

# Stillwater Chamber of Commerce

## *Ambassador Handbook*



# Ambassador Program Handbook

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## **Ambassador Program Handbook**

### **Welcome to the Ambassador Program**

Welcome to the Ambassador Program for the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce. Your participation and support of the Ambassador Program will be both rewarding and challenging. Ambassadors are the vital public relations arm of the Chamber and we appreciate your commitment and dedication to both Chamber members and the Stillwater business community. Attributes of an Ambassador include the following:

- Ambassadors exhibit the goals and ideals of the Chamber while being permitted to promote their business.
- Ambassadors must dress and behave professionally when representing the Chamber at any event (work uniforms are acceptable professional attire).
- Ambassadors generate excitement, enthusiasm and a sense of camaraderie and support for the community at civic, community, and Chamber events.

Note: If you are not at a Chamber-sanctioned event, please do not wear your official Ambassador name badge.

### **Ambassador Mission**

To retain existing members and attract new members to join the Chamber of Commerce by sharing about Chamber services, resources and benefits. To promote, serve and participate in the growth and development of the Chamber of Commerce through attendance at Chamber and community functions (i.e. ribbon cuttings, grand openings, ground breakings, business open houses, networking events, monthly mixers, etc.).

Ambassadors often assist Chamber leadership and staff in fine tuning Chamber services and benefits, and are official representatives of the Chamber at various Chamber functions in the community.

### **Benefits of Being an Ambassador**

As front runners in the business community Ambassadors find their volunteer experience rewarding because of the opportunity to celebrate business growth in Stillwater, support the Chamber with their time and expand their business potential through networking. During your tenure as an Ambassador, you will experience the following return on your investment:

- Greater visibility for your business
- Opportunities to interact with new businesses in the Stillwater community
- Greater opportunity for direct input to the Chamber
- Exclusive opportunities and priority invitations to community activities and events
- Lasting business relationships and friendships
- Leadership and volunteer opportunities within the Chamber and community

## Eligibility

Any individual wanting to promote the Chamber as an Ambassador must be a member, or an employee/representative of a member in good standing with the Chamber of Commerce, whose dues are paid and up to date. Each interested individual will be asked to view the handbook and fill out an application. Once the Approval Committee (made up of the Chamber CEO, the Director of Membership and the Ambassador Chair) has confirmed an applicant, he/she can begin the Ambassador in Training requirements. A training name badge will be issued and after completing the Ambassador in Training requirements, candidates will be presented with their official Ambassador name badge at the next Ambassador monthly meeting.

## Ambassador in Training Requirements

Once an Ambassador in Training completes the activities identified in the following checklist, he/she should notify the Chamber staff liaison. After the requirements have been verified, an official name badge will be presented and he/she will be added to the Ambassador roster. It is the responsibility of the Ambassador in Training to sign-in with the Chamber staff liaison to make sure there is a record of attendance.

### ***Ambassador in Training Checklist:***

- Attend three Ribbon Cuttings
- Attend one Business After Hours
- Attend one Business for Breakfast
- Attend one Noon Networking lunch
- Attend one Third Friday Forum
- Attend one Ambassador Orientation
- Bring a potential member to a Chamber function (inform Chamber staff in advance)
- Attend one Ambassador Monthly Meeting

## Duties & Responsibilities

Ambassadors are asked to wear their official Ambassador name badge when they are functioning as an official representative of the Chamber. There are three specific areas in which Ambassadors are asked to officially represent the Chamber. These are listed in the following section in detail: Chamber Activities, Member Retention and Member Recruitment. The Annual Checklist helps each Ambassador to track their Chamber involvement and is required to maintain eligibility as an Ambassador

At any event it is the responsibility of the Ambassador or Ambassador in Training to sign-in, or make contact with the Chamber liaison if there is not a sign-in sheet, to ensure that their attendance is recorded. This will ensure that points are accurately assigned to give you credit for your volunteer efforts.

## ***Sub-Committees***

In order to support the Ambassador Mission, the Chamber has recently instituted some sub-committees within the Ambassador team as a whole to help us focus on some specific areas, such as providing greeters at events, delivering welcome baskets to new members, and pursuing businesses for recruitment and retention. These committees each have a Chair who is the volunteer organizer of these efforts (*see Ambassador sub-committees list*). If you are able to commit some extra time to one of these sub-committees, contact the Chair of the action committee or the Chamber liaison. Doing so can help you achieve some of the goals on the following Annual Checklist.

## ***Name Badges***

Ambassadors are encouraged to wear their Ambassador name badge to all Chamber functions and events. Points toward awards are assigned for wearing the badge. This is the primary identification of your official affiliation with the Chamber and is especially important when you go on recruitment or retention visits. It is helpful for other business professionals who are looking for direction at an event or perhaps have a question about membership, to see (as well as hear you say) that you are an official representative of the Chamber of Commerce.

The first badge is complimentary, but there will be a \$5 replacement charge for a lost badge. If an Ambassador moves to another Chamber business and continues as an Ambassador, there is no charge for a new name badge. If you are not at a Chamber-sanctioned event or activity, please do not wear your official Ambassador name badge.

## ***Annual Checklist***

*To remain an Ambassador in good standing and remain eligible for awards, Ambassadors must complete at least 5 of the items on the following checklist in each 12-month period:*

- Attend an Ambassador Orientation meeting
- Attend or be a greeter at a Member Orientation meeting (twice a year)
- Attend six Ribbon Cuttings
- Attend or be a greeter at a Business for Breakfast event (monthly)
- Attend two Business After Hours (every other month event)
- Be a greeter at one Business After Hours
- Be a greeter at a Third Friday Forum (10-12/year) or Women's Business Network Luncheon (quarterly event – attend free as a greeter)
- Refer four potential members to the Chamber – deliver their business card to Chamber liaison

- \_\_\_\_ Do four retention visits to existing members (contact Retention Committee Chair or Chamber liaison)
- \_\_\_\_ Invite a new or long-term member to attend an event with you (new members are listed in the newsletter and on the website monthly)
- \_\_\_\_ Deliver maps, Chamber magazines or ribbon cutting pictures to members
- \_\_\_\_ Attend six Ambassador Committee Meetings

## **1. Chamber Activities**

Ambassadors are expected to participate in a variety of Chamber functions and events. The descriptions below are the activities and events offered by the Chamber.

### **a. Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings/Ground Breakings/Open Houses**

Ribbon cuttings, grand openings, ground breakings and sometimes simply open houses celebrate new business or business growth in the community. These activities represent opportunities for economic development, employment and city growth. As such, Ambassadors provide a welcoming service as the public relations arm of the community. Events like Ribbon Cuttings and Ground Breakings that have an official ceremony involved are scheduled to take 15-20 minutes to maximize the time that you are taking away from the office.

Ambassadors are asked to arrive at the set time of the ribbon cutting so that we can stay on schedule. Ideally, within 5-10 minutes, the host (new business owner or manager) will be introduced, allowed to speak for a few minutes about the expansion or the new business, and then Ambassadors and the business owner and staff are assembled for the official picture. Within 15 minutes of the advertised starting time, the ribbon cutting or ground breaking picture should be taken. In some instances, there are variables outside of the control of the Chamber staff that stretch the event out longer, but this is the goal the Chamber tries to adhere to. Afterwards, anyone who can stay longer is encouraged to do so if they so choose.

### **b. Business After Hours**

The challenge of the every other month Business After Hours is networking. Ambassadors should attempt to meet (or bring) at least one new person and introduce them to other attendees, for the benefit of making the event beneficial to both parties. These mixers provide an excellent platform to promote your business to a variety of people, promote the Chamber and enjoy a relaxed social environment with new found friends. If you are working as a greeter at a Business After Hours, you are free to attend as a guest before or after your 30 minute shift.

### **c. Membership Orientation**

The Chamber will begin hosting a Member Orientation at least twice a year to outline the many benefits and services of the Chamber. This meeting provides vital information to new and current members so they can maximize the benefits of their Chamber membership. Ambassadors are an extension of the Chamber leadership and staff and

are encouraged to provide feedback for program improvements. In support of this function, Ambassadors can contribute to the success of these sessions by welcoming members and assisting in answering their questions.

#### **d. Other Chamber Activities**

- Morning networking events (8-9 am - Business for Breakfast, Third Friday Forum)
- Lunch networking events (11:30am-1pm - Stillwater Women's Business Network, 11:30 am-12:30pm - Noon Networking)
- Annual Events (Economic Summit, Capitol Breakfast, Ag Banquet, Industry Appreciation, Annual Meeting & Hall of Fame Reception, Fall Tradeshow, Holiday Open House)
- Board Meetings (7:30am - may be attended by Chamber members upon request)
- Special Services (set-up / take down for major functions, volunteering for activities/events, deliveries to members)

### **2. Member Recruitment**

A key function of Chamber Ambassadors is to help identify business owners who would benefit from more community involvement through Chamber membership and invite them to join. Ambassadors should be aware of membership benefits and privileges so that they can extend the invitation when appropriate.

Feel free to call the Chamber office with any questions you have about member services so that you are equipped to answer those same questions from others as you go out into the community. Membership packets and information are available at the Chamber office at any time for your reference or for a potential member. Ambassadors are expected to be the eyes and ears in the community, providing the Chamber staff with leads that allow follow-up.

### **3. Member Retention**

Ambassadors are also the relationship builders with existing Chamber members. They work towards "adopting" members, inviting them to Chamber-related events, pursuing inactive Chamber members and those who are considering dropping their membership to find out how the Chamber can do a better job of serving their business.

One of the goals of retention is to visit as many existing members as possible throughout the year to update their data and ask how their Chamber membership is working for them. This is a great way to build one-on-one networking opportunities for Ambassadors. As an Ambassador meets new business professionals, ideally they will get help in expanding their contacts and growing their business. You may find others who share your vision for business, and who have the enthusiasm and energy to be involved in the community that would be potential Ambassador candidates as well.

## **Participation Points**

The Chamber staff liaison will keep track of points throughout the year. At any event, it is the responsibility of the Ambassador or Ambassador in Training to sign-in with the Chamber staff liaison to ensure attendance is recorded so that points can be accurately assigned. If you are submitting a referral of a potential members, it is important to help us document this referral by submitting their business cards the Chamber staff liaison, so that we can track the leads and assign points. Ambassadors in Training are not eligible to start earning points until they have completed all their training requirements.

Documentation will be provided at the monthly Ambassador meetings for each Ambassador's current point standing.

### ***Point Eligible Events***

- Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings/Ground Breakings/Open Houses
- Business After Hours
- Ambassador Committee Meetings
- Business for Breakfasts
- Noon Networking
- Chamber Tradeshow
- Industry Appreciation

### ***Number of Points Earned at Events***

- Attendance: 1 Point
- Attendance with Name Badge: 2 Additional Points
- Attending an Event with a Prospect (inform Chamber liaison in advance): 3 Points
- Official Greeter at an Event (name badge required): 3 Points

### ***Additional Point Earning Opportunities***

Because sign-up sheets are not available for an Ambassador's delivery of maps, magazines or other items, or for participating in some extra-curricular Chamber activities, it is important that each Ambassador communicates his/her involvement to the Chamber staff liaison via email or phone call as soon as the point-earning project is complete.

*Report to Chamber liaison when completed:*

- Giving out at least 10 proud member cards with your business' name listed every time you do business with a different Chamber member: 1 Point
- Send welcome email and deliver welcome basket to new member: 2 Points
- Deliver maps, magazines, or ribbon cutting pictures: 2 Points
- Submit recruiting referral leads to Chamber with contact info - get permission from business owner/manager for Chamber liaison to call: 2 Points
- Retention drive\* participation: 3 Points

- Recruitment drive\* participation: 3 Points
- Signing on a New Member: 5 Points

\*Drives will potentially be organized once a year for the Ambassadors as a whole under the leadership of the named sub-committee(s), Ambassador Chair and Chamber Liaison.

## **Ambassador Awards**

The Chamber is committed to giving recognition where recognition is due for your volunteer services. An attendance roster at each event is used to track the Ambassadors' participation for each quarter. The points will be used to determine the recipient of the Ambassador of the Quarter award every three months and the Ambassador of the Year annually.

### ***Ambassador of the Quarter***

*First Quarter: July-September*

*Second Quarter: October-December*

*Third Quarter: January-March*

*Fourth Quarter: April-June*

The Ambassador who has the most accrued points for the quarter is honored at the monthly meeting with a small gift from the Chamber and a framed Ambassador of the Quarter certificate. The winner, along with a highlight of their business, is also announced via the email updates to Ambassadors, and is featured in the Chamber newsletter. A press release is also added to the Chamber website and is sent to the local newspapers.

### ***Ambassador of the Year***

Recognition as Ambassador of the Year is tied directly to the Ambassador point system. The Ambassador of the Year Award will be decided on an accumulation of participation points for the entire year. If there is a tie, Ambassadors may be asked to vote on the recipient of the award to determine year-end winner. The winner will be recognized and presented with a special gift, along with the Ambassador of the Year award at the Annual Meeting & Hall of Fame Reception in June.

## **Ambassador Chair**

The Chair of the Ambassadors is a position traditionally chosen by the President/CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, who in turn receives nominations from the Director of Membership and/or the Chamber Board of Directors. This position is held for the Chamber's fiscal year, July 1-June 30, during which time he or she can call on the Chair Ex-Officio from the previous year to provide any needed support. The responsibilities of the Chair include officiating at monthly meetings, being a spokesperson for the Ambassadors at ribbon cuttings, ground breakings and other similar events, providing leadership to the Ambassadors as the largest volunteer entity of the Chamber and being an example of the mission and goals of the Ambassador program.

## **Sub-Committees**

In an attempt to provide more effectiveness in meeting the Ambassadors mission as a whole, the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors established several sub-committees with the goal on

focusing on some neglected areas of recruitment, retention, having greeters at events and welcoming new members to the Chamber.

These sub-committees are chaired for a year as well, and the appointed Chairs are those Ambassadors involved in each of the sub-committees who have been in the Ambassador program the longest. If there is a question as to who is eligible to Chair a sub-committee, the Ambassador Chair will appoint a Chair to fill an opening, taking seniority into consideration.

*Ambassadors interested in being a part of any of these sub-committees should contact the Chamber liaison or the Sub-committee Chair listed below. A current Ambassador roster with contact information can be found on the Chamber's Web site [www.stillwaterchamber.org](http://www.stillwaterchamber.org).*

***Greeters:***

**Debbie White-Hinchey, Chair**

Patricia Huffman

Dale Langley

Donna Rhinehart

David Drummond

Sadie Harrison

Tammy Boylan

This group acts as greeters/ hosts, welcoming guests as they arrive at Chamber events. Their goal is to make people feel welcome and if the situation allows, help members meet one another and getting them involved as a Chamber member. Any Ambassador can participate as a greeter/host, but this committee is contacted for their preferences prior to a request going to everyone.

***Recruitment Committee:***

**Manny Cervantes, Chair**

Sherry Roden

David Scott

Kyle Rosebure

Keri Marr

This group is the first in the door with new businesses. They deliver a gift from the Chamber to welcome them to Stillwater and they also do team visits to existing businesses as well who are not currently Chamber members, inviting them to get on board with the Chamber's commitment to grow Stillwater and answering any questions they might have about membership.

***Retention Committee***

**Stephanie Fry, Chair**

Trish Stokes

Dustin Bledsoe

Sadie Harrison

Dale Langley

This group provides support to existing Chamber members. They visit active and inactive Chamber members to find out how the Chamber can do a better job of serving their business and the Stillwater community. With a survey card, they obtain updated information on each business in order to help Chamber staff keep membership information current.

***Welcome Baskets***

**Kathleen Bays, Chair**

Greg Dankey

Donna Rhinehart

BJ Beers

Joyce Montgomery

This group makes sure that new members receive a welcome email and a gift basket from the Chamber of Commerce and will also assist in procuring items for the gift baskets if needed. Welcome emails and gift basket deliveries are assigned to any interested Ambassadors. This is most easily coordinated at the monthly meetings. The committee is responsible to assist in making sure the contacts are made in a timely fashion.

## *Ambassador Commitment*

*Ambassadors represent one of the most important volunteer groups within the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce. As an Ambassador, I am responsible for assisting in maintaining open lines of communication between the Chamber and its members.*

Members receive special attention from Ambassadors through phone calls, personal visits and e-mails. The business community, in return, benefits from a stronger and healthier Chamber with a strong base of sustaining members. All of this enables the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce to stay focused on the issues that positively impact our city's growth.

This program also provides exposure to those companies and individuals whose representatives serve as Ambassadors. These opportunities include learning firsthand about the Stillwater business community and gaining access to a vast array of new and existing businesses.

*While Ambassadors enjoy the privilege of expanding their business contacts, as an Ambassador, I am responsible to refrain from exploiting this privilege or these contacts and will not add other Ambassadors/Chamber members to my customer contact list without their permission.*

Ambassadors should be exemplary in their business ethics and practices, are expected to be active in Chamber activities and should familiarize themselves with all aspects of the Chamber to truly be recognized as an "Ambassador" of this organization.

*I have read the above obligations of the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors and pledge that I will fulfill these expectations to the best of my ability. I understand that if I do not meet the participation guidelines outlined in the Ambassador Program Handbook, I can be removed as an Ambassador. I agree to re-apply to the Approval Committee should I choose to continue as an Ambassador.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### *EMPLOYER/CEO PLEDGE OF SUPPORT*

The Ambassador commitment must be supported by both the volunteer and his/her employer. It is important to recognize that time spent as a member of this group will entail some time spent away from the office during regular working hours. This time is a valued contribution to the business community and to the Chamber of Commerce. Support of the Chamber with this program reflects your commitment to the Chamber as a whole, and will be a positive reflection to other Ambassadors of your company as a whole. Please indicate below your willingness to support your employee in this commitment:

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/CEO: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit Ambassador Commitment page to the Chamber office:

Stillwater Chamber of Commerce · 409 S. Main · Stillwater, OK 74074 · FAX (405) 372-4316

## **NOTES and CONTACTS**