

Hosting successful ribbon cuttings is a beneficial public relations display that shows how the chamber brings attention to businesses in our community. It makes people feel good and a part of something bigger than they are. It's a public induction ceremony that can provide a lot of positive press for everyone.

What's a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony?

Ribbon cuttings are traditionally performed for business openings but you can use a big pair of scissors to cut a ribbon for any big milestone, for example:

- opening a new brand, new location, or franchise
- a business anniversary
- a millionth customer designation (or some other number)
- moving or expanding into a new building
- reopening a business under new management
- reopening after a devastating event (like a fire)
- or, any reason the business feels they need to present themselves to the community.

When Should You Host a Ribbon Cutting?

Chamber ribbon cuttings are a lot of fun but even if the Chamber and the business both actively promote it, drawing a crowd can be impacted by scheduling (day & time), the weather, or even the location.

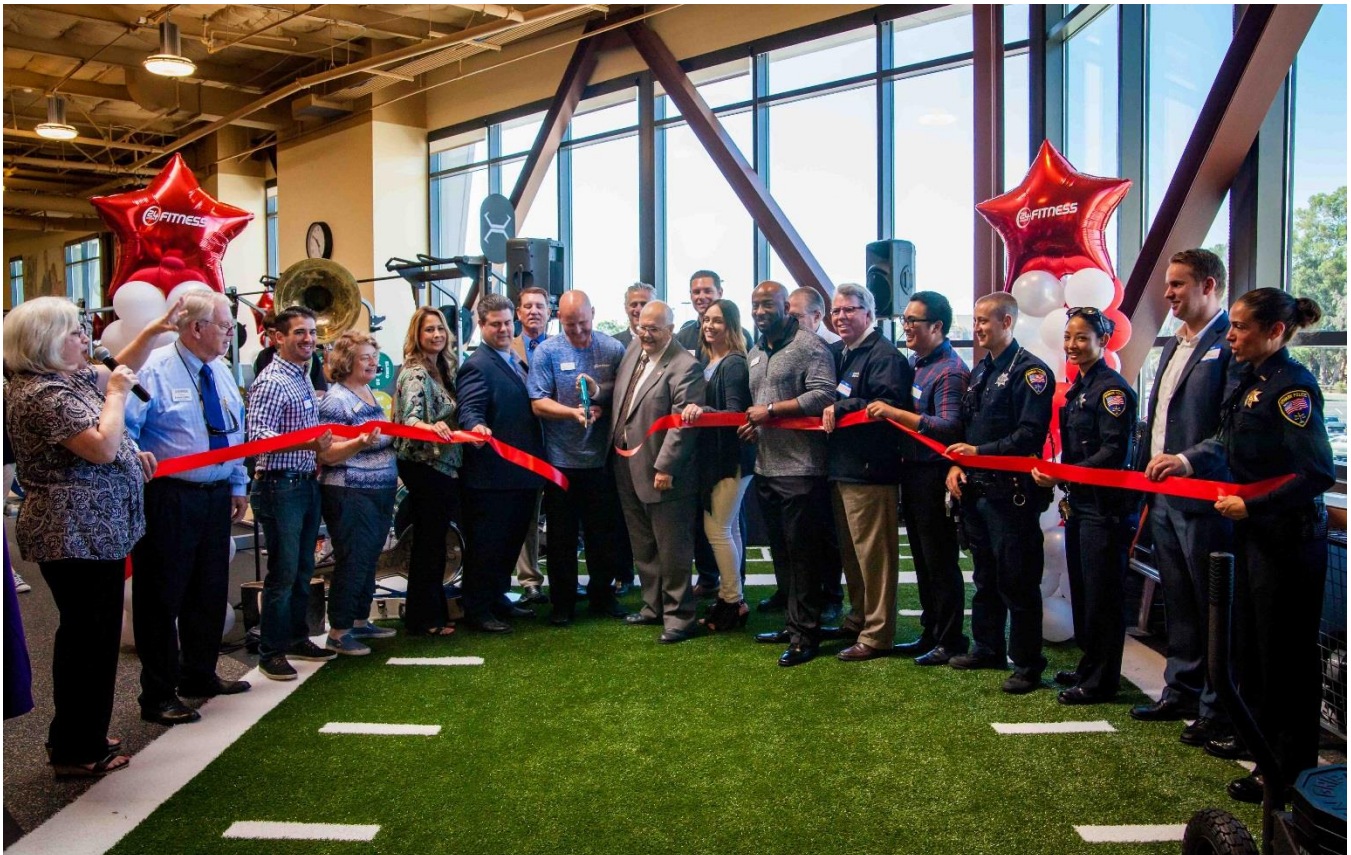
Saturday? For the uninitiated, a Saturday may seem like the ideal time to host the festive event because no one has to leave work to attend. But it may mean a lot of no-shows - that the mayor, city leaders, or other businesses like the Chamber Ambassadors (who volunteer their own time to help you celebrate your business event) simply can't make it.

Sunday? The same participation issues apply as on a Saturday. People have limited discretionary time and multiple demands, again, making a weekend Ribbon Cutting an iffy proposition.

Chamber Ribbon Cutting: The Weekday Edition

The point of ribbon cuttings, outside of being able to have fun with big or giant scissors, is to draw attention to the business, create a great photo-op, and ideally, to draw a crowd. That's why many businesspeople prefer the weekends. But while the weekends may bring in shoppers, if you have the right kind of business, you often won't get leaders in the business community (Mayor, Councilmembers, and other dignitaries). They have other plans and obligations. You may have family and friends, and potential customers, but fewer businesspeople.

1. A great alternative idea: It doesn't have to be all or nothing. A business can host a chamber-led ribbon cutting during the week with the mayor and other key people in the business community and then host a grand opening celebration for customers either the week preceding or following the ribbon cutting, or on the weekend. This way everyone is happy. This is why we try to schedule Ribbon Cuttings on either the 2nd or 4th Tuesday or Thursday – right after the close of work. It works well for the city leaders and our businesspeople.
2. Sometimes a business must schedule their Ribbon Cutting on a weekend – this generally applies to larger corporate firms who may be having the top executives coming in from out of town, in which case even City dignitaries will try very hard to fit it into their schedules. Those businesses usually have a marketing executive widely advertising the event and our Chamber role is to do our local promotion and execute the ceremony.



How Do You Get More Ribbon-Cutting Attendees?

How can you, the Ribbon Cutting host, help get more attendees at your Ribbon Cuttings

What the Chamber will do: The Chamber will coordinate with the Mayor's calendar. As soon as the date is confirmed, we will list your event on our website calendar. We also send multiple email invites for several weeks ahead, included in our regular mass emails to our business members and subscribers; we send additional invites to city dignitaries and our elected regional and state representatives; we also post the even on our social media. We are here to answer your questions and advise you of best tips to create a successful event. And, we have a core group of volunteer Ambassadors who sign up to help you at your event.

What you, the host should do: First, select several potential dates at least three weeks ahead. When a date is confirmed, you, the host are expected to extend your invitation (personal, phone, email or mailed – your choice) to your own select group of customers, friends or family members. Make it a celebration they wouldn't think of missing. They already love you and know you!

Sometimes getting more attendees at your ribbon-cutting event is as easy as changing up the format, doing something a little out of the ordinary.



Change up the Format. Could you do a Ribbon Tying?

This idea can be used as a new form of [ribbon-cutting](#) ceremony or, as a standalone event. Traditionally, a ribbon-cutting ceremony designated a building as open for business. In a ribbon-*tying* event, the business organization is celebrated for being seen as bringing the community together.

Examples of Chambers That Have Used Ribbon-Tying Events

In 2011, a Michigan Chamber used this idea when the community opened ALIVE, “an experience-based destination health park.” “ALIVE is going to serve our citizens well and bring new people into the area.”

A New York Chamber hosted a tying event for the grand opening of the Riverside Bank. They did so to “demonstrate the connection of this bank to our community.”

Personalized Alternatives for Ribbon Cutting Scissors

The big scissors are ALWAYS a hit, and gets attention. And, while you could use any old sharp item out there, using something that reflects the business is a way to get everyone’s attention. This is something you’d have to inquire about...and see if it’s even doable. But why not ask?

One City opened its new vocational career center by having the welding instructor “cut” through the ribbon with his “tiny” blowtorch.

Chain and bolt cutters were perfect for a construction company opening.

Or how about a rib cutting? When a well-known BBQ and Rib restaurant held their ribbon cutting, they cut a slab of ribs instead of a ribbon. (A little messy, but....it worked!)

Tying in the type of business with the instrument used is a great way to get attention, not to mention plenty of social media shares.

Ribbon cuttings (or tyings) are great for the business, great for the Chamber and great for the community. It’s OK to think outside the box!

In closing, the Newark Chamber looks forward to helping you, our member businesses, celebrate your successes, and Ribbon Cutting ceremonies are something we simply love to do -- and do well!