Chamber of Commerce Overview

What Is a Chamber?

A chamber of commerce is a partnership of businesses and professionals, working together to build a healthy economy and improve the quality of life in a community. As a chamber works to accomplish these goals, it must champion many different functions: economic developer and planner, tourist information center, business spokesperson, economic counselor and teacher, government relations specialist, human resources adviser, and public relations practitioner.

Benefit of Investing in the Chamber

Chamber members are businesses, nonprofits, organizations, and individuals concerned with the socioeconomic climate of a community. These groups have joined together because they stand a better chance of getting things done when speaking with a collective voice. Chamber members can include retired individuals, the small beauty shop on the corner, the independent or chain restaurant, small and large banks, franchise and major retailers, nonprofits, and the local professional sports team. There are no limits or restrictions on the number or kind of members that choose to get involved in a chamber of commerce.

Who Leads a Chamber?

A chamber of commerce is run by its members. They elect a volunteer board of directors who determines policies and sets goals. A chief elected officer, the board chair, presides over all board meetings. A chamber’s day-to-day operations are handled by a paid staff, including a professional manager who is a paid employee.

Chamber members may choose to work on committees. Committees can include economic development, education, government relations, public affairs, membership, and ad hoc work groups.

Objectives of a Chamber

The chamber keeps these broad objectives in mind as it works to improve a community’s economy and quality of life:

• Help businesses prosper and grow.

• Increase job opportunities.

• Encourage an orderly expansion and development of all segments of the community.

• Contribute to the overall economic stability of the community.

• Promote the nation’s private enterprise system.

Advantages of Joining the Chamber

Joining a chamber of commerce provides businesses with access to resources, discounts, and relationships that enable them to save money, market their products, and streamline their processes. Both chamber employees and chamber member organizations bring their own benefits to the total body. Whether your business is looking for B2B partners and sales, help with customer acquisition, or guidance on HR processes, a chamber of commerce can help.

While investing in the Chamber is never a guarantee, 80 percent of respondents in a Shapiro Group survey were more likely to purchase goods or services from companies belonging to a chamber of commerce.