

Chamber of Commerce

My city has a Chamber of Commerce. What is it?

A Chamber of Commerce is a business group (like a club) that professional workers pay dues to join each year so that they can meet and talk to other Chamber members. Professional workers include real estate sales persons, bankers, insurance sales workers, company owners, restaurant managers, retail sales managers, and others. Professional workers want to meet and talk to other Chamber members to:

1) Get to know other business persons, 2) Increase sales for their company; 3) Solve common business problems in the city. Most companies that join the Chamber of Commerce are located within the city, but some out-of-city companies may join because they sell products to residents (people who live in the city).

What is networking?

Networking is defined as "to meet with people to exchange information and create valuable business friendships." In the Chamber of Commerce, the networking process has 3 steps:

1) Meet business leaders in the city; 2) Learn what their company makes or sells; and 3) Share what your company makes or sells.



At a Chamber of Commerce business, or networking, lunch meeting, there may be 50 members to eat lunch and listen to a speaker. **Before the speaker, each Chamber member** stands to introduce him/herself to the group — company he/she represents — products his/her company makes or sells to customers. **After the speakers, Chamber members** mingle around to talk to each other about business. Networking can find Chamber members new customers for their company. For example, a Chamber member who owns an auto insurance company can network to find businesses that need auto insurance. Or, a Chamber member, who needs to find empty land for a new company, can network to find a Chamber member who is a real estate agent and knows of commercial (business) land for sale.



What does the Chamber of Commerce do?

1) The Chamber of Commerce acts as a **unified voice (one voice)** that speaks for businesses on issues that affect the business world. The Chamber of Commerce gives recommendations for new laws needed to help businesses. The Chamber may ask State government for better roads so that company trucks can ship products faster. The Chamber may ask County government to lower sales taxes to allow customers to buy more products. The Chamber may ask City government to pass new laws to make it easier to start a new business. Because the Chamber is a unified voice, its recommendations are taken seriously by lawmakers.

2) The Chamber of Commerce acts as a **source of information** about any topic that may affect businesses. The Chamber keeps members up-to-date on new labor laws, better ways of doing things, and trends in robotic technology. For example, the Chamber may have workshops for members: 1) Way to make customers pay overdue bills; 2) How to prevent shoplifting; 3) How to prevent robberies.

The Chamber of Commerce **provides many events for members** to network such as: 1) lunch meetings with speakers; 2) mixer gatherings at different locations after work hours; 3) ribbon-cutting ceremonies when new a company opens, and 4) classes to help companies learn ways to make more money.

4) The Chamber of Commerce is a **leader in efforts to improve the city**. For example, the Chamber may help restore an auditorium for school plays, support city parades or fireworks, help buy benches or special dog drinking fountains for city parks.



5) The Chamber of Commerce **provides information about the city** when asked. A person who wants to visit the area for a vacation may call or visit the Chamber of Commerce website to find out what types of hotels, restaurants, and recreational or sports activities are available for visitors. If a company wants to build a new store, the Chamber provides information to the store builders about the city's population and laws.



Does the Chamber of Commerce help workers?

The Chamber of Commerce helps create new jobs by bringing new companies into the city so that workers have many careers from which to choose. The Chamber of Commerce helps companies grow and earn profits (money) so that companies may give workers promotions and higher pay. When the Chamber of Commerce helps companies in the business world, workers in the work world are also helped.

How is the Chamber of Commerce organized?

A Board of Directors runs the Chamber of Commerce. The Board of Directors are Chamber members voted into offices by all the members. The Board of Directors hires a Chamber President to:

a) Run the Chamber office; b) Hire office workers; c) Organize the Chamber into departments (such as Community Development, Government Relations, New Member Recruitment, and others).

QUICK CHECK:

1. What is a Chamber of Commerce?
2. List 3 types of professional workers.
3. For what 3 reasons do workers want to meet and talk to other Chamber members?
4. How is "networking" defined?
5. List 3 steps in the networking process.
6. What do Chamber members do: a) Before the speaker? b) After the speaker?
7. What may a Chamber member who owns an auto insurance company network to find?
8. What type of "voice" does the Chamber have?
9. a) For what may the Chamber ask State government? b) For what may the Chamber ask County government?
10. List 3 workshops the Chamber of Commerce may have for members.
11. List 3 events the Chamber will provide for members to network.
12. In what efforts is the Chamber a leader?
13. What does the Chamber provide when asked?
14. What 3 things can a person who wants to visit for vacation find on the Chamber website?
15. How does the Chamber help create new jobs?
16. What happens when the Chamber helps companies in the business world?
17. Who runs the Chamber of Commerce?
18. List 3 job duties of the Chamber President.
19. If your class has time, call your city's Chamber of Commerce and ask for a Chamber of Commerce member to speak to your class about your city's businesses.