



Fauquier Chamber of Commerce

HOSTING AN AFTER 5 AT YOUR BUSINESS



These monthly events are a great chance to network, make new friends, and meet potential customers. Hosting an After 5 is a great way to showcase your business and a perfect opportunity to introduce your products and/or services to fellow chamber members and attending guests.

One of the obvious benefits of hosting an After 5 at your business is awareness and exposure. Your event will be listed in the Chamber list of upcoming events and posted on our Facebook page. In addition, announcement of the event will be emailed to over 1,000 recipients each week.

Attendance is dependent on a number of factors including weather and location however; average attendance is between 50 - 60. Keep in mind, if you invite clients and associates who do not normally attend our events, plan for extra people. Personal invitations from your company will also prompt more to attend so keep that in mind when planning the food. The Chamber can provide you with a mailing list should you choose to mail personal invitations.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

• EVENT SPACE

Not all businesses are necessarily set up for these types of events so be creative but also be practical. Consider guest flow through the space and proximity to restrooms. Guest parking should also be considered to ensure there is plenty of space available. Be aware of any limitations on number of attendees per any town or emergency services ordinances. It is strongly recommended that you check with your landlord (if applicable) to ensure that these types of events are permitted. Do the same with your insurance carrier particularly if serving alcohol.

• FOOD & BEVERAGE

Food should consist of light to heavy hors d'oeuvres. We suggest some hot and some cold selections. And encourage you to contact any other Chamber member who may be able to provide these services. Beverages should include beer, wine, soft drinks and water, and should be ready to serve at 5:00 p.m. It is perfectly acceptable if you choose not to serve alcohol.

• THEMES & ENTERTAINMENT

Themed events are festive and attractive to Chamber Members. Please let the Chamber know what you are planning as the theme so it can be incorporated in the announcements. Entertainment is welcome but not necessary. Most themed After 5's have coordinating entertainment. Background music is suggested.

• WEATHER CONTINGENCIES

If you are holding an outside event, you should have a rain plan in place and notify the Chamber of your rain plan so we can properly inform the membership. Be reminded that these events would fall under the Chamber's inclement weather policy.



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AFTER 5 CHECKLIST & BEST PRACTICES



Below are general Best Practices and are offered as suggestions only and not intended to be applicable to businesses hosting an AFTER 5. Please contact the Chamber with any questions or needs for clarification.

1 ONE MONTH BEFORE

- ☐ Confirm date, time, and location with the Chamber office
- ☐ Send your logo, a short business description, and any attendance cap
- ☐ Decide what a win looks like: leads, hiring, a new product, awareness
- ☐ Walk your space for flow, parking, restrooms, and comfortable capacity
- ☐ Book food and beverage — light bites plus one signature drink
- ☐ Be aware of ABC rules if alcohol is to be served
- ☐ Plan a for a door prize that will help to keep your business top of mind

3 DAY OF EVENT

- ☐ Set up 90 minutes early — clutter and boxes out of sight
- ☐ Post signage from the road and parking lot to your front door
- ☐ Staff a welcome table: sign-in sheet, name tags, card bowl, pens
- ☐ Place food and bar away from the entry so guests keep moving in
- ☐ Create one photo-worthy spot with your name or logo in frame
- ☐ Test mic, music, and lighting; mute TVs and phones

2 TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- ☐ Share the Chamber registration link on social and in your newsletter
- ☐ Personally invite your best clients and top prospects — one by one. Consider hand written invitations
- ☐ Order signage, name tags, and any printed material you want in hands
- ☐ Check the RSVP count with the Chamber and adjust catering
- ☐ Assign your team: greeter, tour guide, photographer, closer
- ☐ Write a two-minute welcome: who you are, why here, one clear ask

4 DURING THE EVENT

- ☐ Greet everyone at the door and hand each guest off to someone
- ☐ Let the Chamber open with announcements, then give your welcome
- ☐ Keep remarks under five minutes — sell the room, not the product
- ☐ Introduce guests to each other; be the connector, not the center
- ☐ Draw the door prize before guests start heading home
- ☐ Collect cards and sign-ins, and thank people on the way out

After the event

Email every attendee within 48 hours, connect on LinkedIn, and tell the Chamber what worked so the next host can use it.