

2025-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN



COVER LETTER:

For any organization to grow, it is critical to ensure the programs and services offered by the organization align with the community and its potential investors. It's important to ask for feedback, and listen to input from stakeholders and leaders, along with former and current investors.

Over the past year, the Seminole County Chamber has undertaken a rigorous look at our operations, programs and services to find that alignment. We looked at our weaknesses and our strengths. We sought to find the opportunities for growth, along with where we may need improvement.

During that time, we:

- Convened two focus groups and one Stop, Start & Continue session
- Held 23 strategic plan committee meetings
- Listened to 51 current investors and two former investors
- Conducted 41 meetings and phone calls with current staff
- Spent 381 hours developing this plan

This document represents the final report of those efforts. Today, the Seminole County Chamber is strong and many of the efforts listed and pushed by those groups are starting to take place today.

However, for any organization to be truly effective it must grow and evolve to ensure it meets the demands and environment of its community. As such, over the next five years, the staff, board and volunteers will be focused on five key pillars of growth. They are:

1. Innovating Impactful Programs
2. Amplifying our Story
3. Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders
4. Voicing Business Progress
5. Building Stronger Connections
6. Growing Regional Strength

In each pillar, there are key elements to focus on in the short term. As we accomplish the key goals, more will be added to truly capitalize on how the Seminole County Chamber can remain a regional leader, and grow our standing as one of the top chambers in Florida.

I look forward to working with all of our stakeholders, both internal and external, to use this strategic plan as the guide for building our economy, growing our members' businesses and ensuring Seminole County remains the top place for business in the state.



Sincerely,

Rebekah Arthur
President & CEO
Seminole County Chamber

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OUR STORY:

The Seminole County Chamber is truly the fabric of the business community, with a woven textile of entrepreneurs, executives, employees and elected officials working together to make Seminole County a great place to live, work and play.

Through a wide range of programs and events, the Seminole County Chamber connects the region like no other, bringing thousands of individuals to the table to network, communicate, learn and inform.

An investment in the Seminole County Chamber makes the business community – and your business – stronger by including your thread in the tapestry of our cities, our county, our region and our state.

OUR MISSION

To serve the interest of our members and the business community by providing programs, services and leadership to enhance economic vitality and quality of life in our community.

OUR VISION

Establish Seminole County as the premier place to do business within this region.

OUR VALUES

We value members; volunteers; staff; leadership; relevance; an inclusive, professional environment; integrity; diversity and excellence.



HISTORY OF SEMINOLE COUNTY AND ITS CHAMBERS - 1913 - 2024:

Like Seminole County, the history of our chamber has been written by groups of talented and dedicated people who wanted to make a difference in our county by improving the business climate. They understood then and now their success in business was a catalyst for improving our region through the chamber and by working with other committed groups.

Area business leaders have helped create the community agenda. What was important to those founders of our chamber is still important today. Committees focused on education, government affairs, and issues like transportation and economic development, were created in the 1920s. Groups of business leaders sprouted up in parts of the county as early as 1921. Eventually, those groups formed the Seminole County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The ancestor organizations of the Seminole County Chamber were founded in the early 1920s. The Altamonte Springs Chamber began then with the dual goals of improving the appearance of the community and advertising its features for growth. One of its first accomplishments was removing the trolley line through town and replacing it with a sidewalk. The chamber's business meetings were also social events. The meetings at the community house (located at the current city library) were always well attended. The Altamonte Springs Chamber became inactive during the depths of the recession, and in 1947 ceased functioning.

In 1974, the Altamonte Springs city council voted to establish a chamber under the leadership of council woman Helen Kaiser. By the time an organizational meeting took place, Casselberry businesses and government joined, calling the new organization the Altamonte/Casselberry Chamber. The chamber occupied the 80-year-old community house on Maitland Blvd. until 1985, when it moved into the city of Altamonte Springs library expansion. In 1989, the organization became the Greater Seminole County Chamber and moved its office to Longwood.

The Lake Mary Chamber of Commerce was formed under the leadership of Frank Evans in 1923. There were seven functional committees, which included good roads, schools, lighting, civil government,

telephone, beautification and publicity, and a volunteer fire department. Evans used his talent and financial resources to build the original Lake Mary Elementary School and a community house for residents to use for social and political events. The community house served as the meeting place for the Lake Mary Chamber and today houses the Lake Mary Historical Museum.

The Longwood/Winter Springs Chamber of Commerce incorporated in 1974 to enhance the commercial, financial, industrial, civic and general interest of the area it served. The Longwood/Winter Springs Chamber of Commerce had monthly educational programs, scholarship awards, a beautification program, and the Cable Award, named after the first president, Rod Cable.

In January 1995, the Longwood/Winter Springs Chamber merged with the Greater Seminole Chamber. The merger of the Lake Mary/Heathrow Chamber and the Greater Seminole Chamber occurred in 2000. It was these groups that created the first political hobnob in Seminole County, an annual industry recognition awards luncheon, a diamond member luncheon routinely featuring high-level keynote speakers to address chamber members and the Success at Work program with Seminole County schools to teach vital job skills to students.

During this time our Chamber also began a renewed focus on economic development. Focusing on major issues throughout the region and state, a Chamber delegation, in partnership with other organizations, met with the Governor and Lt. Governor on property insurance issues in 2007.

At the same time, the Chamber, focused on small businesses and created area councils in Longwood and Altamonte Springs, a small business industry group to address the needs of small businesses. .

Since those first two area councils were created, the Chamber has used that model to expand its programming throughout the county. Today, the Seminole County Chamber has seven area councils, including a virtual council.

HISTORY OF SEMINOLE COUNTY AND ITS CHAMBERS - 1913 - 2024: CONTINUED

2014 was a pivotal year for the Seminole County Chamber. First, the chamber changed how it offered investment, basing it on the benefits the investor was looking to receive. At the time, few chambers embraced the investment-based dues structure and the Seminole County Chamber was among the first to offer this solution. The members appreciated the full-service approach and this membership structure is now the preferred method of structuring investments in chambers throughout the country.

In addition, that year Jason Brodeur was named the president and CEO. This provided a unique opportunity for the chamber, as Brodeur was also a Florida state representative. This relationship provided significant access to leaders throughout Florida, including when Governor Rick Scott visited the chamber and former Speaker of the House Richard Corcoran spoke as the newly appointed Secretary of Education.

Twenty years after the merger, the Seminole County Chamber embarked on a rebrand to showcase its place in the community. The chamber dropped "regional" and "of commerce" from its' title and created a new, modern color scheme and logo, representing the chamber's place in the community, a thread of a larger tapestry helping shape the community.

In 2019, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce designated the Seminole County Chamber with Accredited status. This follows the Florida Association of Chamber Professional's Certified Plus designation in 2015. We were just the second chamber in the four-county area to be accredited, and we were the first to receive the Certified Plus designation.

The joy of releasing the new brand, website and marketing collateral was quickly overshadowed as just two weeks later, the country shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Seminole County Chamber was in a great place to weather the pandemic and it kept operating without affecting any employees or operations. Just two months after the start of the pandemic, the chamber was the first organization in the Central Florida area to restart live events, developing a hybrid model, allowing those comfortable to attend the opportunity to attend live, but those who were

more cautious to take advantage of a virtual option. The chamber also created programs to help businesses restart. It's Support Seminole generated nearly \$100,000 in sales for its member businesses.

Today, Rebekah Arthur is the president and CEO of the Seminole County Chamber, which remains a collection of great organizations, leaders, and staff focused on ensuring businesses meet their goals while enhancing our community. A few highlights of our chamber:

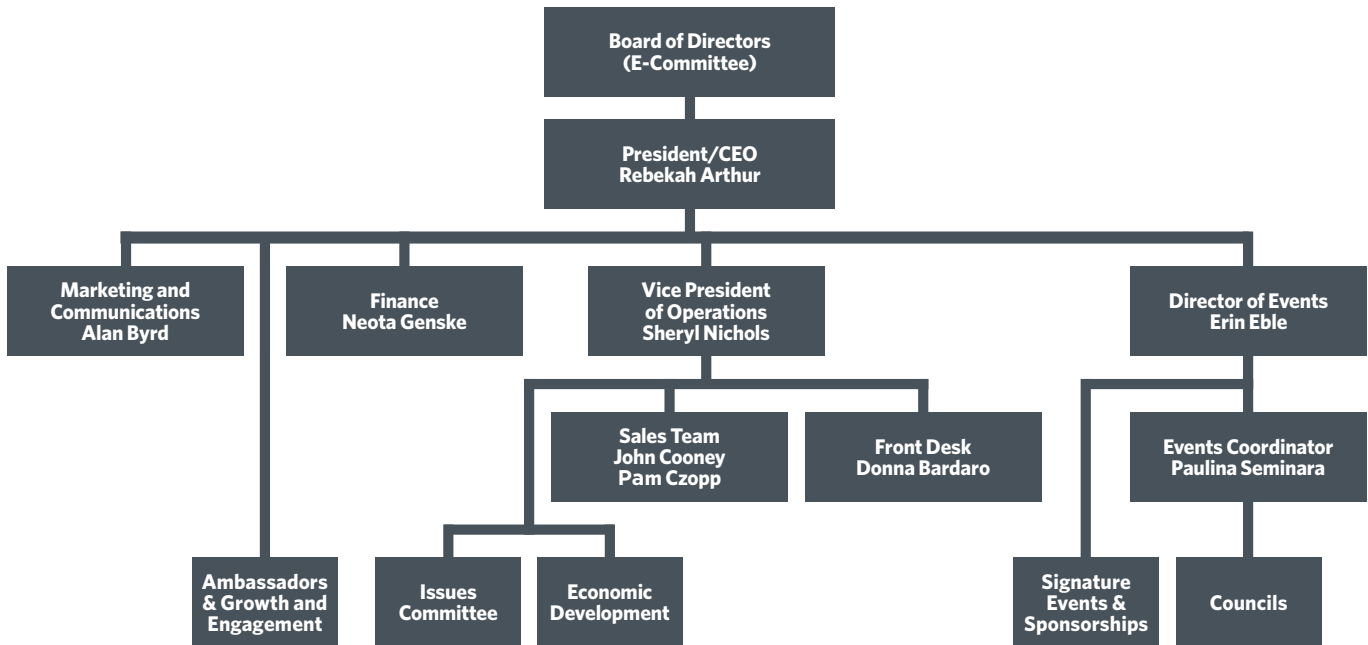
- **More than 700 members employing more than 30,000 individuals**
- **Nearly two dozen trustee members, including companies like Walt Disney World, AT&T, FAIRWINDS, Duke Energy and more.**
- **A board representing businesses of all sizes, from individual proprietors to international conglomerates.**
- **A staff focused on creating great events, developing membership involvement, building unique programs and focusing on ROI.**
- **A structure of member benefits that are based on investment and goals, not just the size of your business.**

Our chamber membership includes a great mix of business types and most of the top businesses in the region. Our board is built on proven leadership in our community, and our staff is comprised of the most dedicated chamber staff anywhere. We're here to help meet the needs of businesses and reach desired goals through investing in the Seminole County Chamber.

In 2025, the chamber's goal is to achieve a 5-Star Accreditation through the U.S. Chamber. This designation recognizes our high standards in all aspects of business, from innovation to following strict standard operating procedures including organization management, professional administration, financial management and marketing/public relations.

Only 15 chambers in Florida have received accreditation by the U.S. Chamber and only 16 chambers in Florida have received the Certified Plus designation.

CHAMBER STRUCTURE:



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

TRUSTEE



CHAIRMAN PRESIDENT EXECUTIVE

PARTNER ENTREPRENEUR

SEMINOLE COUNTY / CHAMBER BY THE NUMBERS:

SEMINOLE COUNTY

- Largest employers in Seminole County are in retail, construction, and health care
- Total non-employer establishments - 51.6K; Total employer establishments -14.7K (2022)
- Firms owned by men -6.5K; women-owned -2.1K; minority-owned -1.8K; veteran-owned -625 (2017)
- Health care and construction industries have increased the greatest while administrative/support and waste management and remediation have had the greatest decrease (2023-24)

AWARDS/ RECOGNITION

- Accredited as a Certified Plus Chamber by Florida Association of Chamber Professionals - 2015
- Recognized by Chamber Kit, a national group focused on sharing the best ideas from chambers around the country for the "I'm Here" Program - 2018
- Award of Excellence by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives for the Riverside Dash Ambassador program - 2018
- Received Accredited Status from U.S. Chamber of Commerce - 2019
- Named Best Public Relations Campaign by FACP - 2021

SEMINOLE COUNTY CHAMBER

- Over 700 chamber members - 2024; 31% at Executive level and higher
 - » Largest membership group consists of finance/insurance followed by business/professional services and health care
 - » Goal is to increase focus with construction/manufacturing industries
- Six Affinity Programs including: EV chargers, credit card processing, health insurance, cyber security, fingerprinting and office supplies.
- Provide Certificate of Origin for manufacturers and other businesses
- Over 200 events held annually: eight signature events
- 81% member retention; averaging 200+ new members annually
- Seven area councils and five committees
- Over 50 board members and 7 Executive Committee members
- Over 9000 emails sent bi-weekly to members, non-members, and the community
- Over 48,000 unique website users annually
- Seven different ways for members to promote their business with the chamber
- Chamber events and information are shared across ten social media sites



SCOPE OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

CHAMBER AREA COUNCILS

- Altamonte Springs Area Council
- Business Alliance Area Council
- Lake Mary Area Council
- Longwood Area Council
- River Area Council
- South Seminole Area Council
- Virtually Seminole Area Council

MEMBERSHIP FEATURES

- Professional development & networking
- Reduced admission to signature events
- New member plaque, decal, and online badge
- Collateral display on shared table at Good Morning Seminole & Councils
- Affinity programs that save money and could pay for membership
- Member directory profile
- Post Hot Deals and member-hosted events
- Press releases for member announcements
- Certificate of Origin
- Email newsletters
- Business resources and connections
- Leadership development, through committees and councils
- I'm Here program

RECURRING EVENTS

- Chamber U
- Good Morning Seminole
- Business After Hours
- Ribbon Cuttings
- Seminole Chamber Crush

SIGNATURE EVENTS

- Seminole Business Expo
- State of the County
- Professional Women's Luncheon
- Legislative Update
- Annual Meeting
- Seminole State of Our Schools
- Mayor's Update
- Chamber Holiday Party

COMMITTEES

- Executive Committee
- Ambassador Committee
- Economic Development Committee
- Growth & Engagement Committee
- Issues & Government Affairs Committee



STRATEGIC PLAN - STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

Strategic planning is an organization’s process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on how to set priorities to pursue this strategy. It may also extend to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the strategy. Strategic planning became prominent during the 1960s and remains an important aspect of strategic management. It is executed by strategic planners who involve many parties and research sources in their analysis of the organization and its relationship to the environment.

Strategic planning is a process that involves inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. It may be formal or informal and is typically iterative, with feedback loops throughout the process. Some elements of the process may be continuous, and others may be executed as discrete projects with a definitive start and end during a period.

Strategic planning provides input for strategic thinking, which guides the actual strategy formation. Typical strategic planning efforts include the evaluation of the organization’s mission and strategic issues to strengthen current practices and determine the need for new programming. The result is the organization’s strategy, including a diagnosis of the environment and competitive situation, a guiding policy on what the organization intends to accomplish, and key initiatives or action plans for achieving the guiding policy.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PLAN

- Allow time for big-picture thinking
- Ask the hard questions
- Concentrate on what moves the dial
- Allow for open and free discussion regardless of each person’s position
- Don’t write the plan in stone; be flexible
- Keep it simple and clear
- Make strategy planning a habit
- Have fun; celebrate success





STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL AND PROCESS:

The strategic plan goal is to obtain cross-functional, strong leadership engagement, buy-in and ownership based on a series of external and internal assessments with intermediate- and long-term goal setting.

1. PROCESS AND TIMING

- Determine roles & objectives of leadership team and workgroup team
- Identify budget, location, and other restraints
- Conduct Strategic Plan Kick-Off to validate plan process, timing, set expectations, and map out mitigants for roadblocks and constraints

2. PREVIOUS STRATEGIC PLAN

- Review and evaluate previous plan's successes and issues; what went well and what did not
- Measure results against goals and analyze opportunities

3. FOCUS GROUPS

- Conducted two focus groups - community leaders and chamber members
- Feedback and suggestions provided on how the chamber can be even more successful
- Map into SWOTS (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, surprises); validate alignment and identify gaps or missing points

4. DRIVING FORCES

- Identify values and behaviors as "the way things are done"
- Compare desired or differing values and behaviors from actual and draw conclusions

5. US CHAMBER ACCREDITATION APPLICATION

- Evaluate criteria required to achieve 5-Star Accreditation
- Analyze previous, current, and future actions for validity and accreditation applicability
- Complete and submit application

6. STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Use collected data, feedback, current information, and future desires to build the plan
- Examine roadblocks, speed humps, hiccups
- Potential risks or impacts; minimize or stop from occurring
- Finalize plan objectives, goals, and accountable leaders

7. POST PLAN SUCCESS

- Gain personal commitment, buy-in and ownership
- Internal & external communication plan - actively demonstrate ongoing plan progress
- Unite the organization with consistent "We Heard you" content; solicit ongoing feedback
- Measure results and ongoing inspection of progress of goals and objectives every 1-3 months
- "We Heard You": focus group check-back with validation of strategic plan progress

2025-2030 TOP STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS:

Upon reviewing the data, conducting multiple fact-finding activities including a Stop, Start, & Continue exercise, reviewing other successful chamber of commerce's best practices, and analyzing the community and member focus group verbatim, we named the following as our top deliverables for this Strategic Plan. To be successful, we will:

- **Concentrate on what moves the dial**
- **Remain focused but flexible**
- **Keep it simple and clear**
- **Acknowledge that this plan is not "one and done" - it is an ongoing process that will be revisited and updated**

1. INNOVATING IMPACTFUL PROGRAMS

Continue to enhance, prioritize, and/or develop innovative programs that address the evolving needs of local businesses, fostering growth, education, and networking opportunities.

Key Actions to Take:

1. Continue to identify what's working and what's not and alignment with community and member needs; then utilize feedback to gain stronger understanding of what companies want or need from the chamber.
2. Examine revenue streams - affinity programs, memberships, sponsorships - evaluate effectiveness and relativity to chamber goals.
3. Enhance industry/topic-specific events providing opportunities for like-minded businesses of varying sizes to interact and grow.
4. Create targeted marketing via social media and other avenues to increase interest and involvement in various chamber events.

Measurement: Utilize a review process to assess the effectiveness of current programs and adjust as necessary. Track participation rates, member satisfaction scores, and the number of new members gained through program participation.

2. AMPLIFYING OUR STORY

Strengthen communication channels to increase member and stakeholder engagement and ensure that all are informed, connected, and valued.

Key Actions to Take:

1. Launch 2024/25 Marketing Plan to include comprehensive digital communication strategy, including a revamped website, ongoing email communications, and active social media engagement.
2. Incorporate feedback loops through surveys and focus groups to continuously improve communication efforts.
3. Build LinkedIn network through regular posting providing information and thought leadership from our staff and members. Boost at least one post per month with a target of Seminole County businesses. Develop a weekly routine that includes member business advice articles relevant to our audience, staff opinion pieces, chamber announcements and more.

Measurement: Monitor metrics such as open rates of e-newsletters, social media interaction rates, website clicks and time on site, and participation in feedback surveys. Compare sign-ups on the website to actual participation. Measure response rate to surveys.

2025-2030 TOP STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS: CONTINUED

3. EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Foster a strong governance structure that supports transparent decision-making and leadership development within the chamber. Implement a board development program focused on training and succession planning. Establish clear governance policies and regular evaluations to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

Key Actions to Take:

- Develop targeted marketing plans for 10 -20 businesses in Central Florida to increase trustees who sustain the chamber long-term with high levels of investment.
- Expand the advocacy arm of the chamber to provide resources on business issues important to large investors. Find avenues to promote the chamber as a thought leader for regional issues affecting Seminole County businesses.
- Formalize a training/onboarding program for board and council leaders to ensure role clarity, improve participation, and increase consistency and accountability.
- Conduct team building and satisfaction events with chamber employees and contractors; use the event to ascertain personal and professional growth needs

Measurement: Ensure clear governance policies and regular evaluations to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Evaluate the success of various groups through participant feedback and improved governance practices.

4. VOICING BUSINESS PROGRESS

Position the chamber as a leading voice in local, state, and federal government affairs, advocating for policies that support business growth and community development. Continue to empower the government affairs committee to be responsible for monitoring legislative issues, engaging with policymakers and organizing advocacy campaigns. Develop partnerships with other niche chambers and business associations, such as the OEP, CFHLA, VEI, NEC and others, to be an asset and be introduced to new markets.

- Develop programing that is specific for trustee members to include events, economic development initiatives, legislative advocacy and more.
- Convene city managers to focus on local government affairs and how cities can be part of local business success; identify areas we are challenged and how we can help each other.
- Increase the amount of news coverage that features the Seminole County Chamber by engaging with reporters and news outlets on a regular basis. Develop a media source guide available for the press of members and staff with specific expertise.
- Visit with CEO and top editors of local news outlets to discuss the chamber to develop media partners that are constantly connected with the chamber.
- Publish more media advances of potential news stories that could be developed from our events, but only when stories would be of interest.
- Proactively identify op-ed opportunities on issues that affect the business community.
- Leverage the Issue & Government Affairs Committee to identify and implement actions to communicate with and involve the business community based on, and in alignment with, local needs and chamber-focused initiatives.

Measurement: Advocate for at least three key business-friendly policies at the local, state, and federal levels. Conduct policy meetings, track policy changes influenced, and the participation rate of member businesses in advocacy efforts to amplify the chamber's voice.

2025-2030 TOP STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS: CONTINUED

5. BUILDING STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Continue to build and retain a diverse and robust membership base that reflects the county's business community. Develop a targeted membership recruitment campaign that highlights the chamber's value proposition. Focus on personalized engagement with existing members to enhance retention.

Key Actions to Take:

- Conduct an in-depth study of why members don't renew and focus on renewing existing chamber members.
- Enhance intake system for new members to determine goals and interests. Track data across new members to look for data points that could indicate a non-renewal.
- Create a mentorship program to utilize the ambassadors in close relationships with new members. Develop a 15-month renewal plan for new members focused on the overall data points and their intake forms. Consider bringing on a "membership coordinator" to shepherd the renewal process.
- Hold a call day of ambassadors and committees to call past members and another drop-in day, where they "drop-in" to the past member.
- Expand the Win Back campaigns currently utilized by the chamber. Hold dropped members rally to bring together current and past members for networking. Use membership databases to track growth and retention metrics.
- Tap into the young professionals with programming and events to appeal to millennials and Gen Z as well as support the young entrepreneur and leadership focus within the county.

Measurement: Increase membership year over year and improve retention rates; increase Win Back campaign members to encourage past members to renew; encourage manufacturing and construction industries to become members to balance the chamber's membership to the county's industry levels.

6. GROWING REGIONAL STRENGTH

Establish the chamber as the go-to resource for business support, information, and growth opportunities in the community. Communicate and facilitate a stronger partnership with Seminole County Government, SBDC, and the UCF Incubator. Develop partnerships with other niche chambers and business associations, such as the OEP, CFHLA, VEI, NEC and others, to be an asset and be introduced to new markets to provide comprehensive support services.

Key Actions to Take:

- Develop the goals and tactics that can be used as the opening framework of a regional partnership. Identify the key partners and key leaders the chamber could use to reach new markets and represent the chamber in each.
- Ensure the chamber is present with the partner, looking at attendance at key events and board placement. Find ways to help partners in Seminole County through small events, introductions and email for partner programming.
- Expand the Ready to Launch program to other organizations. Host regular workshops, seminars, and networking events to support businesses at every stage of their growth.
- Bring back the CEO Roundtable to foster interactive dialogue around important areas of impact and interest within the C-suite community. Advocate for local businesses, creating actions that will make a difference within the county.
- Continued emphasis on the chamber's "Membership Information Center" – help members understand and utilize the many ways they can promote their business events, needs, and post-event results.

Measurement: Evaluate the chamber's ability to provide comprehensive business support services through collaboration with educational institutions, financial organizations, and other partners. Track the number of businesses served, resources utilized, and effectiveness feedback received from users. Measure the chamber's reputation as the go-to resource for business growth within the community.

GATHERING CRITICAL INFORMATION:

WORKGROUP KICK-OFF STOP, START, & CONTINUE - AUGUST 2024

The Strategic Plan and 5-Star Accreditation Kick-Off meeting which provided key leaders and members of the chamber to:

- Learn about the process, next steps, and expectations
- Identify areas they would recommend the chamber stop, start, and/or continue doing

FOCUS GROUP EXPECTATIONS - SEPTEMBER 2024

Two focus groups were conducted and included:

- Community leaders from Seminole and surrounding counties
- Seminole County Chamber members - past and present

During the sessions, a diverse group of participants, in a large range of industries, were asked what they thought were the chamber's strengths, where there were opportunities, what is important for them and their community, employees, suppliers, or co-workers, and how they would like to receive communication.

ONGOING CHECKPOINTS

Key leaders and members of the Chamber were invited to participate in on-going meetings to provide:

- Strategic direction
- Review of other chambers to identify best practices
- Validation of data, issues, and key points to include in the plan
- Brainstorming on ideas and ways the chamber can continue to address the business community's needs and goals

Please see the acknowledgment page for specific members represented in these groups



GATHERING CRITICAL INFORMATION: CONTINUED

ROADBLOCKS, RISKS AND MITIGATION

Identifying roadblocks and risks is a critical step in the goal achievement process. This helps the group get ahead of the issues and take a more proactive approach to resolving or reducing risks to the project. Key questions the group addressed:

- What could get in our way during the project or achieve success?
- What are the potential risks or impacts to work and outcomes?
- How can we stop or minimize? Are there some we just need to acknowledge and move on?
- How will we measure results or impacts to ensure the mitigation plan is working?
- Are there any strategic shifts we need to make?

ROADBLOCKS

- Us, ourselves and egos
- Financial
- Staffing and resources to execute key deliverables while keeping the wheels on the bus moving forward
- Unplanned events (hurricane, pandemic, economic conditions)
- Buy-in, acceptance of change
- Communication - good understanding of goals and next steps
- Level-setting priorities
- Depending on a few to do the work
- Scope creep
- Wrong expectations and outcomes
- Not asking the tough questions
- Business community support or expectations
- Perception vs reality
- Technology barriers

RISKS

- Quality of work produced
- Volunteer and staff burnout
- Loss of direction
- Volunteer shortage or engagement
- Focus on emotional vs. critical to success
- Realistic timelines
- Comparing dissimilar chambers
- Distractions

MITIGANTS

- Flexible and transparent communication
- Keep the plan active and flexible but targeted
- Execute the plan across all levels - a process, not a project
- Shared repository and understanding
- Checkpoints along the way; version control
- Consistency with established expectations and routines
- Communicate often - be predictive and proactive
- Stay committed
- Delegate activities and responsibilities; load balance efforts between volunteers and staff
- Get strategic on who works on projects based on skills and expertise
- Create a baseline and measure results frequently
- Celebrate successes big and small
- Early identification of needs
- Be efficient and focused



GATHERING CRITICAL INFORMATION: CONTINUED

START, STOP, & CONTINUE

We conducted a Stop, Start & Continue exercise as the opening activity for our Workgroup Kick-off Meeting. Participants provided their thoughts on flip charts around the room and were allowed to build upon other's points of view as well. After the meeting, the team was asked to prioritize the listed items. Here are the top-ranked items within each category.

NOTE: These are verbatim and may not accurately reflect current Chamber programs or actions.

RECOMMENDED STOP ACTIONS

- Events that are hard to sponsor like
 - » Legislative Update
 - » Annual Meeting
- Ex-officio board seats that don't attend meetings

RECOMMENDED START ACTIONS

- Add a review of chamber awards
- Evaluate quarterly drives
- Social media training for staff and council committee members
- Social media campaign with branded businesses
- Stronger support for and partner with incubators for new business
- Understand time devoted by volunteers
- Ongoing council leadership training
- Create and publish reels
- Add or revisit benchmarks for councils
- Member job fair

RECOMMENDED CONTINUE ACTIONS

- Levels of membership
- Business spotlight
- Newsletter email
- Popular events like:
 - » Professional Women's Luncheon
 - » Good Morning Seminole
 - » Business After Hours
 - » Chamber U
 - » State of the County
 - » Seminole Hob Nob
- Affinity programs
- Work-life balance
- Training policies
- Chamber representative at area councils



GATHERING CRITICAL INFORMATION: CONTINUED

FOCUS GROUP OUTPUT - Community Leaders and Chamber Members Combined

NOTE: These are verbatim and may not accurately reflect current Chamber programs or actions.

HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY

- Continue to have an influential leadership role in the community and provide value to members
- Engage members and highlight chamber initiatives through ongoing communication and marketing efforts
- Tie the Strategic Plan to targeted programming goals and measurable outcomes
- Expand high-profile speakers and impactful events that attract and renew C-suite executives
- Members value diverse/high-level connections and guidance on effective networking
- Expand new member communication and engagement
- Enhance the chamber's advocacy for business interests and where it stands on key issues
- Review opportunities to further enhance programs, recognition, and support for non-profits

STRENGTHS

- Networking opportunities, welcoming to new businesses, strong reputation and county-wide reach
- Welcoming atmosphere, diverse membership, networking events, reputation

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue to seek out diversity in business types to align with the county's industry make-up, evaluate ways to have consistent Area Council attendance, utilize influential leadership to identify additional opportunities to meet the business community needs, develop partnerships with other niche chambers and business associations

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Improve advocacy efforts at local, county and state levels
- Provide even more targeted, valuable programming for different business sectors
- Ongoing communication regarding available resources and affinity programs
- Foster connections between businesses and non-profits to address community needs
- Opportunities to highlight civic engagement and community service
- Members have renewed interest in education on important topics like sales tax initiatives



GATHERING CRITICAL INFORMATION: CONTINUED

FOCUS GROUP OUTPUT - Community Leaders and Chamber Members Combined

PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

- Ongoing focus on signature events that attract high-level attendees (e.g. State of the County, Legislative Updates)
- Provide members with clear strategic plan purpose and goals
- Keep reviewing all events to serve geographical and ever-changing business needs
- Consider new programs like job fairs or “home shows” to connect businesses and consumers
- New members desire structured networking guidance
- Interest in accountability groups and industry-specific networking

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Members like the current email communications but were unaware of the 9,000 recipients
 - » Suggestions to help readers “get the message” included: Provide categorization/targeting of content – why is this important, use more video, identify ways to attract different age groups
- Analyze email open/click rates and website engagement metrics; inform the Area Councils so they can assist
- Liked the new changes to the website and navigation
- Would like even more personalized outreach and follow-up with members but not sure how to achieve
- Ongoing identification of opportunities to enhance member recognition and spotlight programs

US CHAMBER ACCREDITATION:

The Accreditation Program facilitates continuing excellence in the chamber industry to foster a pro-business environment across America. There are over 900 chambers that have participated in the program since 1964. Currently, 194 chambers carry this distinction. As of December 2024, the Seminole County Chamber proudly holds the Accredited Distinction.

CATEGORIES FOR US CHAMBER FOR ACCREDITATION

- **Governance**
 - » Chamber structure, board, goals
- **Finance**
 - » Chamber accounting & financial practices and stability
- **Human Resources and Staff**
 - » Chamber organization and personnel policies
- **Government Affairs**
 - » Chamber integration with local and state government and connection to the business community
- **Program Development**
 - » Chamber strategic plan focused on needs & demographics of the community and its members
- **Technology**
 - » Chamber use of safe technology practices to communicate with and enhance community, member, and staff capabilities
- **Communications**
 - » Chamber marketing and communication plan to include reach out programs and wide-span sharing of chamber activities and results
- **Facilities**
 - » Chamber facilities comply with safe workplace practices including crisis plans

ACCREDITATION CHAMBER COMMITMENTS

- **Reviewing, improving, and promoting strong business practices**
- **Recognizing leadership and outstanding contributions to the community**
- **Supporting the principles of free enterprise and promoting pro-growth policies at federal, state, and local levels**
- **Establishing best practices and staying in-step with industry changes**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thank you to all the community leaders, chamber members, chamber staff, directors, and our business consultant for the tremendous amount of commitment provided over the last seven months to ensure the Seminole County Chamber has a robust Five-Year Strategic Plan. As a result of their out-of-the box thinking, honest and open feedback, and strategic points of view and direction, we feel this year's plan is going to position the chamber for increased success in achieving its goals and meeting the needs of the business community. Based on these outcomes, we are also highly motivated to achieve our goal of attaining a 5-Star Accreditation with the US Chamber of Commerce.

LEADERSHIP AND WORKGROUP TEAMS

- Rebekah Arthur, Seminole County Chamber - President
- Kelly Rogers, Finsome & Windmore - Board Chair
- Jennifer Englert, The Orlando Law Group
- Board Past Chair
- Gigi Santiago, Optimal Mind Set - Director
- Shawn Harrold, Seminole County Public Schools - Director
- Tanya Boggs, FAIRWINDS Credit Union - Director
- Nicole Martz, Orlando Sanford Airport Authority - Director
- Maritza Martinez-Guerrero, Orlando Magic
- Incoming Board Chair
- Tricia Johnson, Seminole County Government - Director
- Mary Gustafson, One Oaks Realty - Director
- Alan Byrd, Alan Byrd & Associates - Chamber Marketing
- Neota Genske, Genske & Co - Chamber Finance
- John Gyllin, Seminole State College - Director
- Susie Dolan, Waste Pro - Director
- Stephanie Williams, Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens
- Stephen Fussell, Sanford-Orlando International Airport
- Vicki Simmons-Hinz, MSL CPAs and Advisors - Treasurer
- Christina Hollerbach, Hollerbach's Brands
- Chris Cremens, Hollerbach's Restaurants
- Sheryl Nichols, Seminole County Chamber - Vice President
- Erin Eble, Seminole County Chamber - Events Director
- John Cooney, Seminole County Chamber - Sales
- Pam Czopp, Seminole County Chamber Consultant - Sales
- Paulina Seminarara, Seminole County Chamber
- Events Coordinator
- Donna Bardaro, Seminole County Chamber
- Administrative Assistant

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

- Frank Ioppolo, Ioppolo Law Group
- Susie Dolan, Waste Pro
- Amy Pennock, Seminole County Public Schools
- Dan Ryan, The Sharing Center
- Aerial Robinson, Spectrum Reach
- Deborah Bauer, Society for Historic Casselberry
- George Margoies, Recovery Connections of Central Florida
- Brandy Ioppolo, Strategic VFO
- Karen Raborn, The Orlando Law Group
- Andrea Mahoney, Certified Computer Solutions
- Mike Brockman, Brockman Insurance Group
- Milna Maldonado, Prime Services
- Ben Badger, Royal Support Services
- Nikki Coppola, National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
- Tim Sanders, Credit Repair of Florida
- Belinda Perez, Union Home Mortgage
- Chris Ham, Rescue Outreach Mission
- Yesha Patel, Platinum Signs and Design
- Dr. Farhana Yunus, My EyeCare
- Samantha Talyor, Lake Mary Life Publishing
- Carmel Bohlen, Minuteman Press Longwood/Orlando
- Jo Badger, Fairvilla Boutique
- Lee Pappert, Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens
- Rick Hall, GroundUp Property Services
- Diane Crews, Retired



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