



Parker Chamber of Commerce Tips for Hosting a Wonderfully Successful Business After Hours

Business After Hours (BAH) is a casual, social, meet and greet networking event from 5 – 7 pm at your place of business. As host, your company's facilities, employees, and products will be showcased. Not only is this the ultimate opportunity to network but it is the perfect way to get the word out about your business. A great deal of business is conducted at these events, making the potential for obtaining new clients endless.

The goal of Business After Hours is to:

- Provide exclusive opportunity to promote your company to a captive audience without any competition.
- Have events hosted throughout the Parker area.
- Encourage all Members to attend BAH events.
- Assist Members in networking with each other.

Guidelines for Hosting a Business After Hours Event:

- Hosting a Parker Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours is an exclusive benefit for Chamber Members. Its purpose is to showcase a Member business, learn about the host company, provide Members the opportunity to develop a local/regional business network, and to support the Chamber mission.
- A Business After Hours event may be hosted by one organization, co-hosted by two, or sponsored by a group of businesses within a building or neighborhood.
- All hosts must be Chamber Members in good standing.
- The host(s) pledges to finance, arrange and coordinate food, drink and entertainment. The activities of the event will be defined and described in the brief planning session coordinated with Chamber's Communications Coordinator. Hosts are encouraged to select event services such as caterers and entertainment from the Chamber membership.
- There is no sponsorship fee paid to the Chamber for hosting a BAH.
- Attendance at BAH's may not be limited to a designated number of guests.
- The facility must be handicap accessible and have plenty of parking.
- You may not charge admission.
- You are encouraged to make brief remarks (highlight your staff, unique features of your business, etc.) (5-10 minutes) and offer tours of your facility.

Because your Business After Hours is your event, there are no set guidelines. What follows is an assembly of ideas that may be helpful as you plan your big event:

- Send invitations with a map to family; friends; customers; prospective customers; neighboring businesses; business and Town leaders; and local media. Ask for RSVP's to ensure your catering needs are in keeping with the number of guests.

- Plan your event far enough in advance to allow for pre-event publicity and for everyone to respond and mark their calendars. Information about your event will be included in the Chamber newsletter if you provide it to the Chamber before the 15th of the previous month. At a minimum, this will bring 75-100 fellow Chamber members to your celebration.
- Create an event agenda. Ideas to consider include:
 - Tours of your business;
 - Speeches;
 - Entertainment; and
 - Refreshments.
- Have plenty of brochures, handouts and business cards available for your guests. If possible, have specialty advertising items to hand out, i.e. calendars, pens, magnets, cups.
- Have a drawing or give away prizes or gift certificates related to your business. Asking people to put business cards in a basket for the drawing(s) works well.
- Have someone, possibly a friend or even a professional photographer, on hand to take pictures.
- Have a greeter from your organization to welcome attendees.
- Have nametags available.

It's fun, educational and beneficial to participate in a Business After Hours and the Chamber Staff looks forward to assisting you by:

- Preparing pre-event Chamber publicity (including a description of the hosting business) to all Members via our website (www.ParkerChamber.com) and monthly newsletter, *The Network*.
- Offering event planning guidance and information.
- Providing past Business After Hours host references.
- Including your event on the 2004 Event calendar on the Chamber's website.
- Providing you with a list of excellent caterers who are fellow Chamber Members.

Special Thanks to our 2003 BAH Hosts

Great American Tire & Service
 TCF Bank
 AIM Mail Centers
 First United Bank
 Title America
 Parker Dental Care
 BankWest
 Wealth Strategies Group, LLC
 Meridian Lending Corp.
 The UPS Store
 Colonial Bank – Stroh Ranch
 Parker Real Estate Co.