

2014-2018 Strategic Plan

VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.™



Connect. Succeed.

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Mission Statement

To serve as the voice of business in our community.

Vision Statement

To be recognized as one of the nation's premier Chamber of Commerce and a leader in business advocacy.

TECHNOLOGY

Strategic initiatives and action items:

1. Upgrade Chamber computer equipment and systems to leading edge
 - a. Accomplish the capital improvements plan in the long-range Technology Plan
2. Assist Chamber members with their technology education needs
 - a. Business University workshops
 - b. Assistance with Chamber Member Websites

GOVERNANCE

Strategic initiatives and action items:

1. Continue to strengthen the Chamber leadership structure
 - a. Implement more stringent Board member recruitment and selection process
 - b. Continue to expand the Chamber Community Council with 10 new members each year
 - c. Require Board leadership training for incoming Chairmen through GACCE Leadership Conference

HUMAN RESOURCES

Strategic initiatives and action items:

1. Ensure that the Chamber has the best qualified staff to provide the maximum level of professional service to our members
 - a. Budget adequately for staff salaries and benefits
 - b. Provide quality training opportunities
 - c. Evaluate performance regularly



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Strategic initiatives and action items:

- Membership and Member Services
 1. Identify top member needs
 - a. Continue to conduct annual membership survey
 2. Improve current method of conducting cost-benefit analyses for every program annually and use the results to make annual business plan decisions and annual budget decisions
 - a. Utilize effective evaluation instruments to assess member ROI for member activities/events
 - b. Fine tune staff methods for assessing best use of time
 - c. Increase staff training on budget management
 3. Utilize analytical tools to determine the best use of membership recruitment resources
 - a. Assess membership demographics annually to identify under served sectors of the business community
 - b. Analyze effectiveness of various recruitment methods to make best use of staff time and resources
 4. Improve analytics for identifying problems with membership retention
 - a. Analyze second year, third year, and fourth year renewals to identify the rates of 'leakage'
 - b. Develop targeted efforts to reduce 'leakage'
- Economic and Community Development
 5. Continue to be the trusted source of education for our community's leaders on the challenges facing our local and regional economy
 - a. Annual Economic Summits with updated "Lowndes County By The Numbers"
 - b. Annual Business Outlook Breakfasts
 - c. Establish annual Inter-City Tours
 6. Continue to be the primary "go-to" source for assistance in starting and growing a business
 - a. Budget adequately for the high-tech tools needed for market research and competitor intelligence
 - b. Ensure that the SEEDS Business Resource Center continues to be directed by a qualified advisor



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT (cont.)

7. Expand the brand of Opportunity Central to focus community attention on the importance of growing a knowledge-based economy and retaining top talent
 - a. Continue to coordinate the annual Chamber Business Plan Competition
 - b. Partner with VSU, WGTC and Industrial Authority to establish a business incubator for knowledge businesses
 - c. Expand the reach and activities of the IT Professionals Network and the Sustainable Energy Network
 - d. Expand and strengthen MetroOne Young Professionals Network
 - e. Create a well organized internship program for member businesses and VSU students through MetroOne Talent Connection
8. Intensify efforts to create a community culture of collaboration among our community's leadership
 - a. Expand quarterly lunch meetings of top leaders from 70 to 100 participants

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Strategic initiatives and action items:

1. Regain our reputation as the premier chamber Government Affairs Council in Georgia
 - a. Strengthen the Policy Committees' membership composition
 - b. Improve the efficiency and speed of action of our grassroots network
 - c. Create an effective Candidate Academy
 - d. Budget for Director of Government Affairs to participate in U.S. Chamber and Georgia Chamber GAC activities and conferences
2. Enhance our standing as the voice of business for our local community
 - a. Develop an "issue endorsement" policy and plan of action
 - b. Take strong positions on local business development issues
 - c. Provide vigilant oversight of the Military Activity Zones
 - d. Represent the interests of the business community in BRAC discussions



FINANCE

Strategic initiatives and action items:

1. Ensure the financial stability of the Chamber of Commerce
 - a. The Board will create a 5-year plan to build a 3-month operating reserve, and a 7-year plan to build a 6-month operating reserve
2. Ensure that Chamber staff compensation and benefits are comparable to other 5-Star chambers of similar size
 - a. Review GACCE Wage and Benefits Survey each year
3. Undertake a \$150,000 capital campaign in 2015 to generate funds for facilities improvement and a building reserve fund
 - a. Create a committee to develop the capital campaign to begin work in 2015
4. Pursue additional non-dues revenue sources
 - a. Revive the Member Services Review Committee to explore best practices in other chambers for non-dues revenue generation

COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic initiatives and action items:

1. Revitalize and upgrade our communications strategies with all constituencies
 - a. Utilize the ACCE Toolkits for communications
 - b. Consider a name change to reflect our community's Metro Status
 - c. Update and upgrade Chamber logo
 - d. Reassess effective utilization of \$100,000+ in-kind advertising budget
2. Continue to upgrade the quality of communications publications from the Chamber of Commerce
 - a. Submit Progress, Moody Link and/or Connections magazine for an ACCE award
 - b. Develop metrics for measuring effectiveness of all Chamber print and e-publications

Key Result Areas:

- **Program Development** - How well are we serving our members with the services they need to be successful?
- **Government Affairs** - How strong and effective are our advocacy efforts on the local, state and federal levels?
- **Finance** - What are our long term goals for financial stability and growth, and what are we doing to accomplish them?
- **Communications** - How effective are our methods of communicating with all of our constituencies?
- **Technology** - How close is our Chamber to being on the leading edge and a business model of technology utilization?
- **Governance** - How effectively has our Chamber harnessed and utilized the horsepower of our community's top business leaders?
- **Human Resources** - How does our Chamber CEO and staff measure up in terms of job knowledge, education and training, professionalism, productivity, member service, etc.

