



Homer Township CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The main benefit of sponsoring a Homer Township Chamber of Commerce **Business After Hours** (BAH) event is the exposure your business receives from the program.

Here are a few tips for you to consider for hosting a successful BAH event. We strongly encourage you to attend at least one HTCC BAH event so you can begin your planning process, know what to expect and what you would like to avoid.

6-8 Weeks Prior to Event

- Set goals you wish to achieve. Is it your intent to create an awareness of a new location, service or product? Do you want to conduct business at this event? Decide what type of event would serve your company the best. Besides BAH's, your event could be a Morning Mingle, afternoon lunch or possibly an outdoor event (tents in a parking lot in case of increment or after business hours. In all cases, have fun with your event!
- Start planning your event at least 2 (two) months prior to the selected date.
- Select your date and times of the event, coordinating with the HT chamber.
- Arrange for a location. Generally, this is your place of business. If you do not have enough space or are a home based business, you may consider coupling your event with another chamber member. This can also help reduce your planning time or costs. Also, consult with the chamber as they often have optional location ideas as well.
 - Consider where guests will park, enter and mingle. Registration should be near the entrance, leaving enough room for one 6' table. Depending on your parking situation, you may need to have a signage or assistance from others for additional parking areas.
- There is no charge to attendees and typically these events are open to both chamber members and business non-members.

- Provide promo information to the HTCC office ASAP (ideally six weeks prior to the event). The more information you provide and advance notice, the better the promotion of your event will be. The HTCC can assist with posting your event on their website, newsletters and possibly a variety of other distribution means.
 - You are responsible for creating and/or purchasing and mailing your formal invitations. Please make this as professional as possible.
 - Once your invitation is complete, please submit proof to the HTCC office for review. A membership mailing list will be made available to you at this time.
 - Make plans to mail the invitations out approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the event. Invite your own special guests in addition to Chamber members.
 - Remind attendees to bring plenty of business cards. One business card will be provided at the sign-in chamber table when the guest arrives.
 - Encourage attendees to RSVP to the chamber at least a week prior to the event. This will help you determine the final amount of supplies you will need.
 - Arrange for refreshments/catering and/or bar service (if alcohol is to be served). We suggest you plan for a minimum of 50 people. Should you choose to serve alcohol, check with your insurance provider to make sure you are covered to serve. The HTCC is not responsible for purchasing, providing or serving alcohol. The HTCC will be happy to provide Chamber member resource suggestions for food and beverage vendors.
 - Arrange for entertainment if any will be provided. Entertainment should be placed far enough away from the registration area to keep sound levels sufficiently low.
 - Solicit door prizes – 1 (one) major prize and 2 (two) or more minor prizes. Remember to include your prize donors and prizes in the information you provide for publicity. We encourage you to utilize current Chamber members as much as possible for your prizes.
 - Consider offering a tour of your facility or business (if appropriate).
 - Consider having a designated person to take photographs. The chamber will also take photos which may be posted on their website, newsletters, etc. after the event.
- 1 week – Day of Event**
- Hold an orientation meeting with your employees to inform them of the event. Tell them what you expect of them and explain the format of the event.

- In preparation of the event itself, take care of housekeeping. Consider the climate for that day. Have the air conditioning set for warm, summer months and the heat for cold, winter months at a comfortable level. Have a coat rack available if possible.
- Make sure caterers and bars are set up in plenty of time. Some guests will arrive early. You may even consider inviting some of your special guests early to give them personalized attention before the rest arrive. It is a good idea to label food being served in case someone has an allergy requiring them to avoid certain foods.
 - Be sure to provide tables or areas where you can place the food and refreshments along with ample waste containers.
- As host, to get maximum exposure, you may want to be available to greet guests as they are registering or enter the main area.
- Provide at least 1 (one) 6' or larger table for registration. You will need a container for business cards/prize drawing forms, registration forms and a waste basket. Provide a list of door prizes and sponsors at the registration table. We suggest you start prizes one-half hour before the close of your event. Consider having a timeline with prizes, time of drawing and whether or not guests must be present to win.
 - Tables and chairs for guest seating is completely optional since guests mingle and walk around during most BAH events
- Name badges (hand written, stick-on) are great to have available at the check-in table.
- Depending on the size of your location, you may want to arrange for a quality sound system to make your welcome announcement, announce door prizes and thank your guests. Consider who will emcee and do the drawings for the event. Plan to promote your business during the announcements. You will have the entire crowd's attention... this is your chance!
- Coordinate who will assist with clean-up and what need to be done immediately and what can wait till the following day.
- Event follow-up is important. We encourage you to send Thank You letters to your prize donors. If you would like a list of attendees to send additional Thank You letters, the HTCC will provide that to you.

Thank you for your consideration in hosting a
Homer Township Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event!

We hope these tips will be helpful to you.

Please contact us should you have any questions.

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