



# Leveraging Partnerships & Relationships

*How Strategic Collaboration Amplifies Your Chamber's Influence*

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CPO Winter Conference

# Why This Matters Now

Leveraging key **partnerships and relationships**—at the **local, regional, and state levels**—is vital for chambers of commerce because no single organization can drive economic vitality alone.

Chambers sit at the intersection of business, government, education, and community, and strong partnerships turn that position into real influence and impact.

# Force Multiplier

**Strategic partnerships aren't optional anymore—they're a force multiplier!**

When chambers collaborate intentionally with:

- Neighboring, Regional and the State chamber
- Economic development organizations
- Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs)
- Local, county, and state government agencies
- Local schools, CTC's, tech schools, colleges and universities...

...they expand influence, reduce duplication, and deliver greater value to your members and the region.

# Before we start... Defining Partnerships

**Partnerships** are more than co-hosted events or shared logos:

- They shared goals, initiatives, priorities.... and needs.
- True collaboration creates long-term value for everyone involved.
- Partnerships should be a two-way street; everyone brings something to the table.
- Most importantly, everyone should be working in unison. Thriving, growing and health communities are all working together.

# Who do chamber's partner with?

There are several **standard** community and **regional** entities your chamber should be engaged or partnering with, but here are a few questions you should be asking yourself:

- What is your chamber's initiatives, goals, objectives (Strategic Plan)?
- What areas within your chamber are weak, unhealthy or missing?
- What initiatives are you leading are or strong in?

# Neighboring Regional and State Chambers

Working with neighboring local chambers, a regional chamber, and the state chamber delivers real, practical value in a few big ways:

- **Bigger Voice, Greater Influence**
- **Shared Resources**
- **Better Programming for Members**
- **Stronger Economic Development Impact**
- **Professional Support for Chamber Staff**
- **Increased Credibility and Visibility**

## **Bottom Line**

*For small chambers, partnerships extend capacity, increase impact, and elevate relevance. By working together locally, regionally, and statewide, small chambers punch well above their weight—delivering more value to members and building stronger communities in the process.*

# Economic Development Organizations (EDOs)

Ohio's economic development landscape includes **statewide leaders, regional partners, local development councils, and professional associations** working together to support job growth, business attraction, and community prosperity.

- **Statewide Economic Development Organizations**
  - **JobsOhio** – Ohio's primary private, nonprofit economic development corporation focused on statewide business attraction, retention, and expansion.
- **Regional Economic Development Partners**
  - Regional Growth Partnership
  - Team NEO
  - Lake to River
  - REDI Cincinnati
  - Ohio Southeast (OhioSE)
  - One Columbus
  - Dayton Development Coalition

# Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs)

**Chambers** and your county or local **CVB** go hand in hand with **tourism, promotion and a shared focus** on community **branding** and **quality of life**.

- Shared materials for promotion
- Joint marketing and signature events
- Talent attraction and small business visibility

# Government Partnerships

Local, county, and state agencies are **critical allies**.

- Chambers serve as translators between business and government
- Effective advocacy is relationship-driven
- City, Township and County Economic Development Efforts/Committees
- Invite and share ribbon cuttings

Local schools  
CTC's  
tech schools  
colleges  
universities

**Education** partners are your **workforce pipeline**, your **economic engine**, and your community's future—and chambers sit right in the middle of all three.

- Stronger talent retention
- Shared initiatives
- Direct support for local employers
- Economic development competitiveness
- Expanded programming and relevance
- Shared community outcomes

# The Partnership Spectrum

**Awareness:** understanding each other's **capabilities and strengths.**

- Coordination: sharing information and calendars
- Collaboration: joint initiatives and outcomes
- Integration: shared strategy and execution

# Common Partnership Pitfalls

## **Unclear** goals and expectations

- One-sided value propositions
- Over-reliance on personal relationships
- Too many partnerships with too little focus

# A Simple Partnership Framework

Does this **align** with our **strategic plan**?

- Who benefits and how?
- What resources are required?
- Who owns the relationship?
- How will success be measured?

# Your Role as a Chamber Leader

## Be intentional and proactive!

- Set clear expectations and boundaries
- Champion collaboration internally
- Model trust and transparency

# Discussion & Reflection

Which **partnerships** has **delivered** the **greatest value**?

- Where do you see duplication in your community?
- Which relationship should become more strategic?

# Closing Thought

The **strongest chambers** don't do everything themselves...

- They bring the right partners together to do it better
- Surround your chamber with the partners that enhance your mission

# Questions?



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