time for guests to return their reply.
 - A week to 10 days is sufficient for most events, although two weeks would be preferable.
 - Be sure to include a good map or very clear instructions on how to get to your event. A street address alone is not sufficient.
 - Identify parking areas for your guests.
 - Indicate in your invitation whether the event is casual, semi-formal/business attire or formal.
 - If spouses or other guests are also invited, indicate that as well.