

Hosting a 5:01 After Hours

The Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce is pleased to offer you the opportunity to host a 5:01 After Hours to help promote your business. We want you to have the best possible results, so we have compiled a list of tips and tricks to help you have success.



Schedule in Advance

Only one 5:01 Business After Hours is scheduled per month, so if you haven't already, please make sure to call the Chamber to schedule your event. Advanced reservation is necessary for the Chamber to promote your function through *Business Lines*, the monthly newsletter, website, weekly e-news, and press releases. Setting a date early will also give you time to put up posters, place an ad in the newspaper, and send out invitations to your own customers or clients.

Planning Your Event

Plan features and activities that will make people want to attend such as:

- **Drawings** for two or three door prizes. The best prizes have a connection to your business and a high level of appeal.
- **Serve unusual refreshments.** Don't get too exotic, but don't serve the same thing that everyone else serves. Finger foods are fine, and the greater the variety, the better. Be sure that the food is something that people can handle while standing and networking.
- **Plan for drinks.** You need not serve alcohol; however, beer and wine tend to be an inducement for more people to attend. *If you serve alcohol, contact the city for the latest rules and regulations.* Be sure to have coffee, tea, punch and/or soft drinks for those not interested in alcoholic beverages.



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- **Present your business.** Plan for a brief presentation about your business for three to four minutes.
- **Prepare materials that people can take home** if you wish to tell them more about your business than you can say in a few min-

utes.

- **Offer discounts** on products or services that are available only to the people who attend your event and publicize these extensively!
- **Prepare your own invitation list**, in addition to the Chamber membership.
- **Decorate your business** with balloons, streamers, signs, banners, flowers, or displays. Don't be too lavish, but aim at something better than a "business as usual" appearance.
- **Obtain necessary supplies** to include: paper plates, cups, napkins, table cloths, utensils, condiments, serving tools, a guest book, a basket for business card drawings, trash receptacles, etc.

Publicize Your Event

The Chamber will publicize your event to membership and through a press release, but you should not rely solely on our efforts. If you wish to guarantee the success of your 5:01, you must also invite your own customer base or clientele and the community. The more you publicize, the more successful your efforts will be. The following are some suggestions:

- **Membership labels** can be obtained for a low fee to send personal invitations.
- Extend mailing invitation to your **personal business mailing list**.
- Hand out a **flyer** about the event on your business counter to each customer for at least two weeks prior to your 5:01 date.
- Offer a **personal telephone invitation** to some of your best customers two or three days before the event.
- Place an **ad** in the Bonner County Daily Bee inviting the general public to attend.
- Contact the **local radio stations** for advertising possibilities.
- Be sure all **advertising features** your refreshments, door prizes, and any special discounts or other offers that may be available during your event.
- Place **signs and balloons** outside your business announcing the big day.

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Set-Up

Set up the location with refreshments, displays, and information tables near the entrance and around the sides of the room. Provide lots of open space for people to gather in large and small groups.

A large part of the success of your 5:01 is if your attendees had a good time with others. They will remember your business because you made that positive experience possible. Therefore, do all you can to remove every obstacle to lots of social interaction.

After the Event

- If you kept a guest book or business cards, now you can follow-up with **thank you notes** to some of your best customers or those who look like they could become your best customers.
- After all your hard work, you can now **evaluate** your efforts. What did you do well and what could have been done better? Use your event as a learning experience for future outreach programs.

During the Event



When the time arrives, you will have done all that you can do. Now relax. Meet and greet your guests. Do some networking yourself. Work the crowd. Feel free to talk about your business, especially the latest good news. After

all, that's why you invited everyone to attend. Here are some more tips:

- **Have a basket near the door** for people to place their business cards for drawings later in the evening. Have some small blank cards on which people can write their name and phone number if they do not have a business card.
- When attendance is at a peak, get people's attention, offer a welcome, and make a **brief presentation about your business**.
- Later in the evening, get everyone's attention again and **conduct drawings** for your door prizes. Thank everyone for coming and invite them to continue their networking activities.
- See as many people personally as possible as they are leaving and offer them thanks for their attendance. Invite them to come back.

Our Guarantee

If you follow these tips, we can promise that those who attend will enjoy your event: they will make some new friends, be favorably disposed to your business, and you will be happy with the efforts you have made. We'll do all that we can to support your efforts, and we hope these guidelines will help you organize the best possible 5:01 After Hours.

*Remember, Members do business with
Members they know.*

