

Ribbon Cutting Guide

The following guide will assist you in planning a successful ribbon cutting. The Halifax County Chamber of Commerce provides this as a service to our members. Ribbon cuttings are usually planned for business' expansion, relocation, grand opening, major anniversary, or renovation.

Set your Date

- ✓ Select a date several weeks in advance
- ✓ Check for schedule conflicts with other events
- ✓ Set a rain date or have a plan b in case it rains
- ✓ Experience shows that events planned for Monday – Friday from 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM garner the best attendance

Invitations

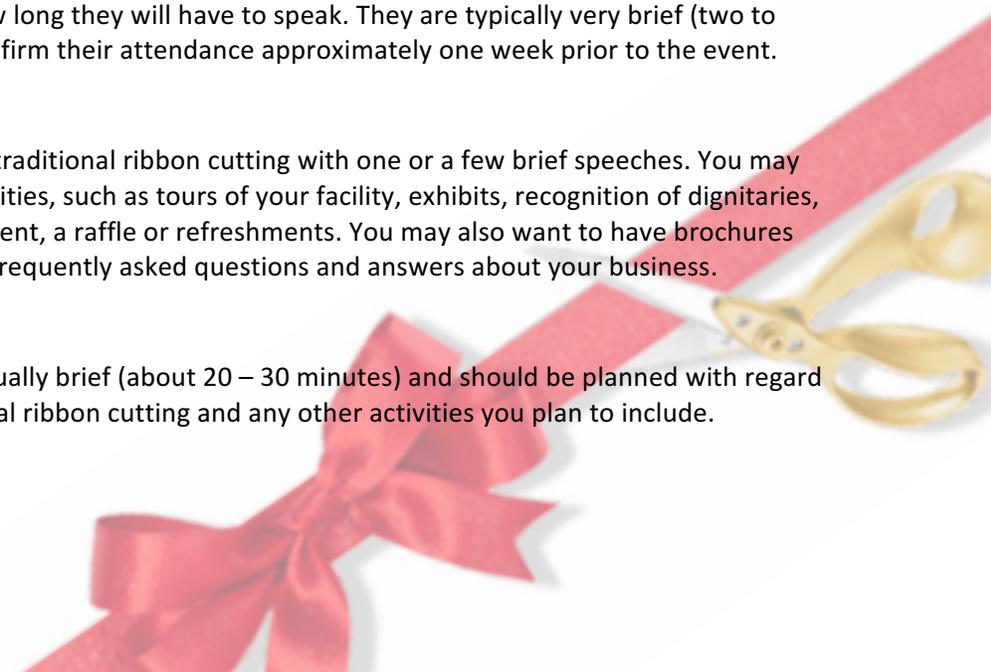
- ✓ Plan the type of invitation: formal letter, informal letter, postcard, email or flier.
- ✓ Include on the invitation: your logo and name, the type of event, date and time, address and a method for the recipients to RSVP.
- ✓ Consider additional methods of getting the word out such as websites, social media, newsletters or posters.
- ✓ **The Chamber will invite by e-blast: Chamber Ambassadors, Chamber Members, and Local Leaders.**
- ✓ Mail your invitations two to four weeks before the event, and establish a cut-off date for RSVPs, usually about one week before the event.
- ✓ Designate a contact person and methods of contact to handle incoming questions and track RSVPs as they are returned. You may want to phone or send email reminders a few days before the event.
- ✓ Your guest list can include many varied individuals from your family and friends to staff; clients; business associates such as bankers, advisors and other professionals; neighboring businesses; volunteer associations; community leaders; elected officials; and the media.
- ✓ Choose an emcee to welcome your guests and introduce any other speakers. He or she may also offer a few remarks, thank appropriate persons and recognize VIPs in attendance who will not be speaking.
- ✓ If you plan to include guest speakers, contact them early so they have enough time to prepare remarks and tell them how long they will have to speak. They are typically very brief (two to three minutes). Call to confirm their attendance approximately one week prior to the event.

Plan Activities

- ✓ You may decide to hold a traditional ribbon cutting with one or a few brief speeches. You may wish to include other activities, such as tours of your facility, exhibits, recognition of dignitaries, music or other entertainment, a raffle or refreshments. You may also want to have brochures available or a handout of frequently asked questions and answers about your business.

Ceremony and Program

- ✓ The actual ceremony is usually brief (about 20 – 30 minutes) and should be planned with regard to speaker order, the actual ribbon cutting and any other activities you plan to include.



- ✓ Ribbon cutting – Decide who will cut the ribbon and notify them in advance. Have the cutter (and any other attendees you desire) stand and face the audience with the ribbon between them and the audience.

Media & Event Publicity

- ✓ **The Chamber will promote your ribbon cutting in at least one e-mail notification to the Chamber membership.**
- ✓ **Your ribbon cutting will also be listed on the Chamber website.**
- ✓ **The chamber will contact the local newspapers.**
- ✓ After the event, consider posting pictures on your website and social media.
- ✓ It is recommended that you send a press release out to local media that were not able to attend your ribbon cutting.

Materials Needed

- ✓ Materials you may need will depend on the scale of your event and the planned activities. For example, if you have speakers, you may need a podium, microphone and chairs. You may also include decorations and flowers, a large display flag, a welcome sign, name tags and a guest book for people to sign as they enter.
- ✓ **The chamber will provide the large ceremonial scissors.**
- ✓ If you serve food, determine the number of tables, linens and trash cans needed and their placement.
- ✓ Plan the setup of any equipment you will be using and be sure that if you are not hiring a photographer or videographer, you have someone ready with a camera to capture your big moment.

Select and Contact Event Staff

- ✓ Your event can be as simple or as elaborate as you choose. Among the professionals, you may want to involve are a caterer, a photographer/videographer and a florist. Be sure to contact them early – as soon as you have established the date, time and budget. Call to reconfirm your plans one week before the event.

Designate Coordinators for Tasks

- ✓ To ensure your event goes smoothly be sure that everyone knows their tasks in advance. If you have a guest book, you may want a greeter to oversee this so each guest signs it upon arrival.
- ✓ If you offer tours, indicate a definite spot for interested persons to gather; and brief your tour guides in advance so they can answer visitor's questions quickly and accurately.

Post-Event Tasks

- ✓ Be sure to follow up with thank-you notes to all your speakers, sponsors and other VIPs who attended, as well as your faithful staff.
- ✓ Consider sharing your photos/video by posting them online, including them in your newsletter or using any other appropriate means.

