

# Grand Openings and Ribbon Cutting

## Planning Tips

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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 conflicts with community events, public school calendars 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.
- 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).
- Keep in mind rush hour and traffic in regards to your guests getting to your event.
- Consider a time where there is high foot traffic in and around your business, i.e. lunch time, if applicable.

### 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, when, where, and why 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 publication needs. Using the Chamber's Member Directory to find active members to assist you is a valuable resource. The following are some suggestions of people to consider when creating your guest list:

- Current, past, and potential customers

- Suppliers
- Your employees and their spouses/guests
- Media
- Those that helped get you started: banker, accountant, lawyer, architects, builder, etc
- Key local government officials
- Fellow Chamber members
- Neighboring businesses
- Family and Friends

### Refreshments

Providing time-appropriate refreshments is very well received. For example, during a morning event it is nice to offer breakfast items, while during lunch or evening events offering small plates or light hors d'oeuvres is appropriate. Enlisting the help of a caterer is often helpful. Please use the Chamber's Member Directory as a resource to find members who are able to cater your event.

### Program Planning

- Create an event agenda. A brief program adds focus to the event and gives you an opportunity to explain more about your business.
- Ideas to consider for your program include:
  - Introduction of key people that helped you make this milestone possible
  - Speeches from leaders in the community
  - A tour of the facility if time permits and is applicable for your business

### Additional Suggestions

- Create an event timeline with duties you want completed and the corresponding dates they need to be completed by. This helps ensure that you are on schedule and can give you a space to plan everything including when invitations need to go out, when to book the caterer, etc.
- Have plenty of brochures, business cards, and other marketing materials available for your guests.
- Have a drawing or giveaway. Winning a sample of your product, voucher for your service, or gift card from an outside business can add to your guests' enjoyment and potentially build attendance.