



MEMBER TOOLKIT GUIDE AND PLAYBOOK



ASSOCIATION OF
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
EXECUTIVES

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01 MESSAGING & AUDIENCES

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Most people cannot tell you what their chamber does. That's a communications challenge. A landmark 2024 Harris Poll commissioned by ACCE found that only 44 percent of Americans say they are familiar with their local chamber, while 70 percent wish they knew more. Read those two numbers together and it's an invitation.

Chambers Change Things is the national campaign built to answer it. ACCE created the platform, the research, the creative and the templates. These are unified assets **for you to share locally**.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE

- The campaign's core narrative, laid out plainly enough to hand to anyone on your team.
- Customizable messaging frameworks for the audiences you actually talk to.
- Plain, ready-to-use answers to tough questions.
- Thirty days of ready-to-localize social content, an asset library, channel-by-channel guidance and the metrics worth putting in front of your board.
- Earned media playbook: pitching strategy, reporter relationships, the five story shapes that reliably get covered and an op-ed worksheet.

CAMPAIGN MESSAGING

Chambers are everywhere. Walk down Main Street in any community and you will find one.

But most people cannot tell you what it does, and the silence gets filled by assumptions.

Sixty-three percent of Americans either wrongly believe or are not sure whether chambers are a government agency. Only 54 percent recognize that chambers are nonpartisan.

The people who do know their chamber like it. Eighty-six percent of adults familiar with their local chamber are satisfied with it. Eighty-one percent call it a trusted resource and partner for businesses. Ninety percent say local chambers have an impact on growing the local economy. This is not a relevance problem. It is a narrative problem.

THE MESSAGE

THE PEOPLE WHO LEAD

Local chambers are made up of people who lead local businesses and also provide the civic leadership to help shape the future of our communities.

That takes vision. It takes trust. And it takes leaders willing to stay focused on what comes next, even when the path is long. Chambers do more than connect people. They help communities align around big-picture priorities that change economic circumstances. They shape a shared direction and keep attention on the opportunities and challenges that will define the years ahead.

A handshake at a networking meeting becomes a partnership. A partnership becomes a plan. A local solution becomes statewide legislation. A plan helps a community determine its future, instead of waiting for the future to arrive.

A CHAMBER IS where business leadership becomes civic leadership, and where communities organize to build what comes next.

WHAT CHAMBERS SET IN MOTION

So what does a chamber actually do?

- A local chamber opens doors, helping new business owners meet their first big client. A chamber plays a role when company founders finally get the bank to call back.
- A chamber builds alignment, helping business and community leaders establish shared priorities and stay focused on solving problems that no single organization can address alone.
- A chamber invests. It provides accelerators, mentorship and training, so small companies can scale.
- A local chamber speaks up. When zoning or workforce policy is on the line, the chamber carries the business voice and advocates for what the community needs to succeed.

A chamber turns intentions that benefit a community into action.

YOU SEE CHAMBER WORK EVERYWHERE

Want proof? Pick a city. From daily hassles to big challenges, chambers step in:

- In Greater Summerville/Dorchester County, the chamber led ENVISION 2047, a 20-year community vision shaped by more than 3,200 residents. A plan like that gives the region a shared roadmap for growth, investment and quality of life.
- Nashville's chamber rallied 260 investors behind a long-term plan. The payoff: 560,000 new jobs and a 327% rise in per capita income.
- LA is hosting the World Cup and the Olympics. Its local chamber is making sure local and diverse firms win a slice of the \$150 billion that follows.
- Greenville's chamber built an accelerator for small business. It worked so well, the state adopted it.

LOCALIZING THE STORY:

This is an opportunity to highlight your chamber's individual contributions and successes. Use the national examples to show scale, but your outcomes show the local application.

Different communities. Same difference-maker. Chambers are shaping long-term change with right-now results.

CHAMBERS CHANGE THINGS

The tagline is a container, not a slogan to leave empty. Fill in the blank with the audience in front of you. *Chambers Change Things* for the second-shift parent who found childcare. That is the version people repeat.

CHAMBERS *Change* **THINGS**

**FOR ENTREPRENEURS
FOR DOWNTOWNS
FOR YOUNG TALENT
FOR SMALL BUSINESSES
FOR OUR CITIES' FUTURES**

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN IN FIVE EASY STEPS

1. Choose two or three chamber outcomes you want your community to better understand.
2. Identify the people, businesses and places that demonstrate those outcomes.
3. Adapt the campaign messages using those local examples.
4. Choose the channels and tactics that fit your capacity.
5. Track what resonates and share your results with ACCE.

THE FOUR CAMPAIGN MESSAGES IN SHORT FORM

When you need the arc compressed for a pitch, a board slide or a staff briefing, use these four sentences in this order. Every piece of content you produce should ladder to one of them.

- **Chambers are the people who lead.** Local chambers are comprised of people who choose to lead not just in business, but in their communities.
- **Chambers open doors, lead, invest and speak up.** That is the job. They turn intentions that benefit a community into action.
- **Chambers get results.** Pick a community. Different communities, same difference-maker, shaping long-term change and getting results.
- **Chambers Change Things.** Local chambers shape communities, create opportunity, solve problems and influence what comes next.

TIPS ON DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

- **Outcomes, never activities.** Running a workforce development program is an activity. Instead, frame as an outcome: “Last year, our workforce development program connected 150 local residents with training and employment opportunities.” Audiences can tell the difference immediately.
- **Micro before macro.** Big economic numbers bounce off people. Neighborhood-level results stick.
- **Name people and places.** Anonymous impact reads like a press release. A named business on a named street reads like the truth.

CUSTOMIZING MESSAGING FOR KEY AUDIENCES

The argument does not change by audience, but the entry point does. A resident wants to know what changed on her street. A reporter wants to know what is new and who can talk. A CFO wants to know the return. A nonprofit director wants to know whether you will still be there in year three. A recent grad wants to know whether there is a reason to join.

HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE MESSAGE FOR AUDIENCES

01

Open on the beat that answers their real question, not the beat you like best.

02

Swap in the local specifics that the audience recognizes.

03

Lead with the proof that the audience actually trusts.

04

Close with an ask that the audience can complete this week.

05

Know the angle that will get you in trouble, and do not say it.

GENERAL PUBLIC

This is the largest and least informed audience. Seventy percent of Americans wish they knew more about what their local chamber does. They are not hostile. They are uninformed, and they are asking.

WHAT THEY REALLY WANT TO KNOW	HOW YOU ADDRESS IT	YOUR ASK	AVOID
What does this do for me, someone who doesn't own a business and will never come to a chamber meeting or event?	- Lead with everyday examples and outcomes. Show them something they can walk past before you explain the mechanism. Name the landmark, the business or the place. People believe what they can see. - Language to use: "Neighbors," "Jobs that pay enough to live here," "Storefronts that stay open," "Young people who do not have to leave."	Something free and specific. Shop with a member business. Tell us what is breaking on your block. Show up on October 21 for Support Your Local Chamber Day.	Leading with membership. If the first thing a resident hears is a dues pitch, you have confirmed the stereotype you are trying to correct.

MEDIA

Reporters are not indifferent to your chamber. They may not know you yet, and organizations are not a beat. They cover change, conflict, money and people. Your job is to translate the work into one of those four shapes and to become the first call rather than the press release.

WHAT THEY REALLY WANT TO KNOW	HOW YOU ADDRESS IT	YOUR ASK	AVOID
What is new, why does it matter here, who can I interview today and can I document the number you just gave me?	Focus on sharing proprietary local data. Your member survey, your job postings count, your downtown occupancy figure. In a thin newsroom, a number nobody else has is the single most reliable path to coverage.	Fifteen minutes or an exclusive on your strongest story. Offer one outlet a 24-hour exclusive and say plainly that is what you are doing. It converts far better than a broad release.	Pitching the campaign itself as the news. A national campaign launch is not a local story. What your chamber did in your neighborhood is.

BUSINESS DECISION-MAKERS

This audience includes current members, lapsed members and the employers who have not joined yet. They are not primarily moved by community sentiment, and they should not be. They are running a payroll.

WHAT THEY REALLY WANT TO KNOW	HOW YOU ADDRESS IT	YOUR ASK	AVOID
Does this reduce a cost, remove an obstacle or open a door that I cannot open myself?	Lead with activities and benefits, then the peer group. These are people who join rooms because of who else is in them.	A thirty-minute conversation, a committee seat, one hire from a local program or a data point for your next member survey.	Describing the chamber as a networking group. That framing prices you at the cost of a lunch. Describe the chamber as the shared capacity that most businesses could never buy alone.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Nonprofits, school districts, health systems, faith leaders, housing coalitions, county staff. Some of them are wary of you, and the wariness usually has a history. This audience is not asking whether you are competent. They are asking whether you are going to take the credit and leave.

WHAT THEY REALLY WANT TO KNOW	HOW YOU ADDRESS IT	YOUR ASK	AVOID
What are you bringing that we do not already have, and will you still be here after the grant cycle ends?	- Lead with the chamber's convening and staying power as partners, then how you have positively impacted other organizations and built lasting relationships. - Be accurate about your role. "Led" means you set the strategy and owned the outcome. "Helped to build" means you brought partners together or supplied the business case. "Supported" means you backed someone else's effort.	Co-sign a shared priority, join a working group or let us carry your data into a room you cannot get into.	Taking the credit. Sharing credit generously costs nothing and pays back the next time you need a room full of allies. In a small community, overclaiming gets noticed.

STUDENTS AND EMERGING LEADERS

High school and college students, young professionals, early-career staff. Millennials are the generation most likely to engage with chambers. Millennials and Gen Z are also more likely to read chamber involvement as evidence that a company is reputable. That combination is an opening.

WHAT THEY REALLY WANT TO KNOW	HOW YOU ADDRESS IT	YOUR ASK	AVOID
Is there a reason to build a life here, and is there a door in for someone with no title yet?	- Lead with the future your local chamber is building, and then show them that you are the people shaping it. - Focus on the opportunity your chamber offers students and emerging leaders in the form of internships, apprenticeships, credential programs, young professionals councils, board fellowships. - Highlight a peer who got involved and is now in a better position due to the offerings of your chamber.	Apply, attend, shadow or ask us a question on Instagram. Keep the barrier to entry at roughly one tap.	Do not talk about legacy. This audience does not care about how long you have existed, and it's critical you frame yourself as a creator of the future, not a steward of the past.

Now, we'll review how to turn these messages into coverage for your chamber and develop a cohesive pitching strategy.

FAQS / HARD QUESTIONS

This document looks at questions we've heard from local chambers. This is not a script. It is a set of decision frameworks to help you get to your best response for tough questions.

TELLING YOUR STORY

Strong chamber storytelling connects that work to tangible outcomes and clearly explains the chamber's role without overstating its contribution.

HOW DO WE DESCRIBE WHAT THE CHAMBER ACCOMPLISHES, NOT WHAT WE DO?

Lead with what changed for a real person or a real business. Your part in it comes second.

Much of a chamber's best work happens quietly, so lead with the outcome.

- "We held a workforce summit" describes the activity. "Thirty-one people finished the training. Twenty-four got hired" describes the result.
- Tell the emotional part of the story and support it with data and statistics. Data should tie directly to real impact: Jobs filled. Dollars saved. Childcare seats added.
- When nothing has changed yet, speak to what you are watching for and by when.

HOW DO WE MAKE CHAMBER WORK VISIBLE?

Point at the thing. A building. A bus route. A storefront. A graduating class.

Make every claim tangible by connecting it to something people can see, understand or experience.

- "That is the site we fought two years to rezone. Forty people work there now."
- Before-and-after imagery often explains a change faster than a paragraph can.
- **Standing template.** [Chamber] worked with [partners] on [effort]. Today, [visible result at a specific address].

WHAT DO WE SAY WHEN THE OUTCOME IS LONG-TERM OR HARD TO MEASURE?

Report movement, not just wins. Consistent updates during a long-term effort show the community that you are still working toward the goal.

Long-term work is where the strongest chamber reputations are built. Give members and reporters a rhythm of small updates so your progress stays visible.

- Communicate around milestones, even inconclusive ones. Study finished. Funding cleared committee. Hearing continued. Share leading indicators. Applications filed. Employers signed on. Name what obstacles you are working through.
- Be clear about what comes next. Name the decisions, funding or other milestones needed to keep the effort moving and what could prevent further progress.

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN A POLICY WIN IN TERMS RESIDENTS CARE ABOUT?

The work of your chamber is best understood when someone understands how it directly impacts their every day. Translate every policy outcome into time, money or peace of mind for someone running a shop, hiring a crew or dropping a kid off before work.

- Explain every win in terms of time or money.

Before: “We successfully advocated for streamlined municipal permitting processes, reducing average approval timelines by 40%.”

Try this instead: Opening a bakery on Main Street used to take nine months of paperwork. Now it takes three. That’s six months of rent a new owner doesn’t burn before selling a single loaf.

Before: “The chamber championed passage of a targeted tax incentive for qualifying small enterprises.”

Try this instead: If you run a shop with fewer than 25 employees, you just got roughly \$3,200 back a year. That’s a new point-of-sale system. Or a part-time hire for the holidays. Or a raise for the person who’s been with you since day one.

Before: “The chamber advanced a public-private workforce development initiative aligned with regional labor market demand.”

Try this instead: A local kid can now graduate high school on Friday and start an apprenticeship Monday, earning \$22 an hour while learning welding, plumbing or IT support. No four-year debt. No leaving town to find work.

- A member’s own words outperform any statistic you can produce.
- Skip bill numbers in public materials. Describe the change residents will feel.

HOW DO WE DESCRIBE OUR ROLE WHEN A WIN HAD MANY HANDS ON IT?

Be clear about the chamber’s role.

When many organizations contribute to an outcome, describe your chamber’s role accurately and give partners appropriate credit. Being specific about who did what builds trust and strengthens relationships.

- **Led.** You set the strategy, carried the ask and owned the outcome. Use this carefully.
- **Helped build.** You brought partners together, shaped the approach or supplied the business case.
- **Supported.** You backed someone else’s effort with testimony, data or member voices.
- **Congratulated.** You were not directly involved, but the outcome is good for the community. Name the leaders who carried the results. Recognizing work you did not lead tends to strengthen the next partnership.

RESPONDING TO CRITICISM AND MISPERCEPTION

HOW DO WE RESPOND WHEN THE CHAMBER IS CRITICIZED FOR A POSITION?

Lead with the position and why it serves the community. Be clear about what informed the decision, address the criticism directly and explain what happens next.

- **State the position and its purpose.** “We support this permitting change because business owners should be able to get a clear answer before they commit their savings to opening a shop.” Start with the practical benefit, not a defensive explanation.
- **Answer the substance.** Identify the actual objection and respond to it in plain language. If the concern is that faster approvals mean less oversight, explain what the proposal changes and which safeguards remain.

- **Show how the decision was made.** Explain whose input informed the position, what the chamber considered and how it was approved. Be specific without implying that every member agreed. A sound process supports your case; it doesn't replace it.
- **Be clear about what comes next.** State what the chamber will advocate for, monitor or report back on. Make commitments you can keep, and don't guarantee outcomes you cannot control.
- **If the criticism comes in a public forum worth engaging, respond there (e.x. the local newspaper or a community forum).** You want people who saw it to also see your answer. Explain your position clearly, answer honest questions and correct anything that's wrong. But don't get pulled into an endless back-and-forth or argue about why someone criticized you.
- **Stand behind a sound decision.** The goal isn't to have the last word, It's to make your reasoning clear.

IS THE CHAMBER A GOVERNMENT AGENCY?

No. We are an independent, member-funded business organization.

Our revenue comes from member dues, event revenue, sponsorships and other sources. We advocate for a strong business climate to promote economic growth. We have no regulatory authority. We cannot issue or deny a permit. We advocate and the elected officials decide.

IS THE CHAMBER FUNDED BY TAXPAYERS?

No. Operating revenue comes from member dues, event revenue and sponsorships.

If your chamber administers a public contract or grant, name it and what it pays for.

IS THE CHAMBER JUST A NETWORKING ORGANIZATION?

Networking is a tremendous value of the chamber. It is not most of the work. Chambers are dedicated to solving problems that a single business owner can't solve alone.

Follow one specific recent example (ex., helping permits move forward, assisting in a hiring initiative, helping a store through an important issue with the city).

DOES THE CHAMBER ONLY REPRESENT BIG BUSINESSES?

No. [Number] percent of our members employ fewer than [number] people.

Say the real figure, even when it is inconvenient.

IS THE CHAMBER PRIMARILY ABOUT RIBBON CUTTINGS AND EVENTS?

Events may be the most visible part of a chamber's work, but they are only part of the story.

Use specific examples to show the work happening beyond events. Highlight how your chamber is helping businesses address challenges, strengthening the local economy or advancing priorities that matter to your members and community.

DO YOU HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO BENEFIT FROM THE CHAMBER'S WORK?

No. And it is worth amplifying!

When a permitting process gets faster or a road gets funded, every business on that street benefits, including the ones that never paid us a dollar. Members pay for work that spills over onto everybody. That openness is what makes the case for membership stronger. However, members decide what that work is, and get a seat at the table in conversations directly impacting the business community. While everyone gains from the local economy being strong, the local chamber members get to decide the direction.

HOW DO WE SHOW THAT THE CHAMBER IS FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE?

Lead with the challenges and opportunities shaping your community today and in the years ahead.

A chamber's history can demonstrate its staying power, but it should not define its story. Show how your chamber is responding to changing business and community needs and helping shape what comes next.

- Highlight current priorities and the progress you are working to achieve.
- Feature a range of members and leaders who reflect the businesses and perspectives shaping your community's future.

SCOPE AND POSITIONING

WHY IS A BUSINESS ORGANIZATION INVOLVED IN HOUSING, CHILDCARE, EDUCATION OR INFRASTRUCTURE?

Because employers cannot hire people who have nowhere to live, no way to get to work and no one to watch their kids.

The modern chamber agenda now reaches into housing, child care, behavioral health and broadband. It's important to show, in plain terms, why these are business issues. These are not simply social causes the chamber adopts.

- Connect each issue to a hiring problem in one sentence. "Three of our members had offers fall through last year because the hire could not find housing under [amount]."
- Use your own member data, even if it is small. Nine responses from named local employers persuade a county commissioner more than a national study.
- Stay in your lane. Speak to workforce and business consequences. Let the curriculum and clinical experts speak to theirs.

HOW DO WE DECIDE WHICH ISSUES TO WORK ON?

Describe your actual process. Member survey. Committee review. Board vote. Annual policy agenda. Written, dated, published.

A documented, member-driven, board-approved position-taking process is the foundation of the chamber's credibility. It protects the staff, reassures the board and gives members confidence that their interests are being represented.

HOW DO WE WORK WITH GOVERNMENT, NONPROFITS, EDUCATORS AND OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS?

Focus on the shared goal and be clear about each organization's role.

Many community challenges require organizations to work together. Use specific examples to show what the partnership is working to accomplish, what each partner contributes and what progress has been made.

- Give partners appropriate credit for their contributions.
- Be clear about the chamber's role. If another organization leads the work and the chamber supports it, say so.

GROWTH AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

WHAT DOES ECONOMIC GROWTH MEAN FOR RESIDENTS?

Connect economic growth to the outcomes people experience in their daily lives.

Jobs, wages, successful local businesses and a stronger tax base can help residents understand why economic growth matters to the broader community.

- Put investment figures in context by explaining what they mean for jobs, wages, business growth or the local tax base.
- Use specific examples, such as wages and benefits, when they help demonstrate the quality of new jobs.
- Explain how new economic activity contributes to public revenues and the services residents rely on.

HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT GROWTH WHEN RESIDENTS HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT HOUSING, TRAFFIC OR DEVELOPMENT?

Acknowledge legitimate concerns and be clear about the trade-offs involved.

Growth can create new opportunities while also raising concerns about housing, infrastructure, traffic and other community impacts. Address those concerns directly and explain how the chamber evaluates the benefits, costs and long-term implications of growth.

- Be specific about both the benefits of growth and the challenges that may come with it.
- Explain the potential consequences of inaction as well as the impacts of growth.
- Use local employers and community voices who can speak authentically about how an issue affects them.

HOW DO CHAMBERS SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES, NOT JUST RECRUIT NEW ONES?

First and foremost, chambers are focused on growing local economies. Helping current employers in a town to stay, grow and create new jobs is an important part of that mission. A chamber's first job is making sure the businesses already here can stay, grow and hire. In practice, that means:

- Meeting with local employers directly and regularly.
- Building the workforce pipeline by fostering partnerships with schools, colleges and other training programs.
- Advocating for the business community at-large.
- Providing businesses with resources, including financing, incentive programs and government affairs support.

When local employers are able to stay and grow, the whole community benefits.

HOW DO WE SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESSES?

Chambers provide practical help to small businesses and entrepreneurs that they otherwise might not have the time or resources to handle. Some chambers even provide opportunities and resources for grants, financing and promotional opportunities.

- Make the case for your chamber's relationship with entrepreneurs and small businesses by naming the services you provide and giving a recent example.

HOW DO JOBS, INVESTMENT AND A STRONGER TAX BASE AFFECT THE BROADER COMMUNITY?

When local businesses do well, the things everybody uses get funded. Schools. Roads. Parks. Emergency services.

Make the connection concrete so residents can picture it. "The commercial expansion on [road] added [amount] in annual county revenue, which is roughly what [specific service] costs to run."

DIGITAL AND REPUTATIONAL RESPONSE

HOW DO WE RESPOND WHEN AN INFLUENCER OR A PAGE POSTS SOMETHING FALSE ABOUT US?

Decide whether it is spreading before you decide whether to respond. Most posts die on their own. A correction gives them oxygen. Silence usually does not.

Every online post is a triage decision before it is a response decision. Sorting them well is what makes the response strong.

- Look closely at the audience. Is it your audience? Would their view move your core constituents?
- If you respond, correct once, in your own space. Avoid following the post through comment sections.
- Go to your members directly. An email to your list, or fifteen calls to board members, reaches the people who matter most.
- Handle it privately when you can. A call to a reporter or an official who has it wrong often works better than a public correction and preserves the relationship.
- Keep records. Screenshots with timestamps. Patterns matter if this becomes a legal or platform question.
- Agree on a two-tier response posture with your board before the first incident. What you correct publicly. What you handle privately. Who decides. Settling this in advance keeps you out of a second story you did not want.

02

SOCIAL MEDIA

THIRTY-DAY SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CALENDAR

Many people know their chamber through the things they see most often — events, ribbon cuttings and networking opportunities. This campaign is an opportunity to show them the broader picture. Use social media to make the chamber's work visible by showing who is leading, what problems you're working to solve, what has changed because of that work and who benefits.

Don't just tell people that *Chambers Change Things*. Show them what your chamber is changing.

Use this calendar as a starting point and tailor each post to reflect your chamber, members and community.

POSTING CADENCE

We've provided enough content to support one post a day, but daily posting is not expected. Use the content that works best for your chamber and post at a frequency that fits your existing social media strategy.

CONTENT THAT ALIGNS WITH THE CAMPAIGN

Show the people who lead. Members, board members, staff and partners.

Show the work. Advocacy, workforce, economic development and community priorities.

Show the results. Data, outcomes, milestones and individual success stories.

Show what's at stake. The local problems businesses and communities are trying to solve.

Show what's next. Priorities, commitments and opportunities to participate.

HASHTAGS & HANDLES

- **Primary:** #ChambersChangeThings on every post.
- **Secondary (choose one or two):** #[CITYNAME]Business, #[CHAMBERACRONYM], #ShopLocal[CITY]
- Tag ACCE where relevant so the national team can amplify local activity.



@ACCEHQ



@ACCEHQ



@ACCEHQ



@Association of Chamber of
Commerce Executives



@ACCEHQ

Keep hashtag counts low. Three or fewer on LinkedIn, five or fewer on Instagram. Hashtags are used now to label your content in the algorithm, not to expand reach.

CONTENT CALENDAR

DAY	CHANNEL & POST TYPE	DRAFT COPY TO LOCALIZE	ASSET NEEDED
1	All channels Campaign launch post	Today we're joining <i>Chambers Change Things</i> , a national campaign from @ACCEHQ. Here's the short version: chambers don't just host the ribbon cutting. We help build the thing behind it. [CHAMBER NAME] is proud to stand with chambers across the country. #ChambersChangeThings	Campaign launch graphic, chamber logo lockup
2	LinkedIn President and CEO note	A message from [CEO/Executive Director NAME]: "[INSERT QUOTE ABOUT THE IMPACT YOUR CHAMBER HAS ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND YOUR NEIGHBORS]."	Headshot, pull quote card
3	Instagram, Facebook Look closer carousel	Look closer. There's a chamber behind it. Swipe through five things in [CITY] that a chamber helped make happen. #ChambersChangeThings	5-panel carousel, local photography
4	X, Facebook Myth versus reality	Myth: a chamber is a networking group. Reality: 81% of Americans say their local chamber is a trusted resource and partner for businesses. #ChambersChangeThings	Stat card, myth versus reality template
5	LinkedIn Staff spotlight	Behind [PROGRAM], is [STAFF OWNER'S NAME]. They spend their weeks [DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM], turning connection and collaboration into impact for [CITY].	Staff photo
6	LinkedIn, X Headline data point	The impact of local chambers is felt close to home. 90% of Americans say their local chamber helps grow the local economy.	Stat card, 90% treatment
7	Facebook, Instagram Consumer behavior stat	Here's something worth knowing if you own a business in [CITY]: 64% of Americans familiar with their local chamber are more likely to buy from a chamber member. Membership shows up on the bottom line.	Stat card using the stat template
8	LinkedIn Advocacy explainer	What does chamber advocacy look like in [CITY]? It looks like [SPECIFIC ISSUE]. We showed up at [VENUE OR BODY], brought [NUMBER] employers with us and asked for [SPECIFIC ASK]. See our impact. 🙌🙌	Photo from hearing/meeting, or an infographic graphic using the stat template
9	Instagram reels, TikTok Short-form video	Sixty seconds on what a chamber actually does. Filmed at [LOCAL LANDMARK]. #ChambersChangeThings	Vertical video
10	X, Threads Awareness gap	70% of Americans wish they knew more about what their local chamber does. What are you looking to know?	Simple text card using the audience engagement template

DAY	CHANNEL & POST TYPE	DRAFT COPY TO LOCALIZE	ASSET NEEDED
11	LinkedIn Partner tag post	[INITIATIVE] moved forward because local leaders came together. Thank you to [PARTNER 1], [PARTNER 2] and [PARTNER 3] for standing with us on [INITIATIVE].	Group photo and/or partner logo strip
12	All channels Member story call	We want your story. If [CHAMBER NAME] helped your business hire, grow, open, reopen or stay put, tell us in three sentences. We'll share the best ones all month. Submit here: [FORM LINK - can be MS Forms, Google Forms or comparable platform]	Text card using the audience engagement template
13	LinkedIn Employer testimonial	'[QUOTE FROM EMPLOYER, ONE OR TWO SENTENCES].' [NAME], [TITLE], [COMPANY].	Quote card, company logo
14	Instagram reels Behind-the-counter	Sixty seconds behind-the-counter at [BUSINESS NAME]. [USE THE QUESTIONS BELOW IN A SHORT VIDEO INTERVIEW] 1. What's the hardest part of running a business on this street right now? 2. When did the chamber show up for you? 3. What do you want this block to look like in five years?	Vertical video, owner interview
15	Facebook Member spotlight two	[BUSINESS NAME] hired [NUMBER] people this year through [PROGRAM]. Here's how it happened. #ChambersChangeThings	Team photo, simple stat overlay
16	X, LinkedIn Reputation stat	47% of Americans say knowing a business is a chamber member makes them view it more favorably.	Use stat template
17	All channels	74% of Americans believe local chambers create jobs and promote community development. Here's how [CHAMBER NAME] supports our neighbors in [TOWN]. [Includes photos of recent projects and community engagement activities].	Photo carousel
18	LinkedIn Hard problem post	Nobody solves [HOUSING, CHILDCARE, WORKFORCE, TRANSIT] alone. That's exactly why [CHAMBER NAME] convened [COALITION NAME]. Here's what we've committed to and what we still need.	Coalition graphic, commitment list
19	Facebook, Instagram Workforce program	[PROGRAM NAME] connected [NUMBER] [CITY] students to employers this year. Workforce development isn't abstract. It's a kid with a steady paycheck and a plan.	Program photo, participant quote
20	LinkedIn Board member voice	[BOARD MEMBER NAME] of [COMPANY] on why they serve: '[SHORT QUOTE].'	Board member headshot
21	X, LinkedIn Community challenge stat	72% of Americans say local chambers play a key role in addressing community challenges. In [CITY], that role looks like [SPECIFIC EXAMPLE].	Stat card with local overlay

DAY	CHANNEL & POST TYPE	DRAFT COPY TO LOCALIZE	ASSET NEEDED
22	Instagram stories Day in the life	Follow [CEO NAME] through one Tuesday. Four meetings. One site visit.	Story sequence, 6 to 8 frames
23	Instagram stories, Facebook Ask us anything	You had questions. What does [CHAMBER NAME] actually do? Nothing's off-limits.	Local photography
24	LinkedIn What comes next	<i>Chambers Change Things</i> is a campaign. [CHAMBER NAME]'s work is a commitment. Here are the three things we're taking on next: [PRIORITY 1], [PRIORITY 2], [PRIORITY 3].	Priority graphic
25	All channels Membership call to action	If you've read along this month and thought 'we should be part of that,' you're right. Membership starts here: [LINK] #ChambersChangeThings	Join graphic, clear CTA button in bio
26	Instagram, Facebook Member spotlight	[BUSINESS NAME] is building a stronger future in our community. With support from [ONE SPECIFIC THING THE CHAMBER DID], they've gained meaningful connections and resources to keep growing. #ChambersChangeThings	Owner portrait, local photography
27	LinkedIn Advocacy record	[CHAMBER NAME] brought the business perspective to [ISSUE] this year, making sure local employers had a voice when it mattered.	Priority and issue graphic
28	Facebook, Instagram Who to call	Not sure what a chamber can actually do for you? Start here. [STAFF NAME] handles [AREA]. [STAFF NAME] handles [AREA]. [STAFF NAME] handles [AREA]. Call us before you need us.	Staff photo
29	Instagram reels, TikTok	What does [CHAMBER NAME] mean to local business? Hear directly from the members, employers and partners who are helping move [CITY] forward.	Program photo, participant quote
30	All channels Month in review	The work of building a stronger [CITY] never stands still. Next, [CHAMBER NAME] is focused on [PRIORITY OR OPPORTUNITY], alongside the members and partners helping shape what comes next. #ChambersChangeThings	Local photography

ASSET LIBRARY & EDITABLE TEMPLATES

Every graphic referenced in the calendar lives in one place: [Canva Template Links](#)

Pre-made graphics are ready to post as-is. Canva templates are for anything that needs your city, your number or your logo. Duplicate the template before you edit it.

READY TO POST

These include the campaign launch graphics and stat cards. Download and post, no editing needed.

CANVA TEMPLATES

Includes stat card, audience engagement card and quote card. Each one is pre-sized for feed, story and vertical video, so you should not need to resize anything yourself.

BRAND ASSETS

- ↓ Brand guide
- ↓ Logo lockups
- ↓ Endcard animation

CHANNEL GUIDANCE

CHANNEL	WHAT WORKS	WHAT TO AVOID
 LinkedIn	First-person leadership posts, employer testimonials, policy explainers, native documents.	Link dumps with no context, corporate voice, more than three hashtags.
 Facebook	Member spotlights, community photos, event recaps, local highlights content.	Long policy threads, anything that reads like a press release.
 Instagram	Carousels, portraits of owners, reels, stories, polls and Q&A.	Text-heavy graphics, stock photography, unbranded assets.
 X and Threads	Single stat cards, real-time advocacy updates, quick myth versus reality posts.	Threads longer than four posts, engagement bait, partisan framing.
 Email newsletter	Full member stories, the CEO letter, the story submission call.	Repeating social copy verbatim.
 TikTok	Owner interviews, phone-shot walkthroughs, behind-the-counter footage, trending audio used sparingly.	Watermarked reels reposts, scripted narration, logo-heavy intros.

MEASURING YOUR CONTENT

Set the baseline before day one so the board has something to compare against on day thirty-one. Reach and impressions are the easiest numbers to report and the least useful. Push for the ones that show behavior change.

METRIC	WHY IT MATTERS	TARGET TO SET LOCALLY
Engagement rate per post	Signals whether the campaign is landing or being scrolled past.	Beat your trailing 90-day average.
Member story submissions	Direct proof that members see themselves in the campaign.	Set a number before launch.
Board and member reshares	Shows internal buy-in, which predicts everything else.	Percentage of board sharing at least twice.

SHARE HOW YOUR CHAMBER CHANGES THINGS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

This campaign needs you to share your chamber's unique stories and contributions to raise the profile of chambers of commerce nationally.

Submit your stories via ChambersChangeThings.com

What are we looking for?

- Measurable achievements, projects and/or outcomes that we can feature in the *Chambers Change Things* campaign.
- Original content that performed well or stories that gained local attention and pickup.
- Direct response from elected officials and/or other organizations recognizing your chamber's leadership and influence.

03 EARNED MEDIA

WHY THIS CAMPAIGN MATTERS

Most people don't know what their chamber does. Sixty-three percent of Americans think a local chamber is a government agency or aren't sure, and only 44 percent say they're familiar with theirs at all. But 70 percent wish they knew more. This campaign exists to close the gap, one story at a time, starting at the local level.

The *Chambers Change Things* campaign centers on four messages, in this order. Every pitch, interview and column should ladder to one of them.

- **Chambers are the people who lead.** Local chambers are comprised of people who choose to lead not just in business, but in their communities.
- **Chambers open doors, convene, invest and speak up.** That's the job. They turn intentions that benefit a community into action.
- **Chambers get results.** Pick a city. Different cities, same difference-maker, shaping long-term change and economic prosperity for their community.
- **Chambers Change Things.** Local chambers shape communities, create opportunity, solve problems and influence what comes next.

The campaign gives local chambers a shared message, but a national campaign can't place a local story, and that work belongs to the people inside each chamber. These stories deserve to be told, and telling them is how you correct what the public gets wrong about chambers.

PITCHING STRATEGY

Too often, chambers are known for their events rather than the broader work they do to strengthen their communities. A strong media strategy can help change that perception by demonstrating the chamber's role in addressing issues that matter to businesses and the community. The objective is to make the chamber a source of record for the local business community. Reporters should know they can turn to you for credible data, a clear understanding of how local issues affect businesses and connections to employers who can add perspective to a story. Build that reputation consistently, and the chamber becomes a go-to source when business issues make news.

- **Always measure and report your work in outcomes, not activities.** For example, "We run a workforce development program" is an activity. "Last year, our workforce development program connected 150 local residents with training and employment opportunities" is an outcome.
- **Pick the right angle.** Every pitch casts the chamber in one role. Pick the one that fits the story. A single story can't carry all three.

ROLE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT A REPORTER HEARS
Leadership	The chamber convenes the people who can actually fix something.	"These are the folks who got the parties in a room."
Advocacy	The chamber carries business voices into policy rooms.	"Here is who is pushing on that ordinance, and why."
Problem solving	The chamber takes on what no single business or agency can solve alone.	"Childcare, workforce, downtown vacancy. They own a piece of this."

REPORTER OUTREACH BEST PRACTICES

Many chambers pitch cold, hear nothing and conclude the press is indifferent. It is not. It simply does not know you yet. Correct that in the four weeks before you have anything to announce.

- **Build a list of ten contacts.** Not a database. The daily's business reporter, the weekly's editor, the television assignment desk, the radio news director, the regional business journal's newsletter writer and the two or three independent newsletter or podcast operators who have become the most read voices in town.
- **Send the no-ask introduction.** Three sentences: who you are, what your chamber tracks that they may want and an offer to be a resource. Include an invitation to a short call.
- **Get in front of them before you need them.** Invite a reporter or editor to coffee or lunch with no pitch attached. Explain that you just want to get acquainted, and agree up front that the conversation is off the record. Then honor it. It's the cheapest relationship investment available to you, and it pays the first time you have real news.
- **Be useful once before you ask once.** A data point, a member who fits a story already in progress or a correction offered privately. One genuinely helpful email can buy a year of returned calls.
- **Answer within the hour, every time.** Respond within an hour with something usable and you become the first call. Respond the next day and you become the contact they stopped trying.
- **Keep a coverage log.** Date, outlet, reporter, topic and what you provided. Six months of that log is a media strategy, and it is what shows your board the work is effective.
- **Decide who is authorized to speak, and put it in writing.** A reporter will not wait while you figure out who can talk. Settle it before the phone rings, note who covers what and note the topics no one should address without checking with the CEO or board first.

FIVE EFFECTIVE STORY ANGLES

Start by understanding what these newsrooms actually cover. Local and regional reporters work a wide beat with very little time, and their assignment list is more predictable than most people assume. They cover what's opening and what's closing. Who is hiring, and who just cut a shift. New development, new jobs, new money moving through town. A decision that costs somebody something, and the person who has to absorb it. Change, conflict, money and people. Organizations are not a beat.

- **The local number nobody else has.** Your member survey, job postings data, downtown occupancy count. Proprietary local data is the most reliable path to coverage in a thin newsroom. Publish it on a cadence and it becomes recurring.
- **The business that would not exist without you.** Not a testimonial. A named business, a specific obstacle and the specific action the chamber took.

- **The problem the chamber decided to own.** Childcare capacity, housing near jobs, workforce credentials, transit to the industrial park. Chambers earn coverage when they take on something uncomfortable.
- **The policy fight with a local face.** State and federal issues land locally when a member can describe the cost in dollars and hours. Reporters need that face. Your directory is full of them.
- **The anniversary, the milestone, the proclamation.** Weakest of the five, but legitimate, and it performs well around Support Your Local Chamber Day. ACCE provides guidance on requesting a mayoral or county proclamation.

BEFORE PITCHING, ASK:

WHAT CHANGED?

WHO IS AFFECTED?

WHY NOW?

WHAT IS NEW OR SURPRISING?

WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE?

WHO CAN TELL THE STORY BETTER THAN THE CHAMBER CAN?

PITCH MECHANICS

Subject line: under nine words, specific to your town, written as the headline you would want to see. “Chamber Announces Campaign” gets ignored. “Half of downtown Elkhart’s storefronts turned over since 2023” gets opened.

Body, under 150 words, in this order:

1. The news, stated plainly.
2. Why it matters here, with a number if you have one.
3. Who they can interview, with title and availability.
4. What is already prepared. Data, photography, b-roll, a member who has agreed to talk.
5. Your cell number.

BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

No attachments on the first send. Link instead.

Attachments trip spam filters and signal a mass distribution.

Follow up exactly once, three business days later.

Lead with new information, not a reminder. Then stop.

Send Tuesday through Thursday, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. local.

Avoid Monday mornings and anything after noon on Thursday.

Use embargoes sparingly.

Only with reporters you have worked with before, and never on material that is already public.

Have an exclusive ready for your strongest story.

Offer one outlet a 24-hour exclusive and say plainly that is what you are doing. It converts far better than a broad release.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT TO DIVERSIFY OUTREACH

It helps to know what different newsrooms actually cover. Organizations are not a beat, so a chamber gets covered when it’s attached to change, conflict, investments and people.

- **Daily newspapers:** The whole-market story. New development, job numbers, city and county decisions, the largest employers in town.

- **Weekly and community papers:** Named people and small businesses. A new owner on Main Street, a program that helped somebody specific.
- **Local television:** Anything you can see. Construction, a hiring event, a storefront opening or closing, a crowd in a room.
- **Radio and podcasts:** Conversation. Someone who can explain in plain language what a decision means for local business.
- **Regional business journals and newsletters:** Money and data. Deals, expansions, wage and workforce figures, commercial real estate.
- **Independent newsletters and creators.** In many markets they now out-reach the legacy outlets above them. Entry point: treat the writer exactly as you would a beat reporter. Direct outreach, same access, same exclusives.

HANDLING MEDIA SENSITIVITIES

The table below is a starting point, not a rulebook. It reflects patterns common to chamber media work, not your chamber's specific reporter relationships, board sensitivities or local political terrain. Use it to spot the shape of a problem early, then judge the actual response against your own situation.

RISK	HOW YOU MANAGE IT
Pitch is read as advocacy or paid messaging.	Lead with data and a member's experience, not the campaign. Disclose sponsorships and paid placements without being asked.
Coverage pulls the chamber into a partisan fight.	Stay on business impact and process. Keep to positions the chamber has formally adopted. Decline candidate questions.
A member business is named unexpectedly.	Written permission before naming any member or using a photo.
Your team's bandwidth shrinks.	Ten names, one hour a week, one pitch a month. Small and sustained beats a sprint that ends.
Multiple chamber members are asked to comment.	One approved spokesperson list. Everyone else routes press to that person, politely and immediately.

KNOW THE EDITORIAL CODE

Attribution is not a formality, and it is not something to sort out mid-conversation. It decides whether a sentence you said out loud shows up in print under your name. Settle the terms before the interview or engagement starts.

#1 RULE

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES BEFORE AN INTERVIEW, NOT PARTWAY THROUGH.

On the record is always the default. Reporters can be fair, professional and genuinely friendly. They are not your friends. Assume you are being quoted unless you have agreed otherwise, out loud, in advance.

TERMS TO KNOW

ON THE RECORD

- Everything you say can be quoted directly and attributed to you by name and title.
- This is the default status of any conversation with a reporter unless explicitly agreed otherwise.

OFF THE RECORD

- Commonly used for get-acquainted or reset meetings, the coffee described above, where the point is the relationship rather than a story.
- Must be agreed to by both parties before you speak. Never assume anything is off the record without explicit agreement.
- It exists purely for the reporter's understanding of context. The information cannot be used in any way, quoted or as background.

ON BACKGROUND

- Information can be used but not attributed to you directly. Useful when you need to give a reporter context while keeping some distance.
- Attribution terms must be established explicitly. Common phrasings include “according to sources familiar with the matter” or “local business leaders note.”
- This can be used inside an on-the-record interview, where you and the reporter agree that specific comments are on background. Mostly with trade press you know well.

CAUTION:

Off the record only works with a reporter who honors it, and you have no practical recourse if one doesn't. If a detail would embarrass a member business, expose a board disagreement or commit the chamber to a position it hasn't formally adopted, don't say it. Not on background, not off the record, not as an aside on the way to the parking lot.

OP-ED WORKSHEET

HOW TO USE IT

A companion to the *Chambers Change Things* Op-Ed Template.

↓ [Download the template](#)

The template gives you the draft. This gives you the argument to customize to your own voice, issues and local impact. Using this worksheet, you should be able to pull together your own op-ed in thirty minutes.

STEP 1. SETTLE THE MECHANICS.

A strong argument sent to the wrong inbox in the wrong week does not run. Start here.

Target outlet and editor.

One paper. Named person if you can find one. What have they covered in the last month that connects to your argument?

- Your answer:

Run date and send-by date.

Ten to fourteen days ahead is the working rule. If you're tied to a vote or a major announcement, count backward.

- Your answer:

Word count and submission format.

Verify on the paper's own submissions page. Most require between 500 and 750 words.

- Your answer:

Exclusivity language for your pitch email.

You should only pitch an op-ed to one outlet at a time, and make that clear in your email. If you don't hear from the outlet in five business days, follow up once, then move on.

- Your answer:

STEP 2. PICK ONE PATH. NOT TWO.

You don't need to tell an impact story, a policy argument and a defense of the chamber all at once. Pick the one that matches what you actually have to say.

PATH	USE WHEN	WATCH FOR
A. Impact Story	You have a documented result and someone who felt it.	Lists of activities instead of outcomes. Overclaiming your role.
B. Policy Argument	An active debate or decision is pending, and you want a specific outcome.	Election, ballot, litigation or lobbying-spend content: to counsel first.
C. Setting the Record Straight	A false assumption about your chamber is costing you standing.	Never put the misperception in your headline or lede. Repetition cements it.
D. Making the Case for Growth	Your community is debating growth, development or investment and you want to make the case for what responsible growth can deliver.	Argue what's possible for your town. Paint a picture of the future.

MY PATH:

My argument in one sentence.

A reasonable person should be able to disagree with it. If your sentence is a version of "chambers are valuable," keep working. That's a sentiment.

- Your answer:

STEP 3. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR PATH. SKIP THE OTHERS.

PATH A. IMPACT STORY

1. What changed, and who can point to it?
2. Who had to be in the room, and how long did it take?
3. What's the number, and where does it come from if a reporter calls tomorrow?
4. Was this us leading, us helping build it or us supporting somebody else's work? Pick the true one.

PATH B. POLICY ARGUMENT

1. What exactly am I asking for, and who has the power to grant it?
2. What did our members tell us, in dollars, hours or headcount?
3. What does the other side get right?
4. What happens if this doesn't move? Quantify it.

PATH C. SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

1. Which single piece of our work, told plainly in five sentences, makes the assumption collapse on its own?
2. What's the one-breath answer to how we're funded and who we answer to?
3. Is any part of the misperception our own fault? Civic-looking design, seals and municipal language quietly feed it.

PATH D. MAKING THE CASE FOR GROWTH

1. Which specific public thing did growth pay for here? The road, the ladder truck, the school addition.
2. Who got hired, at what wage range and can I point to the employer?
3. What's the objection I'd hear at the hardware store, in their words?
4. When did we push back on a project? Proof of judgment beats proof of enthusiasm.

STEP 4. WRITE THE CONCESSION. EVERY PATH NEEDS ONE.

Readers are braced for a defense. Give them an honest accounting and they'll stay with you. This is the paragraph most people delete right before the piece stops being persuasive.

The sharpest fair criticism of your chamber, in your critics' own words:

- *Your answer:*

Your structural answer.

Not reassurance. Structure. How board seats are allocated. How a small member gets a vote. Something you turned down.

- *Your answer:*

STEP 5. PICK YOUR HOOK AND YOUR CLOSE.

HOOK (PICK ONE, NO BLENDING):

- A named person and the decision in front of them.
- A specific scene. Name the street.
- A news peg.
- A single local number. Hardest to land. Only if the number is genuinely surprising and yours.

Sketch your hook in two or three sentences:

CLOSE (MATCH YOUR PATH):

- Specific ask (best with Path B). One action, one named decision maker, one deadline.
- Invitation (best with Paths A and C). Something a reader can do that isn't joining.
- Honest stake (best with Path D). What's genuinely at risk in the next few years

Sketch your close in two or three sentences:

FINAL CHECK. READ IT OUT LOUD. THEN CONFIRM EACH OF THESE.

- ☐ One argument. One path. One sentence I can say without notes.
- ☐ The argument lands by paragraph three.
- ☐ The opening is a person or a place. Not a statistic. Not a mission statement.
- ☐ You can back up the facts you use.
- ☐ Our role is described accurately: led, helped build or supported.
- ☐ The concession is in, names a real criticism.
- ☐ No insider vocabulary. Nothing convenes. No stakeholders, no ecosystem, no programming.
- ☐ The close makes one ask. The last line returns to my opening.
- ☐ Nothing reads like a membership pitch.
- ☐ Within the outlet's word count.
- ☐ One outlet, one named editor, email says exclusive.