



RIBBON CUTTING PLANNING GUIDE

YOUR BUSINESS IS OPEN!

Congratulations! You've worked through the hard part of planning and preparing your new location or business venture, now it's time to celebrate!

Ribbon Cutting Overview

A Ribbon Cutting is an official ceremony conducted to celebrate the opening of a business or building AND to welcome your business to Livingston Parish! As the name implies, a ribbon is cut signifying your location is "open for business". Chambers across the country, including the Livingston Parish Chamber of Commerce, are the official organization of ribbon cuttings in their communities. A ribbon cutting event can be a very large event or a simple, but no less important, event. The choice lies with the business, and the Chamber can help to guide you through the process whether your business is very small or very large!

Hosting a Ribbon Cutting is an exciting time for your business. We often say that the most exciting 30 seconds of the business opening process is when you cut the ribbon on your new location! In reality, the ceremony does last a bit longer, but the culmination of the planning and hard work that goes into preparing a business for opening cannot be celebrated in a better way. Because this is such a special occasion in the history of your business, take advantage of the photo opportunity and begin **Building a Chamber Network** – many of which start at this important event introductory event.

Ribbon Cutting Plan Bullet Points

The Chamber Will Schedule/Provide the Following:

- Schedule the event according to your time and wishes – if available on our calendar.
- Place your event on the Chamber website and inform the membership of your event.
- Take photos of the event.
- Provide the ribbon and scissors for the event.
- Provide the date and time of your ribbon cutting in the emails that go out to the membership, unless you prefer that this information is not forwarded.
- Give you tremendous exposure for your Ribbon Cutting.

Business Owners Should:

- Invite those they would like to attend the event including family, staff, friends, political leaders and anyone else you would like present at your event.
- Plan the event in advance to get more exposure from the event.
- Address those in attendance and give a brief overview of your business and its specialties.
- Place notice of your event to your customers, if you chose.
- Take photos of the event.
- Provide refreshments at your discretion. We do recommend drinks at a minimum.

To Consider:

- Some ribbon cuttings have been a simple photo opportunity. Some have dozens of people attend and extend the event for an hour or so. Some have light refreshments. Others have had a larger amount of refreshments and still others have none. Ribbon cuttings and Grand Openings can be separate events and held on different days. The Chamber will support you on this exciting day in your business, and we look forward to your success!

Ribbon Cutting – The Details

When Should I Hold a Ribbon Cutting?

Ribbon Cutting events are held within 6 months of the business opening. Many businesses have already opened before the ribbon is actually cut and that is widely acceptable protocol. Getting your business up and running is your first priority. Scheduling the ribbon cutting event within 2 months of your business opening is ideal. The ribbon cutting can be a stand-alone event or in coordination with a grand opening – also acceptable to hold after the actual opening – open house, after hours or other opening event. The Chamber recommends you check the schedules of those most important to you whether it is business associates or family.

Who is Eligible for a Chamber Ribbon Cutting?

Chamber Members. The Chamber **does offer** an extensive menu of other Programming, Initiatives, Services, Committees, Member and Events. Because of the resources allocated for a ribbon cutting, these special events are reserved for members. Please remember, the Ribbon Cutting is only the beginning of your Chamber relationship! We offer so much more to keep your business engaged and connected. Members must be current to schedule a ribbon cutting.

Is There a Cost?

There are varying levels of membership which include a Ribbon Cutting. Best business practices recommend you include Chamber membership – especially when your chamber is award winning and state recognized - as part of your annual business plan and budget. It is also recommend you consider a Ribbon Cutting as part of your location opening plan, and that you budget promotion for your new location. The investment is minimal for each, and the return is great. Chamber membership allows your business to be viewed immediately as not only a business in the parish: but also, a Community Partner. That's a very important role of today's business. Once the demands of your new business settle, the chamber has inclusive programming that many enjoy – again keeping you connected. (Please reference items above plus view the attached Guide for notes on what the Chamber includes in a ribbon cutting.)+

There is a small fee for the Chamber to participate based upon membership level:

- **Basic Business Level** - \$50.00 for ribbon cutting in the first year of membership, second year of membership and beyond, ribbon cutting is included. One ribbon cutting per member at this level and fee. Prepayment is required. Note: we will discount the fee from your second year invoice.
- **Enhanced Level** – Executive level and higher membership – ribbon cutting included along with higher search ranking, logo presence, enhanced view and upgraded SEO.

Scheduling Your Ribbon Cutting

Please plan your ribbon cutting at least two weeks in advance to assure your date is available. You will also receive increased exposure of your business by planning ahead. Please provide as much information as possible to the Chamber about your plans to help us properly promote your event. The Chamber attempts to accommodate your scheduling dates and times within typical business hours. Please check with the Chamber office to assure your event will not conflict with other chamber events. You can also check the Chamber's Calendar of Events on our website in advance. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are usually best. Time recommendations include 8 a.m. at the earliest, and avoiding later evening functions, unless this is the type of business you have. Our apologies as the Chamber does not schedule ribbon cuttings on weekends and holidays.

What Will the Chamber Do?

Promote Your Event

- **By placing your event on our calendar of events.** (Top viewed event calendar in Livingston Parish.) This sets off a chain reaction of exposure for your event and business.
- **Send a blanket invite** to elected officials representing your area to the event and provide guidance on protocol.
- **Inform** Chamber Ambassadors and Board members of your event.
- **Send the event information to our extensive contacts.** It's like your own media company! Don't worry – they won't all show up! Unless you are giving away something really big!

Facilitate your Event

- Provide a Complimentary Ribbon and Bow for your event.
- Provide Large Scissors, they really do cut!
- “Emcee” your event by providing remarks on behalf of the chamber, officially welcoming you so you can tell your business story.
- Provide a list of peer Chamber members who cater. Please [click here](#) for up to the minute updated listings.
- Take photos of your Ribbon Cutting.

After the Event

- We will post our photos of your event to our social media outlets. Please feel free to tag and use as you please – give the Chamber credit for the photo – thank you, please. 😊
- Send photos of your event to an extensive list of media contacts both local and regional.

What YOU Provide:

Refreshments, drinks, door prizes, decorations, entertainment

These are optional and at the discretion of the business hosting. Many businesses add these extra touches. The rest is up to you! Go as big or small as you would like. We have seen everything from a full meal with adult beverages to appetizers to snacks. As a courtesy, you should provide drinks -water is fine - for attendees. Door prizes, giveaways and entertainment are at your discretion.

Location

The event will be held at your location. We suggest you plan for parking, cleared entrances to your building, basic services and an overall neat appearance showcasing your new business.

Invites / Turnout

It is important that you stay in touch with those you wish to attend the event. We do not track or accept rsvp's to Ribbon Cuttings- (except when a crowd of over 100 is expected.). The Chamber cannot guaranty attendance numbers as predicting turn out is, well, unpredictable.

Ribbon Cutting Do's & Don'ts

DO

- Schedule the event when the most important people to your business, whether it is a business partner, CEO, community person, supervisor or family member, can attend.
- Schedule ASAP to allow potential attendees to plan for your event.
- Be proactive by inviting guests to your event.
- Determine and decide in advance who will cut the ribbon at your event. The owner or top executives typically do the honors here, while in some areas the mayors or other dignitaries cut. Each business is different and free to choose.
- Consider who you would want in photos.
- Use Chamber hashtags! #LoveLivingstonParish #LoveLivingstonChamber #ShopLivingstonParish

DON'T

- Rely completely on the Chamber for attendance at your event. The Chamber cannot guarantee the number of guests in attendance.
- Over plan what you will say when telling your business story. It's best to be authentic.
- Don't forget to enjoy the event! Meet new people and build new relationships.

CONGRATULATIONS!