

Camarillo Chamber of Commerce

Five Year Strategic Plan (short version)

2009 through 2014

Adopted by the Board of Directors, January 2009.

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I. Introduction

by Mitchell Crespi, Chairman of the Board

Camarillo Chamber of Commerce has evolved substantially in the past eight years. It has strengthened itself structurally and has taken a much larger role in advocating for business and affecting economic development for its members and the community.

Eight years ago, through the commitments and investments of many Chamber members, the Chamber office was moved to more spacious offices on Ventura Boulevard, which allowed it to operate more professionally and to serve its members and the public more completely.

Seven years ago, the Chamber Board made a commitment to hire professional Chamber management and key employees and to invest in continued professional development for the staff. It also took the position to invest in technology—hardware, software, Internet presence—in order to have a more effective operation and to better serve its members.

The Chamber has defined its five areas of business, as outlined in this document. In 2006 we created new sales materials and at that time counted more than 50 programs the Chamber offered its members. Each year the board of the Chamber holds a planning retreat to review the programs, decide whether to expand, improve, reduce or eliminate those programs. It considers whether to add new programs to meet its mission, and decides on key priorities for the next year.

The Board concluded in 2006 that it needed a full examination of its purpose, its programs, and the long-term needs of its members and the community. It needed to provide a guide for future Boards and management as they change and may change in the future. So we launched the Long-Term Strategy Committee to develop a strategic plan for a five-year period, one that could be updated periodically for future five-year periods.

This document, "Five Year Strategic Plan, 2009-2014" provides a starting point. Detailed time schedules and check points will be developed when this plan is accepted by the Board.

II. Executive Summary

In 2005 under the direction of Board Secretary, Stan Daily a Chamber Committee structured a 20 year Vision of Camarillo. The Chamber Executive Committee then moved to develop a plan to focus on the mission, activities and organization of the Chamber of Commerce during the next five years using insights from the vision profile.

The Strategic Plan Committee was chaired by Past Board Chairman, **Richard Wagner** (Edward Jones Investments) and included Board Secretary, **Stan Daily** (Mayor Emeritus City of Camarillo) ; **Tom Kelley**, Chamber President/CEO; Board Chair **Mitchell Crespi** (Courtyard by Marriott) ; Past Board Chairs, Pauline Malysko (Logix Development Corporation) and **Bob Taylor** (Keller Williams); Board Vice Chairs **Dave Smith** (United Way of Ventura County), **Larry Doris** (Imation) and **David Press** (Santa Rosa Plaza).

The Committee reviewed current Chamber activities, looked at other organizations and their strategic plans, gathered ideas from Board Members and staff, and took a critical view of the Chamber's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. This has been a significant effort on the part of the people involved and reflects the positive attitude of those committed to the Camarillo Chamber's progress.

The results of this work are contained in this document. Briefly summarized, below are the conclusions of the effort:

1. The Mission Statement and major lines of business are appropriate and will stay in place.
2. New focus on recruiting larger member businesses (50 + employees) is needed.
3. Stronger emphasis on advocating for business interest to government is important.
4. Supporting pro-business candidates for elective office is desirable.

5. Encouraging Camarillo business growth and health (in conjunction with the city) needs greater emphasis.
6. Creating a new communication plan is a top priority.
7. Balancing desired activities with staff and volunteer resources required attention.
8. Establishing a staff succession plan is important.

Achieving this plan involves volunteers, Board Members and staff. The Committee knows this is the first step in attaining a higher level of success and we are confident that a stronger Camarillo Chamber Community will result.

III. Chamber's Product Line and Mission

Chamber's "Five lines of Business"

The Chamber has determined through surveys and discussions with members that all of its programs and events fall within five lines of business – the Chamber's product line. All activities are viewed through these areas.

1. Represent the interests of business to government

The underlying principle of the business advocacy program is that a large group of businesses and organizations can have an effective voice in public policy when they act together and focus on issues that are important to the greater good of all. A membership that is diverse—representing a wide range of types and sizes of businesses, organizations, and agencies—can be the most effective. Effectiveness can be increased when partnering with other organizations with similar goals, both on public policy in general and on specific issues and initiatives. The Chamber Board sets policy for its advocacy program and the Board makes final decisions regarding endorsement of ballot propositions and candidates.

2. Help to improve the local economy

The underlying goal of all Chamber activity is found in its mission statement: **"To promote and enhance a positive environment for business and community"**. With that in mind, the Chamber is active with the City of Camarillo in its economic development programs, works to connect California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) to Camarillo, works to bring more income to the Camarillo area, and pursues many activities to help every member improve its own business.

3. Help make the community a better place to do business and to live

A better community makes for a better business environment. Owners and managers of businesses and community organizations prefer to live in and operate in a community that provides good resources for education (for their employees and their own children), recreation, health and wellness, and culture. Chamber surveys have shown that the quality of life in Camarillo and Ventura County is the primary reason that businesses locate here.

4. Promote the community

Promoting the community as a desirable place to live, visit, establish a business, or move a business to, enhances the probability for success of the current businesses and organizations.

5. Provide benefits, marketing and networking opportunities for members

Chamber members are the core of the Chamber. Their annual investments provide the large majority of the total Chamber revenue and allow the Chamber to operate effectively.

The Chamber is incorporated as a 501(c)(6) organization, a "mutual benefit corporation." Many members join primarily for the marketing and networking benefits. Therefore, the Camarillo Chamber provides many opportunities for members to connect with potential customers, to advertise to other members and the public, to market their products and services in many other ways. And through various means, the Chamber encourages purchasing supplies and services from other members, promoting mutual benefit.

More than 50 programs are included within these five lines of business.

IV. Organization History and Profile

A. History of the Chamber

When the first businesses came to Camarillo in the first decade of the 1900's, they started to work together, and organize for the benefit of their businesses and the community. And thus by the 1930's, the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce was an active organization. At that time Camarillo was a small town of about a thousand or so people including all the surrounding country.

The early merchants knew the value of work, and being businessmen (largely men at that time) they knew what the bottom line was. But from the beginning, Camarillo businesses had the reputation of being very charitable afford the service. These businessmen were concerned with the welfare of the community, and thus one of the credos of the Chamber became "community concern".

Many of the early settlers in Camarillo, when asked why they shopped in Camarillo would reply that they felt it was their responsibly to shop at stores that supported the

community. They were steadfast in their belief that the community is like a family, and that the family must take care of each other.

Chamber incorporation

These businessmen united in 1940 and petitioned to become a California Corporation, the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce, a 501(c)(6) corporation. One of the incorporating members was Adolfo Camarillo. Thus incorporated, the Chamber began the official job of representing the Camarillo businesses in all matters.

For many years, the only government that Camarillo knew was that of Ventura County. The Chamber of Commerce was the closest thing to a Camarillo governmental body. When the 101 Freeway expansion was executed by the State, it was the Chamber that went before the appropriate governmental agencies and asked that it be placed where it is. Chamber leaders were also concerned with putting Camarillo "on the County Map", and lobbied and paid for a County Courthouse to be built in Camarillo (the building that is the immediate backdrop for the Farmer's Market).

Stopping annexation

When there was an attempt by another city to annex Las Posas Estates, the gloves came off in Camarillo. A group of Chamber officials, including George Longo and Max Grant, met and determined to incorporate Camarillo, an effort led by the Camarillo Chamber. The citizens voted on incorporation on Sept 29, 1964.

The Camarillo business community established this reputation: When they saw something that needed to be done, they did it, and they did it without any thought of self-aggrandizement, but rather for the good of the community. According to Stan Daily, Mayor Emeritus City of Camarillo, "Thank heavens for these early businessmen for without them and all the past Chamber members, we would not be the same community, a community that cares! I steadfastly believe that this is the one quality that sets the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce apart from others."

A more complete history of the Chamber, from the perspective of Stan Daily, Mayor Emeritus City of Camarillo and past Chair, Camarillo Chamber of Commerce, can be found in Exhibit C, of this plan.

B. Description of Current Organization

Members. Businesses, organizations, agencies of all sizes are Chamber members. Each member chooses a key representative to the Chamber, but all owners and managers of members can participate in Chamber activities. On January 1, 2009, the Chamber had more than 700 members.

Board of Directors. The Board is elected by the membership, in accordance with the organization's bylaws. Twenty-seven voting Board members are authorized. Board development efforts point toward the following criteria in finding potential Board members: (1) Board members should be top level decision-makers from member businesses; (2) they should bring prestige and influence to the board; (3) they should represent a wide range of member types; (4) they should be from key Camarillo area companies that are strong supporters of the Chamber and its mission.

Executive Committee: The Chamber's officers and two past Chairs of the Board make up the Executive Committee. The officers are Chairman of the Board, Chair-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, up to four vice-chairs.

Committees. Much of the business of the Chamber is done by Committees. Committee chairs are appointed by the Chairman of the Board and ratified by the Board. Committees report to and derive their authority from the Board.

Professional Staff. Board hires a President/CEO to manage the operations of the Chamber and act as a primary spokesman. CEO hires staff as deemed necessary to operate the Chamber. Current staff is approximately five full time people including a Director of Operations.

V. SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (challenges)

Summary of Strengths of the Camarillo Chamber: An organization that operates like a business, is well-respected by its members and the community, and has a very solid list of programs beneficial to members and to the business community.

Summary of Weaknesses: Staff turnover, financial resources are not deep, member retention rate too low, larger businesses have not seen the benefit of membership.

Summary of Opportunities: Many larger businesses and small businesses are potential members; respect for the Chamber by City and business opens possibilities for programs and resources.

Summary of Threats (Challenges): Many organizations vie for business resources so Chamber must be seen as providing value; changes in City leadership could change the relationship; changes in the economy could weaken the Chamber.

VI. Program Goals and Objectives

This section shows the result of study and analysis done by the Strategic Planning Committee during 2007 and 2008 and its primary recommendations.

Advocate Effectively

Representing the interest of business to government is a primary activity of the Chamber, considered the first of its five lines of business. Business advocacy, or “being the voice of business” in Camarillo, takes many forms within the Chamber. The primary responsibility lies with the Business Advocacy committee, but advocacy activities take place through several committees and programs, including Economic Development Committee, CSUCI Connection Committee, and others. Board of Directors, with advice from Executive Committee, has ultimate responsibility for setting advocacy policy.

Goals and Objectives for 2009-2014

Goal A

Chamber is an effective advocate for business positions

Objective A1: Identify and prioritize key issues of concern to business people.

Objective A2: Maintain an advocacy policy platform that reflects the Chamber's position on business issues.

Objective A3: Maintain an effective Business Advocacy Committee (BAC) that serves members' needs.

Objective A4: Consider developing and supporting clearly pro-business candidates in elections.

Goal B

Chamber is considered the voice of Camarillo area business at all levels of government.

Objective B1: Set up a program of communication to members and government including response to business legislation and other issues.

Goal C

Chamber is a key source for input of business perspectives in developing city plans and programs

Objective C1: Bring together Chamber leadership, City elected officials and City staff in the early stages of planning, especially related to development and business-related initiatives.

Top priorities within Advocate Effectively

Two year priorities (to be addressed in 2009 – 2010)

1	Increase business involvement in the advocacy process.
2	Improve communications to members and community on business issues and advocacy priorities (and on Chamber involvement)
3	Develop and execute a program for support of clearly pro-business candidates for office.
4	Develop a plan for outreach to the business community on critical issues.

Build Stronger Economy

Every activity of the Chamber, including business advocacy, has the ultimate goal of improving economic conditions for the Camarillo area and for its individual members. The mission of the Chamber is "To promote and enhance a positive environment for business and community," so this section addresses the activities directed specifically toward that goal.

Goals and Objectives for 2009-2014

Goal A

Become recognized as a primary force in strengthening the local economy

Objective A1: Promote the health and growth of existing Chamber businesses

Objective A2: Bring new businesses to Camarillo

Objective A3: Promote growth of core business areas

Objective A4: Engage larger businesses in the Chamber through demonstration of value

Objective A5: Actively participate in new business formation in the Camarillo area

Goal B

Ensure successful integration of CSUCI into Camarillo area economy

Objective B1: Support the connection of area businesses with CSUCI

Objective B2: Support growth of CSUCI

Objective B3: Use and retain CSUCI students and graduates in the local business community

Goal C

Improve the business workforce foundation of the area

Goal D

Support the continuing improvement of K-12 education in the Camarillo area.

Goal E

Promote Camarillo as an important tourism / visitor destination

Goal F

Promote relationship between Naval Base Ventura County and the Camarillo community and support the base's continuing economic benefits to the area.

Top priorities within Build Stronger Economy

Two year priorities (to be addressed in 2009 – 2010)

1	Increase cooperative efforts between Chamber and City in business development and retention activities.
2	Enhance contacts with business community through surveys, visits and other methods.
3	Increase business contacts with CSUCI.
4	Re-evaluate "tourism" programs (bringing more business to Camarillo and keeping more here) as they relate to the Chamber's overall mission.
5	Set up systematic approach for building relationships with Naval Base Ventura County and supporting the continuing economic benefits it brings to the area.

Communicate Value

The Camarillo Chamber of Commerce will continue as a viable organization only as long as its value to business, city and community is clearly communicated and understood. When the key constituencies understand the Chamber's value proposition, the result will be (a) a larger and wider-based membership that will provide the resources, the credibility, and the clout to remain as the primary voice of business, and (b) more Chamber resources, which are necessary to staff and fund the organization and its activities.

Goals and Objectives for 2009-2014

Goal A

Ensure the business community recognizes and understands the value of what the Chamber does

Objective A1: Develop a comprehensive Chamber communications strategy and plan

Objective A2: Determine and evaluate members' needs

Objective A3: Communicate the quantified benefits of events and programs

Goal B

Attain a higher level of membership participation in Chamber events and primary program areas

Objective B1: Increase attendance at events

Objective B2: Achieve more participation in committees, task forces, study groups, etc

Objective B3: Get more members to write / provide articles for Business Journal and electronic newsletter

Objective B4: Get non-profits more involved with the Chamber and its business members.

Goal C

Bring the business message to the community

Objective C1: Raise the understanding of business and its role in a free enterprise society among community residents and business people.

Top priority within Communicate Value

Two year priority (to be addressed in 2009 – 2010)

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|---|---|
| 1 | Establish a communications plan that addresses the various internal and external communications needs of the Chamber and relates them to current systems. |
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Achieve Desired Membership

In order to fulfill the goals of the Chamber, it must have the desired membership, not only in numbers sufficient to be a true representative of local business, but with the proper mix of members—large and small, plus diversity of types of business such as retail, services, manufacturing, non-profit, real estate, etc.

Goals and Objectives for 2009-2014

Goal A

Continually increase Chamber membership—numbers of desired members, total revenue.

Objective A1: Maximize renewal rate of members.

Objective A2: Add new members continually.

Objective A3: Increase Chamber revenue through various membership-based programs.

Goal B

Establish a varied membership

Objective B1: Develop and refine programs directed at needs of larger businesses (50+ employees).

Objective B2: Grow the membership so that it includes a wide variety of industry segments.

Top priorities within Desired Membership

Two year priorities (to be addressed in 2009 – 2010)

1	Establish systematic program to recruit larger businesses.
2	Establish systematic, workable retention program.
3	Increase revenue through more sponsorship involvement of business in programs, publications and events. Expand Chairman's Circle membership program.
4	Increase revenue through selling of Tier II Memberships and other upgrade membership programs.

VII. Management/Operations Goals and Objectives

The following section was also part of the Strategic Planning Committees work in 2007 and 2008, but is separated from Program Goals and Objectives because it relates to the day-to-day operations.

Operations

Operation of the Chamber involves its Board of Directors, professional staff, and members through committees and task forces. Day-to-day operations are managed by the professional staff headed by the President/CEO who is hired by the Board of Directors.

Goals and Objectives for 2009-2014

Goal

Maintain a well-managed Chamber

Objective 1: Always operate from an annual plan that is consistent with the Strategic Plan

Objective 2: Make the Chamber a leader in use of technology

Objective 3: Continually update the Chamber “product line”

Objective 4

Make committees more effective in fulfilling the mission and goals of the Chamber.

Objective 5: Continue to maintain and develop a strong, stable professional staff.

Objective 6: Maintain a solid financial condition.

Objective 7: Maintain a Chamber business location that enhances Chamber image and provides a productive working environment.

Objective 8: Maintain a board of directors that is representative of the membership and has the strength to get things done.

Objective 9: Promulgate and regularly update bylaws, policies and operating procedures.

Objective 10: Become an Accredited Chamber (U.S. Chamber accreditation).

Top priorities within Operations

Two year priorities (to be addressed in 2009 – 2010)

1	Establish a long-term financial plan that creates sufficient revenue to meet the goals of the Chamber and provide an acceptable reserve.
2	Establish a succession plan for management.
3	Review and update internal operations and procedures (accounting and other)
4	Connect committee functions and goals to staff priorities and to overall Chamber mission.
5	Achieve U.S. Chamber accreditation.
6	Review and update of bylaws to meet current needs.
7	Produce Annual Report and Business Plan (for membership information, retention and recruitment).
