



UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITATION

2025 Accreditation Application for Local Chambers

Section 7: Communications

7. Communications

Standard

An Accredited chamber has identified target audiences within its membership and has devised a clear and strategic plan to communicate with them. Additionally, the chamber has developed a marketing plan to highlight chamber activities to the public and create awareness of the chamber's local mission.

Minimum Qualifications

- Maintains and uses a written communications and marketing plan with clear annual goals
- Uses diverse forms of media to promote the chamber, its services, and events
- Contacts members at least monthly
- Uses the chamber's Web site to communicate chamber information
- Communicates with members using mass-distribution e-mail (html-enabled preferred)
- Complies with federal CAN-SPAM requirements
- Writes press releases for media throughout the region or state

Minimum Requirement Attachment Checklist

- A 7.1 Communications and marketing plan

Additional Criteria Attachment Checklist

- A 7.2 Style guide or graphic guidelines for chamber publications

Section 7: Communications Minimum Requirements

A. Marketing Strategies

1. Does the chamber have a communications and marketing plan? Yes No
2. Does the marketing plan include annual goals? Yes No

A 7.1 Include a copy of the [communications and marketing plan](#)ⁱ. **Attachment :** _____

B. Marketing and Communications Material

1. Which of the following does the chamber have? Are these available online? How often are these items produced?

	Print	Online	Frequency
i. Magazine (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
ii. Membership or electronic newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
iii. Press releases or media advisories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
iv. Products and services marketing pieces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
v. Website		<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

2. Are communications to members distributed at least monthly? Yes No

C. World Wide Web and Electronic Communications

1. Indicate which of the following is available on the chamber Web site? Check all that apply.

- Basic chamber information including telephone number and address
- Staff contact list
- Board and Committee roster
- Upcoming events

2. Does the chamber use member communication software for html-enabled mass-distribution e-mails? Yes No

3. Is the chamber compliant with federal CAN-SPAM requirements? Yes No

4. Enter your website address in the space provided. _____

D. Media

1. Approximately how many press releases are sent annually? _____

2. Approximately how many [media advisories](#)ⁱⁱ are sent annually? _____

3. How are press releases and media advisories distributed? (Check all that apply)

- Emailed Website or Social Media Other _____

4. How broad is the distribution of press releases? (Check all that apply)

- Local Regional State National

Section 7: Communications Additional Criteria

A. Marketing Strategies

1. Does the communications and marketing plan include a strategy for each program and service? Yes No

2. List the targeted audiences mentioned in the marketing plan.

3. Does the communications and marketing plan include a strategy for targeted audiences? Yes No

4. Does the communications and marketing plan include benchmarks to determine the success of marketing efforts? Yes No

5. Which methods are included in the communication and marketing plan? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Instant Messaging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters | <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Online advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online directory | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio/PSA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signage | <input type="checkbox"/> TV appearances | <input type="checkbox"/> Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Blogs / Op Eds | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff or Ambassador visits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brochures | <input type="checkbox"/> Branded promotional items | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

B. Marketing and Communications Materials

1. Does the chamber have a style guide or graphic guidelines for all chamber publications? Yes No

A 7.2 If yes, include a copy of the [style guide or graphic guidelines](#)ⁱⁱⁱ. Attachment : _____

2. Is the chamber's logo and stationery consistent with the image of the chamber? Yes No

3. Is the look of all programs and services consistent? Yes No

4. Is the marketing message of all products and services consistent? Yes No

C. World Wide Web and Electronic Communications

1. Which of the following is available on the chamber website? (Check all that apply)
 - a. Online membership directory
 - b. Current chamber publications (e.g. annual report, newsletters, magazines)
 - c. Policy issues and positions
 - d. Membership application
 - e. Press releases or "in the news" alerts
 - f. Links to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce website
 - g. Links to articles about the chamber
 - h. Links to business resources
 - i. Archives of past chamber publications
 - j. Members-only section with username and password
 - k. Referral section (i.e., where someone can refer a colleague or business)
 - l. Intranet message board or listserv for the chamber's members
 - m. Online information request form
 - n. Board documents (e.g. bylaws and committee structures)
2. Are Web statistics (e.g. the number of hits on the chamber's overall site) tracked? Yes No
3. Are Web statistics (e.g. the number of hits on each individual page of the chamber's Web site) tracked? Yes No
4. Does the chamber have an e-mail address for general chamber inquiries (e.g., info@thischamber.com)? Yes No
 - a. If yes, is it monitored and responded to daily? Yes No
5. Do all employee e-mail addresses include the chamber's Web address rather than an Gmail, Apple, Hotmail, or other public addresses (e.g., jsmith@usachamber.com)? Yes No
6. Does the chamber track the "open" rate of sent chamber electronic communications? Yes No
7. Where is the chamber's website address listed? (check all that apply)
 - All chamber mailings (e.g. newsletters, brochures, annual reports, etc.)
 - Business cards
 - Letterhead
 - Meeting registration forms
 - Member application
 - All novelty products (pens, mugs, apparel, etc.)
 - Bottom of all e-mail signatures

D. Media

1. Is there a staff person responsible for working with the media? Yes No

a. If yes, please list staff name and title

2. Has staff and leadership received media training? Yes No

a. If yes, please list the name and title of each staff member.

3. How many op-eds written by the chamber are published annually? _____

4. In the last year, how many articles about the chamber or the chamber's staff have been featured in the media? _____

E. Member Communication

1. What is the members' preferred method of communication? (check only one)

Phone E-mail Mail

2. Does the chamber have the technology and resources to only communicate with members via their preferred method? Yes No

Supplementary Information

Applicants can use this page to enter or attach supplementary information not required by the application.

Please note that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will review the material, but does not score supplementary information either as a part of the application process or as a basis for designating the chamber as Accredited, Accredited with 3 Stars, Accredited with 4 Stars, or Accredited with 5 Stars.

Supplementary information may be awarded up to five discretionary points as deemed by the Accreditation consultant for exceptional policies or best practices.

Comments can be entered in the space below.

Additional documents can be attached here : _____

ⁱ **Communications and marketing plan:** The Accrediting Board requires that the application create a thorough communications and marketing plan. The communications and marketing plan is a document that details the chamber's strategy to communicate with members and advertise the chamber's programs, products, and services. For sample communications and marketing plans, refer to the best practices Web page at http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm

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ⁱⁱ **Media advisories:** Are used to alert the media about an upcoming event or news story. Media advisories may lead to the media being present to report on a chamber event. Media advisories are not as detailed as press releases, which are used to communicate the entire news story.

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ⁱⁱⁱ **Style guide or graphic guidelines:** Outlines the standards for design and/or writing for a chamber and its publications. For style or graphic guidelines, refer to the best practices Web page at http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm

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