

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

JUNE 2020

DANVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



INTRODUCTION

Strategic Plan for the Future of Danville Chamber of Commerce

The purpose of the 3-year strategic plan is to serve as a roadmap for the Executive board and Executive Director to strategically approach growth and support of the Danville business community.

In a series of strategic planning sessions, the executive board redefined the mission for the new era of the 2020s, as well as detailed strategic steps they will take to better support the existing membership, attract new businesses and ultimately create a community in Danville that attracts the public to visit and live.

“The partnership of the Town and GDCoC is really strong as we strive for the same vibrant community and businesses” –

Mark Morgan, Town Manager

This will take a strong partnership between the Chamber, the Town of Danville, and the Downtown Danville Partnership to achieve, but the group is well on its way!

As part of the planning process, the Board and Director examined a variety of examples of other chambers from around the state of Indiana that represent “star” communities as well as local county chambers to identify best practices. This look outside of the standard member benefits and programs of the GDCoC revealed many consistencies that serve as best practices for chambers, as well as opportunities for new, expanded services that will prove valuable to members into the future.

MISSION

Membership input indicated it was time to update the mission statement for the GDCoC to better reflect the expectations of the member businesses, the greater community of Danville, as well as visitors to the Town. As a result, the Executive Board aligned on the following mission to work towards over the course of the 3-year strategic plan:

*The Greater Danville Chamber of Commerce is the authority on **connecting**, **promoting**, and **advocating** for local business members to provide a **thriving**, **collaborative** community for residents and visitors*

In development of this new mission, the group identified those bolded words as key components that will morph into specific objectives representing the measurable steps required to achieve their mission.

Each of these objectives and the corresponding strategies and tactics and key success indicators will be covered in detail in the pages that follow:

- 01**  **CONNECT**
- 02**  **PROMOTE**
- 03**  **ADVOCATE**
- 04**  **COLLABORATE**
- 05**  **THRIVE**



01

CONNECT

OBJECTIVE: Increase engagement of members in meetings and programs 20% by EOY 2020

Strategy 1: Increase new attendance at Mugs with Members by offering unique valuable content

- Rotate locations to show support for multiple member locations
- Feature a spotlight speaker – success showcase
- Record the success showcase speakers and post virtually

Strategy 2: Amplify and advertise the informal networking opportunity of Pour After Four events to increase participation within current membership

- Rotate locations to show support for multiple member locations
- Promote the value of networking
- Structure formal “speed networking” events

Strategy 3: Promote participation in the new Ambassador Program to maximize this new offering

- Ensure each member understands the Ambassador Program
- Incentivize participation in this new program

Strategy 3: Promote participation in Membership Learning Lunches

- Provide town/school updates
- Provide business growth seminars
- Record and post these updates to post virtually

Key Indicators of success:

- New member attendance
- Proactive involvement from community for presentations

02



PROMOTE

OBJECTIVE: Optimize value of current member promotional benefits by increasing utilization by 40% by EOY 2021

Strategy 1: Understand current member usage of benefits

- ED to conduct 1:1 meeting with each member to query what they use and value
- Small targeted e-surveys, to understand why those that use the benefits use them and for those that do not use the benefits, why not?

Strategy 2: Educate the membership on current benefits

- Create a member benefits one pager on the website
- ED to promote valued benefits in 1:1 meeting with members
- Host a training lunch series to educate on available benefits
- For new members, include in their welcome kit a guide to their benefits

Strategy 3: Promote member benefits

- Publish an email series highlighting one program/month, featuring a success story
- Utilize private FB group to encourage conversation about how members are using their benefits to their advantage
- Host networking events with potential members and established members
- Discount programs offered in new welcome to town pack for new residents

Strategy 4: Promote current membership businesses

- Act as a “marketing arm” of member businesses; demonstrate value of paid advertising
- Market businesses beyond the town limits via social media or paid advertising and look for other marketing and advertising opportunities outside of chamber

Key Indicators of success:

- Benefit utilization; members asking questions/providing feedback due to use
- Networking increases due to value derived from success story shares
- Member businesses reporting business growth because of marketing



OBJECTIVE: Clearly demonstrate membership advocacy quarterly starting in 2021

Strategy 1: Strengthen the partnership between GDCoC and local government to better advocate for existing & new businesses recruited to town

- Create a committee with representatives from each organization to identify and develop synergies to help small businesses thrive
- When recruiting, the joint committee bands together to discuss establishing a business in Danville and how the local organizations work together to support success
- Generate a welcome pack of “initiation” services to advocate for new businesses.
- Create a loyalty incentive program for use of local services by town residents & visitors

Strategy 2: Establish regular communication around how the GDCoC is advocating for its members

- Create an Advocacy Updates section on the website for members only
- Create a Chamber Action Alert – email quarterly to keep members informed on signature events related to local government and how the CoC is participating
- Highlight important legislation (i.e. Covid small business updates) when necessary in formal email and social media communication directing people to the Advocacy Updates section of the website

Strategy 3: Develop an advocacy presence at the state government level

- Create a government affairs committee to promote a healthy business environment by supporting legislation that encourages a strong climate and economic growth opportunities
- Look into a contract lobbyist to work with state legislature

Key Indicators of success:

- Members reaching out to GDCoC with questions and advocacy requests
- New business growth and utilization of initiation and loyalty programs



OBJECTIVE: Create functional collaborative relationships by EOY 2020 with ALL local entities to foster the most productive town environment for business members.

Strategy 1: Improve the communication between GDCoC and Town government

- Establish a calendar of attendance to town council meetings by the GDCoC board members
- Invite town council meetings to attend GDCoC board meetings
- Encourage the town government to attend and or guest speak at GDCoC member events (mugs with members or lunch and learns) and highlight their participation on social media posts

Strategy 2: Create a stronger partnership and distinct roles for the GDCoC and Downtown Danville Partnership (DDP) to encourage membership in both

- Have GDCoC board members join DDP committees and vice versa
- Attend and co-sponsor events
- Create a document that delineates the advantages of membership in both groups, publish on both websites, and include in new member recruitment

Strategy 3: Partner with the local (Danville & Hendricks County) Economic Development Committees to discover opportunities to collaborate and encourage business growth

- Create an economic development committee to understand programs and resources available
- Invite committee members to report back to members at monthly meetings

Key Indicators of success:

- Consistent presence felt at all local entity meetings
- Board members reporting in on collaborative opportunities



OBJECTIVE: Recruit 10 new businesses, representing different services/good into the community by 2022.

Strategy 1: Better understand what new goods/services would be most attractive to Danville residents and visitors

- Seek to understand the millennial population that are now trending to head of household and looking for businesses to support young families
- Host a series of public input meetings and/or solicit via a “suggestion box” at current events to better understand what people are looking for
- Review the findings with a focus group made up of town leaders and community members (DDP, Town, GDCoC, schools) to shape the vision of how we want to be known moving forward
- Visit other like-size towns to understand what types of goods/services are working for them and why. Connect with their chambers to understand their path forward.

Strategy 2: Improve recruitment and ease of opening a business in Danville

- Work with local government to understand and resolve restrictions and obstacles that would prohibit a new business from opening
- Serve as a new business advocate to navigate the town requirements for new businesses
- Connect recruits with businesses that have successfully opened in town to act as a “mentor”
- Work to create a unique value proposition with the Town of Danville that differentiates among Hendricks County towns and attracts new businesses to town (i.e. centered around square and East corridor, look/feel of buildings, business delivery in unique locations, promote the housing growth and the need for new businesses to support the new population growth)
- Reconnect with “recruit” businesses that were on the fence as businesses come out of survival mode and into growth mode. How can business models now change to meet the new needs of the public?

Strategy 3: Market new businesses upon opening

- Host, publicize and require board and town official attendance at Grand Opening events
- Offer advertising to residents to incentivize visits to new business
- Offer drawing prizes for new business reviews
- Facilitate announcements in local news sources (ICON & Republican), online (all social media outlets and website), and a new member spotlight on website
- At the next member meeting following the grand opening, make way in the agenda for a member spotlight.

Strategy 4: Work with existing businesses to help them return to growth, post pandemic

- Evaluate some of the “survival mode” tactics used to support business in early 2020 to assess sustainability (i.e. Expanded outdoor seating, parking for easy curb side pickup)
- Encourage participation in ongoing “support programs” offered at the state and national level
- Create a focus group to understand how else they want to be supported
- Establish a routine cadence of social media promotion for all member businesses
- Create a post-pandemic local loyalty program for Danville residents
- Create a larger “Small Business Saturday” presence this year supporting membership
- Highlight sponsors and allow them to market goods/services on site at events and possibly even participate in the planning process
- Consider posting an online job board to help them advertise new openings

Key Indicators of success:

- New businesses recruited
- Reduced time to opening for a new business
- Participation in grand opening events
- Redemption of new member discount program offerings
- Increase in social media “likes” for new and existing members

CONCLUSION

The GDCoC has expansive work ahead of it to realize its new mission and create a thriving environment for businesses, community residents, and visitors. With a structured approach to realize each of their five objectives, the next step is for committees to be formed and accountability to be established within the plan in terms of who is responsible and by what date.

General priorities have been identified by the inclusion of target completion dates in each objective. Obviously with the current economic climate impacted by the pandemic, for the balance of 2020, the Chamber will focus on continuing to support its members in “survival” mode and begin to understand the support necessary to return these member businesses to growth.