Congratulations! Your business is scheduled to host our next Business After Hours event. This is a great marketing tool for your business as well as an excellent networking opportunity for all of our members who attend this social event.

The mission of the Business After Hours program is three-fold:

- To promote the host business
- To provide networking opportunities for guests
- To contribute toward the Covington Chamber objectives of member networking, referrals, information sharing and promoting chamber member businesses

This planning guide is designed to help you and your employees get the most from your participation as a Business After Hours sponsor. The Covington Chamber of Commerce looks forward to helping make your After Hours a special and memorable event.

Please fill in the details on the form below and return the bottom portion to the chamber. These details will be used in pre-event advertising on the chamber website, chamber eNewsletter, social media pages and the Covington Reporter newspaper.

Please return bottom portion of this form to the Covington Chamber office.
Below are some guidelines which you may adapt to best fit your event and your business. Feel free to discuss any of these details with the chamber staff.

Parking
Consider where guests will park their cars. Notify the neighboring business owners of the event so they know to expect an increase in parked cars and even invite them to attend.

Food & Beverage
You may serve any type of appetizers, small sandwiches, and/or desserts. It is your choice whether you serve water, soft drinks, beer, and/or wine; however, if you serve alcohol, please offer some non-alcoholic beverages as well. If you choose to serve alcohol, you must obtain a liquor license or a banquet permit from the WA State Liquor Control Board which may be completed online. (Additional ideas for catering and event planning are included on the next page.)

Room Set-up Ideas
- Set up an area to accommodate the expected number of people.
- Provide a greeter location and guest sign-in area. Remember to locate this near the front door, with ample room for people to move freely in and out of the room.
- Establish a focal point in the room for the opening, host welcome, and closing speakers.
- Locate food/beverages in a location other than the sign-in area so people can move freely.
- Host may set up a display to feature their business (signs, products, brochures, etc.)

Program (about 30 minutes)
- Highlights the event host by setting aside time during the event for business promotion.
- Encourages guests to seek out new business contacts and provides a fun venue to do so.

1. Introductions
   - Introduce host: Chamber Chair, Executive Director, or Ambassador Chair (1-2 minutes)
   - Welcome statement: Host business (2-3 minutes)
   - Introduction of new chamber members in attendance: Ambassadors (3-5 minutes)
   - Highlight host business: Host business (5 minutes)
   - Ideas - use a display, summarize your mission, show your products, describe your services, offer a brief tour of the facility that begins after the networking activity.

2. Networking Activity (15-20 minutes)
   Host introduces and facilitates at least one networking activity. (Ideas on next page) Consider how you can adjust the program to accommodate a larger group if needed. Have a back up plan.

3. Ending Activities
   - Host business thanks guests for participating and encourages guests to continue networking after raffle drawings.
   - Raffle drawing: Host business (optional)
   - Tour (optional)
Covington Chamber of Commerce
Business After Hours Planning Guide

Catering

Double Dee Cupcakes
P.O. Box 7600
Covington, WA 98042
253-486-2227
info@doubledeecupcakes.com
www.doubledeecupcakes.com

EJ's Custom Catering
28149 233 Avenue SE
Maple Valley, WA 98038
425-301-6600
ericelmer@comcast.net
www.ejcustomcatering.com

Galaxy Catering
12860 SE 262nd Place
Kent, WA 98030
425-226-0634
galaxycatering@msn.com

Main Event Catering
23022 172nd Avenue SE
Kent, WA 98042
253-631-3172
www.lindsmeats.com/main-event-catering-.html

Scooter’s Custom Catering
27707 246th Ave SE
Maple Valley, WA 98038
206-774-9122
catering@scooterscustomcatering.com
www.scooterscustomcatering.com

Restaurants: Orders to Go

Applebee’s
17024 SE 272nd Street
Covington, WA 98042
253-856-1900
covington@appleamerican.com
www.applebees.com

IHOP
27149 185th Ave SE #115
Covington, WA 98042
253-656-0152
ihop98042@hotmail.com
www.ihop.com

Other

Bee’s Florist
27116 167th Place SE, #104
Covington, WA 98042
253-630-7673
myflowers@beesflorist.net
www.beesfloristcovingtong.com

D.A. Sound
12932 SE Kent Kangley Road, Box 460
Kent, WA 98030
206-632-7773
david@dasound.biz
www.dasound.biz

Elements NW Events
27177 185th Avenue SE, Suite 111 #156
Covington, WA 98042
206-235-2187
Jennifer.v@elementsnw.net
www.ElementsNW.net

Greatest of Days Event Planning & Design
27111 167th Place SE, Suite 105 #242
Covington, WA 98042
206-604-1908
jan@greatestofdays.com
www.greatestofdays.com
Networking Ideas

1. Ask everyone to divide into groups of 6 to 8. Have the groups answer 2 questions and write the answers onto their business card. Example questions to use: 1) What is your company's product or service? 2) What is your favorite part of your job? 3) What is your role in the company? Then have the group exchange those cards that have the answers. As small groups, based on the business card information, have each person introduce the other person to the rest of the group.

2. In advance, the chamber or host business chooses a particular question to focus on, such as customer service; advertising; profits, and announces the topic to the whole group. Members break into smaller groups of 6-8, introduce themselves and then discuss the topic selected. Then the small group decides on what 2 concepts are the most important aspect of the topic for a business success. The group reassembles and the ideas are delivered to the whole group.

3. As each member arrives, they are given a slip of paper and asked to think of, then write down, one of their company's "Best Attributes." These slips are placed in a container. The host selects some or all of the slips and reads off the various "Best Attributes" which the group discusses.

4. Each member is encouraged to talk to as many new people as they can in the next 5 minutes, and to get a business card from each one. A prize goes to the one(s) who have not only collected the most business cards BUT ALSO can actually name and identify the person who gave them the card and the product/service of their business.

5. Guests are given a symbol, color, or key business words to put on their nametags. Key business word examples are: Customer Service, Consistency, Communication, Success, Integrity, etc. Guests find others with their same characteristic and form themselves into a group. The new groups discuss their businesses and what they have in common.

6. Creative Handshake:
   - Instruct the participants to find three people they don’t know (one at a time), shake their hand and look them in the eye.
   - Now find three more people you don't know, and one at a time look them in the eye, and perform high fives.
   - Now find three more people you don't know, look them in the eye, and perform over the back high fives.
   - Finally, find the only remaining three people in the room you don't know, look them in the eye, and create, between you and your partner, a completely "new" handshake. Each of the three handshakes must be unique (although all of your participants will be watching and learning from the creative attempts going on around them). Ask any who are particularly proud of their handshakes to demonstrate for the whole group.

7. Guests get into pairs. Each pair discusses to discover what the two have in common. Then they merge with another pair, and all four search for something they all have in common, etc.
8. Each person thinks of a movie/TV show/book/radio program/song that in some way describes or relates to their business. Then people circulate or break into groups and:
   • Try to guess what the business is from this clue, OR
   • Explain to others what the connection is between item and business

9. Group divides into small groups, 6 to 8 people, and each one answers the following about their business:
   • What if Covington changes in some way (grew much larger or smaller)?
   • What if my business changes in some way (grew much larger or smaller)?
   • What if a direct competitor opened up in town?
   • What if my business was sold to a national chain or franchise?

10. Other questions that can be discussed (and added to nametags, or given to the group or pairs):
    • What advice would you give to a new employee? A new resident of Covington?
    • How does your schooling/degree/early work experience relate to/contribute to your current job?
    • How does your job and business today differ from how it was 10 years ago/how it will be 10 years from now?

11. On nametag (or a second nametag), each member writes down their own “tagline” or “headline” (that sums up their business, activities, goals, etc.) People circulate, asking other members to explain their tagline.

12. Other items that people can write on their nametags and later discuss with others include:
    • What I do best
    • What problem my company tries to solve
    • A good advertising logo for my business
    • Best and/or worse thing about my job

13. Breaks into smaller groups. First person says their name and company. Second person repeats first name and company, and then adds their own. Third person repeats first and second and adds their own, etc.

14. Whole group breaks into pairs. Pairs share and discuss their own answers to these questions:
    • What do I have to give (to other business people)?
    • What do I want to get (from other business people)?

    Then each person moves on to form a new pair, and answer & discuss the same questions. Or each pair merges with another pair, and all four share and discuss the questions.

**If you want to make up your own Networking Activity, base it on the following criteria:**

1. Activity takes 15-20 minutes.
2. Activity encourages members to meet and talk with other members, and to learn about and exchange ideas with others.
3. Activity can be participated in by all or most of those members attending the event.
4. Activity is fun and comfortable for those participating.