



**Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce
Program of Work: 2008-09**

**Councils
Member Services
Communications and Marketing
Community Development**

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
1. MEMBER SERVICES	
A. Membership recruitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow the Chamber membership 2. Hire a staff person to manage Chamber memberships 3. Update the list of benefits of being a Chamber member 4. Evaluate contents of membership packet and make changes as needed 5. Develop incentives for potential members (i.e. group price for advertising their business, discounts for insurance, discounts for equipment purchases, etc.) 6. Create and produce collateral material for membership promotion 7. Identify potential members 8. Assign targeted list of prospective members to Board members to recruit 9. Provide training for members/staff who help recruit new members 10. Host a "Membership Prospect Lunch" and invite targeted top prospects (12 – 15) to lunch at the Chamber for small one-on-one networking and invitation to join the Chamber

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Send a letter to prospective members letting them know they have been selected/nominated for membership (include a membership form, dues form, etc.) 12. Develop prizes/incentives for members who recruit the most number of new members 13. Determine the need/benefit of modifying the dues structure for businesses to be able to add employees as non-voting members (i.e. the business would pay for their employees to be members as a way for the business to encourage their employee's involvement) 14. Conduct an assessment of the market 15. Increase the market penetration rate (currently 26%)
<p>B. Membership Retention/Maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host a welcome event for new members 2. Conduct an orientation session for new chamber members 3. Improve and expand the benefits of membership 4. Improve the member experience 5. Personally contact every member at least once to strengthen existing relationships, reduce non-renewals, and resolve local business problems 6. Strategically communicate with members, highlighting the benefits of membership 7. Evaluate member wants, needs and expectations by assessing member feedback using a variety of vehicles including surveys and "focus groups" 8. Conduct exit interviews/survey members who drop their membership 9. Invite new members to attend the Board meeting after their approval, to be introduced
<p>C. Membership Promotion/ Networking Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold ribbon cutting recognition events 2. Provide assistance to members during grand openings. 3. Offer a consistent forum where member-to-member networking can transpire (i.e. "Business After Hours" or "Breakfast Before Business programs, etc.)

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Educate Chamber members on products, programs and services offered by other Chamber members 5. Develop, implement and evaluate “New Business Showcase” (i.e. business “open house”) 6. Promote/recognize members and their number of years as a Chamber member 7. Create sponsorship packages that promote chamber member businesses 8. Develop and distribute a Membership Directory and Quality of Life Guide to promote chamber member businesses 9. Welcome new residents/business owners to the community (welcome wagon, new business package—similar to new resident package). Utilize ambassadors, realtors, and retirees in hosting a monthly/quarterly welcome event. 10. Network with other communities for ideas/best practices
2. COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING	
<p>A. Maintain a website that serves as the Chamber’s major communication and business resource tool</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve and enhance website for increased usage and benefit 2. Provide high quality, up-to-date and relevant information on the site 3. Provide a structure that is easy to navigate and retrieve information 4. Add a “members only” section that includes Board documents, paying dues on-line, etc. 5. Make the website a resource tool for the community and visitors that includes a community calendar, new business/resident packets, links to members’ websites, etc. 6. Utilize the website to promote the Chamber such as including a listing of member benefits, pictures of officers/staff, press releases, member testimonials, videos, the Chamber DVD, a “Delta Scene” page that includes photos of Chamber events (give members cameras at events to assist with picture taking), photos from visitors, etc.

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Evaluate web sponsorship packages 8. Develop a community website link that includes information about the community
<p>B. Communicate to members and the community on a regular basis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a communications calendar 2. Provide the membership with information about Chamber activities including results/minutes of Board meetings 3. Communicate value to the membership by providing annual statistics to members on benefits they receive including, but not limited to number of opportunities to network, promotions, and referrals 4. Provide statistics of positive indicators (housing, businesses, etc.) vs. layoffs 5. Publish Chamber Newsletter that includes positive information addressing pertinent business and town issues, community events and Chamber committee updates for Chamber membership 6. Distribute an electronic “fast facts” or “Did you Know” e-mail as a way to push information to members 7. Increase awareness of Chamber initiatives and activities to key audiences (elected officials, community leaders and citizens) so that they understand and value the Chamber’s mission and accomplishments and that they believe the organization is effective, strategic and relevant 8. Lead, encourage, promote, and educate Chamber members as well as the communities at large in the integration of the Chamber of Commerce into the community and the county 9. Advertise/communicate (via articles in the newspaper) what we’re doing with our Tourism efforts (number of visits from International travelers, where they’re from, articles that feature the Chamber in other publications, how we’re using the Tourism tax--for every tourist dollar spent, xxx% comes back to the community, etc.).
<p>C. Market the Chamber to its members, the community, public officials, and visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an ongoing marketing plan to create an increased awareness of benefits of being a Chamber member and to create a greater awareness of services offered by the Chamber to its members, the community and visitors

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Initiate a promotional timeline for more effective promotions 3. Develop a comprehensive sponsorship program (web, print, etc.). Consider including a basic level of advertising as part of the membership package (basic information – free, additional information for a fee) 4. Market the community and our members to all newcomers and visitors through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community events b. Welcome center 5. Consider focusing on one category/classification each month (industry, education, merchants, etc.) 6. Utilize testimonials in promotional materials 7. Increase advertising 8. Consider creating/utilizing television commercials (Channel 9, Cable One, etc.) 9. Develop radio spots 10. Promote Chamber through regularly scheduled interviews with TV, radio, and print 11. Provide releases to the media 12. Create and distribute a Magazine that is a positive/effective marketing tool for new and existing businesses, residents and visitors. Include articles and editorials, messages from the Mayor and Chairman of the Board, Chamber member listings. Explore partnering with Scott Coopwood on utilizing portions of the <i>Delta</i> magazine and inserting Chamber visitor information at the back (restaurants, shopping, hotels, etc.) 13. Distribute tourism brochures to area hotels 14. Consider electronic signage that would include a phone number for visitors to call for Chamber information 15. Use business marquees and event boards (like DSU athletics white boards) to promote Chamber events
3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
<p>A. Position the Chamber as a pro-active, credible community leader through the work and coordination of community groups and civic organizations in improving the quality of life in Cleveland and Bolivar County</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate a community calendar of events. 2. Market the community as a destination point to visitors and locals for community events/festivals 3. Update and distribute tourism packets / new resident packets and brochures for such packets 4. Serve as an information center for the community by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintaining files of current community events b. Publishing an annual club and organizational list c. Maintaining a file of area telephone directories d. Maintaining state and city maps 5. Create a Bolivar County Map promoting Bolivar County and Chamber businesses to residents/newcomers 6. Create an information guide for visitors 7. Have portable kiosks for use at various community events 8. Capture contact information from visitors at events for future mailouts (raffle, etc.) 9. Work with schools and the community to actively promote education 10. Market Cleveland as a relocation destination for retirees 11. Identify housing needs and pursue development
<p>B. Volunteer Development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proactively identify, recruit, retain, excite, promote and recognize volunteers 2. Develop a structure that will energize and motivate volunteers, give them measurable tasks and assure accountability 3. Increase volunteer base, broaden volunteer base, increase diversity of volunteers and get more volunteers for special events 4. Develop/maintain database of volunteers and track volunteers 5. Have a "Visitor Information Person" (VIP) at various community events to distribute information 6. Restructure the Ambassadors Club

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
C. Leadership Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus and engage young professionals in the business community. Develop a Young Professionals Network to engage and involve young professionals by identifying their wants, needs and expectations to promote increased participation and to diversify the Chamber's membership with more young professionals 2. Sponsor the Leadership Bolivar County program 3. Develop a corps of committed volunteers through the Leadership Bolivar County program and encourage them to take on leadership roles in the Chamber and the community 4. Assign Leadership Bolivar County members to a Chamber project immediately after graduation 5. Sponsor a LBC program graduate for Leadership Mississippi 6. Organize a reunion of Leadership Program graduates 7. Bring in DSU student leaders to seek their input/involvement (work in conjunction with LBC) 8. Explore creating a Junior Chamber at DSU
D. Government Relations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host forums for local citizens to meet, question and express concerns to city, county, and state officials 2. Ensure staff and board member representation on city and county boards, commissions and non-profit organizations 3. Host reception for current and newly elected officials 4. Invite various city and county officials to Chamber Board meetings for recognition 5. Continue and maintain positive government relations efforts at local, state, and national levels 6. Visit with key government officials individually 7. Consistently monitor and advocate at all levels of government (including City Council, County Board, School Board, MS Legislature, and the U.S. Congress) on issues that affect the cost and ease of doing business and the quality of life in Bolivar County 8. Put pictures of alderman/supervisors with various

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<p>projects in the newspaper</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Enhance relationship with city and county officials 10. Make Tourism funding part of a regulation with a certain percentage going to the Chamber 11. Support Delta Legislative Day in Jackson 12. Sponsor group trip to D.C. 13. Initiate requests for federal funding for community development/existing industry projects
<p>E. Business Advocacy and Issues</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take appropriate stands on issues that impact Chamber members 2. Develop a voter education program to increase voter understanding and participation 3. Advocate public policy issues of importance to the business community 4. Provide leadership and support to the funding issues of Delta State imposed by their Board 5. Identify key individuals in the county to enhance County involvement with the Chamber 6. Partner with Farm Bureau, pass resolutions, etc. to attract/serve the agriculture sector 7. Assist communities in Bolivar County with their events 8. Show the importance of Cleveland to the county's survival 9. Meet with area Chamber Boards to exchange ideas, get to know one another, etc. 10. Develop an "annual issue agenda" <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Using member input research b. Develop position(s) c. Communicate to members d. Communicate and encourage members to communicate these positions to appropriate government officials
<p>4. Organizational/</p>	

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
Administration	
A. Provide Staffing to meet the needs of the organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide appropriate compensation and incentives 2. Develop challenging job assignments and update job descriptions accordingly 3. Update personnel policies 4. Develop a Procedures Manual 5. Implement a regular evaluation process
B. Appropriate Structures and Systems in place to support the organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate a need for a third major fund raising event 2. Hold an annual orientation meeting for Board members 3. Create duties/responsibilities for Board members/officers 4. Require Board members /officers to sign commitment forms 5. Develop/implement training for Board members 6. Require Board members to serve as a liaison to at least one committee 7. Develop focused Board agendas 8. Implement Board work sessions with a social afterwards for all members 9. Hold an annual planning meeting for Board members 10. Hold an orientation meeting for Officers 11. Create duties/responsibilities for Officers 12. Require Officers to sign commitment forms 13. Develop/implement training for Officers 14. Hold an orientation meeting for Committee Chairs 15. Create duties/responsibilities for Committee Chairs - emphasizing the management of committees and responsibilities of committee members 16. Require Committee Chairs to sign commitment forms 17. Develop/implement training for Committee Chairs

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Implement more structure for committees giving them a timeframe for completing projects 19. Evaluate the use of committees vs. project-specific task forces 20. Ensure that Board members, Officers, and Committee Chairs adhere to new standards 21. Monitor the Chamber's financial accounts 22. Add a technology line item to the budget for computer replacement, etc. 23. Evaluate reserves to ensure Chamber's long-term financial stability
C. Ensure professional, well-trained and responsive staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a training plan for employees 2. Evaluate the performance of the Executive Director 3. Attend/complete the Institute for Organizational Management program 4. Attend/complete the International Economic Development Council program
D. Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize excellence in business practices and volunteerism throughout the community. 2. Celebrate the Chamber's accomplishments and recognize volunteers for their service to the Chamber.
E. Chamber office reflect a progressive, well-kept community to people and businesses looking to relocate, or with meeting planners and tourists considering Bolivar County as a destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate location 2. Renovate/upgrade office facilities 3. Implement wireless technology for members and visitors 4. Install appropriate presentation technology (projectors, etc.) 5. Determine need/plan for a catering kitchen (for events...Octoberfest, Italian Festival, etc.) 6. Determine need/plan for accessible storage that is heated and cooled 7. Determine need/plan for appropriate meeting space for Chamber members and the community

FOCUS	ACTION ITEM
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="613 174 1438 247">8. Determine need/plan for smaller meeting rooms (15-20 people)<li data-bbox="613 285 1230 317">9. Create a more inviting exterior entrance<li data-bbox="613 359 1414 459">10. Create a more inviting reception area (a visitor center where information, brochures, maps, new resident packet, etc. are accessible to visitors, guests, etc.)