

STRATEGIC PLAN



2023-2026



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INTRODUCTION

Beth Doughty LLC engaged in a two-month project to develop a strategic plan for the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce (DPCC). The DPCC has a new president/CEO who understands the need to update the organization's strategic plan which was developed pre-Covid and under different leadership. The DPCC can play an important role at a critical juncture in the evolution of the regional economy by supporting business growth and success. This can only be accomplished by creating consensus on a strong mission, vision, and direction for the organization along with agreed-upon goals and metrics that will build its resources, reputation, and influence.

The process started by surveying members, the Board of Directors, and key community stakeholders to better understand individual perspectives and define expectations. Two sessions with the Board of Directors included studying chamber trends in membership, activity, and revenue, SWOT analysis, agreement on the mission and vision of the DPCC, and goals and strategies for successful operation and outcomes. The plan integrates the challenges and opportunities unique to the DPCC along with best practices to develop actionable strategies and tactics to maximize effectiveness and efficiencies of the DPCC in service to strengthening the business climate, creating connections, and providing information for its members.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Programming
- Financial position
- Staff
- Passion
- Supportive board
- Voice of business position
- Leadership
- Regional collaboration
- Relationships
- Strong small business membership
- Steady, reliable
- Good communications
- Good use of technology
- Transparency
- Engagement
- Desire
- Energy
- Catalyst
- New direction
- Partnerships

Weaknesses

- Board engagement
- Old school, old business
- Existing businesses
- Small biz, start-ups
- Fall through cracks in workforce
- Member engagement
- Understanding lane on some issues
- Pittsylvania membership
- Belonging, gathering
- Opinions in our community
- Limited staff
- Large footprint
- Learning curve of staff
- Sponsorship needs
- Ambassadors program
- Understanding of advocacy
- Diversity of businesses

Opportunities

- Engage more sector focused business
- Roundtable groups
- New businesses coming
- Agribusiness
- Role as convener
- Better use of technology
- Total resource campaign
- Engage members on issues
- Opportunities to build revenue
- Potential in Pittsylvania
- Room to build revenue
- Potential for more members, esp. small biz
- Integrate LSS grads into leadership
- Intentional actions
- Advocacy
- Strengthen role as voice of business
- Room for greater board engagement and development
- Strengthen relevance
- Create platform for education messaging

Threats

- Generational perceptions of entitlement, change
- Focus on past instead of future
- Not being creative
- Uncertainty of what lane is ours
- Too much traffic in the lanes
- Lack of understanding in community of what Chamber does (business/nonbusiness)
- Appetite for confrontation, taking sides
- Declining membership
- Complacency
- Losing relevance
- Trying to do too much
- Unresolved City/County issues
- Massive change coming to region
- Membership retention
- Lack of member engagement

VISION

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce will be recognized as the premier advocate for business and industry in the region.

MISSION

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce supports and engages business and industry through high quality resources and relationships.

VALUES

- Be excellent
- Act with integrity
- Embrace individuality
- Focus on collaboration
- Provide value
- Be an innovator

#1 BUSINESS ADVOCACY

GOAL: Own the position as the regional voice of business.

Strategy 1.1: Promote business and economic priorities with local governments as a visible part of the Chamber's program of work. **FY23**

Tactic 1.1.1: Reorganize or expand staff to include responsibility for the management of government advocacy.

Tactic 1.1.2: Create an active legislative committee composed of board members and interested members to examine issues, confirm priorities, and build consensus on action.

Tactic 1.1.3: Update members regularly on activities, actions, and positions related to local advocacy initiatives.

Tactic 1.1.4: Serve as a conduit for members to access information on government business initiatives.

Strategy 1.2: Participate in state level advocacy as part of Virginia West and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. **FY23**

Tactic 1.2.1: Actively participate in Virginia West and Virginia Chamber of Commerce meetings and events related to legislative advocacy and the Virginia General Assembly.

Tactic 1.2.2: Meet intentionally and regularly with your state delegates and senators to be recognized as the voice of business.

Strategy 1.3: Engage membership in identifying local business priorities. **FY23-24**

Tactic 1.3.1: Survey members annually on business priorities particularly regarding community development, regulation, and legislation.

Tactic 1.3.2: Survey members intermittently using social media platforms.

Tactic 1.3.3: Include relevant questions on retention/Ambassador surveys to discover/identify priorities.

Strategy 1.4: Engage membership in determining state-level legislative priorities. **FY23-24**

Tactic 1.4.1: Survey members annually on state-level legislative priorities. Leverage connections to the Virginia Chamber and VA West to determine focus areas.

Tactic 1.4.2: Utilize the legislative committee to examine issues and confirm priorities.

Tactic 1.4.3: Share Virginia West newsletters (or offer an opt-in) with members.

Strategy 1.5: Serve as a thought leader on public policy and business priorities through a platform of shared learning. **FY23**

Tactic 1.5.1: Hold forums or educational opportunities, virtually or in-person, to explain and/or explore public policy and/or business priorities. (Examples: explanation on new regulations, speaker experts, candidate debates)

Tactic 1.5.2: Issue op-eds on business issues and serve as a media resource.

Tactic 1.5.3: Publish position papers on economic development and business issues.

Strategy 1.6: Serve as the recognized resource for business and economic priorities to candidates and legislators. **FY24**

Tactic 1.6.1: Connect with candidates early in the election cycle.

Tactic 1.6.2: Meet intentionally and regularly with local elected and administrative officials.

Tactic 1.6.3: Meet intentionally and regularly with delegates and senators.

Strategy 1.7: Provide connections between members and legislators. **FY24**

Tactic 1.7.1: Hold an annual social/fundraiser to bring together elected officials and the business community.

#2 BUSINESS SUPPORT

GOAL: Create and provide value to members.

Strategy 2.1: Focus on opportunities that help members build and foster business relationships. **FY23**

Tactic 2.1.1: Evaluate existing programs for effectiveness and efficiency in helping members make connections.

Tactic 2.1.2: Make quality relationship-building a consistent part of in-person Chamber events.

Tactic 2.1.3: Utilize technology to help make connections among members through website features and web programming.

Strategy 2.2: Create educational opportunities to help members become more profitable and productive. **FY24**

Tactic 2.2.1: Hold a regular series of webinars using talents of members to provide content to members on topics such as hiring strategies, inclusion, content development, software tools, etc.

Strategy 2.3: Facilitate sector engagement. **FY24**

Tactic 2.3.1: Enlist members to organize sector groups or peer councils that focus on sector-specific topics, information sharing, and initiatives. Chamber to provide organizational support.

Tactic 2.3.2: Target membership recruitment at sector qualifiers who are not Chamber members.

Strategy 2.4: Develop programming that contributes to the success of micro-business. **FY24**

Tactic 2.4.1: Hold a regular series (and library) of webinars targeted at interests and concerns of micro-business.

Tactic 2.4.2: Target membership recruitment at micro-businesses.

Tactic 2.4.3: Publish an inventory of resources specific to the interests of micro-businesses.

Tactic 2.4.4: Explore interest in creating a special interest group for micro-business owners.

Strategy 2.5: Increase understanding of benefits of Chamber membership.
FY23

Tactic 2.5.1: Create a new member orientation package provided to all new members. The package should include messaging on “How to Get the Most from Your Chamber Membership.”

Tactic 2.5.2: Include ideas on how to benefit from the Chamber in monthly newsletters.

Tactic 2.5.3: Revamp the orientation webinar to focus on benefits of membership.

Tactic 2.5.4: Utilize the Chamber ambassador program to connect with new members during their first year.

#3 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Claim the position as the recognized source of leaders in the community.

Strategy 3.1: Strengthen and grow existing leadership programs. **FY23**

Tactic 3.1.1: Continue to improve the experience of Leadership Southside.

Tactic 3.1.2: Create an Ambassador program to support Chamber goals and help members build relationships.

Tactic 3.1.3: Activate WE Lead and YP programs and structure to use members in leadership and programming roles.

Strategy 3.2: Strengthen role of Board members through education and professional development. **FY23**

Tactic 3.2.1: Reorganize Board of Directors structure to align with strategic priorities.

Tactic 3.2.2: Use committee structure to actively engage Board members.

Tactic 3.2.3: Engage Board members in membership recruitment and fund-raising with annual goals.

Tactic 3.2.4: Keep Board members knowledgeable on best practices, community development, leadership strategies, etc. by intentionally sharing third-party data and information.

Strategy 3.3: Build community leadership infrastructure by integrating participants in leadership programs into community institutions and organizations. **FY24**

Tactic 3.3.1: Create an alumni organization that will make connections with community institutions and organizations to promote leadership graduates.

Tactic 3.3.2: Integrate leadership graduates and participants into Chamber volunteer and leadership positions.

Tactic 3.3.3: Sponsor informational programming on topics such as “How to be a Good Board Member,” “How to Run for Public Office,” etc.

#4: BRAND SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL: Be a model of operational and program excellence and recognized as the region's premier business organization.

Strategy 4.1: Continue to grow membership. **FY23**

Tactic 4.1.1: Develop a branding campaign to promote the value of the Chamber to business growth including targeting to businesses in Pittsylvania County.

Tactic 4.1.2: Deliberately expand messaging and programming to include Pittsylvania County.

Tactic 4.1.3: Evaluate offering introductory rates to new members and microbusinesses including a campaign to target those audiences.

Strategy 4.2: Grow resources through increased sponsorships and partnerships. **FY24**

Tactic 4.2.1: Identify new sponsorship opportunities for events and programs.

Tactic 4.2.2: Evaluate the Innovation Partners program to ensure benefits are supporting attraction goals.

Tactic 4.2.3: Identify all exposure opportunities on Chamber platforms and channels to maximize opportunities for members.

Tactic 4.2.4: Engage a consultant to identify the potential for a Total Resource Campaign.

Tactic 4.2.5: Organize and conduct a Total Resource Campaign.

Strategy 4.3: Update branding, identity and communications package to reflect chamber values. **FY23**

Tactic 4.3.1: Re-envision the Chamber's graphic identity and color palette.

Tactic 4.3.2: Redesign communication tools and create new tools as necessary.

Tactic 4.3.3: Create an internal annual communications calendar document to ensure effective communications with members.

Tactic 4.3.4: Utilize social media as an integral part of the communications strategy.

Tactic 4.3.5: Evaluate contracting for a media manager to handle social, targeted online marketing, and mass communications.

Strategy 4.4: Improve use of technology for connecting with members and generating revenue. **FY23**

Tactic 4.4.1: Utilize an electronic platform for sharing documents and agendas with Board of Directors.

Tactic 4.4.2: Improve understanding and utility of Chamber Master to seamlessly connect with members.

Tactic 4.4.3: Use Chamber Master to collect intelligence on member engagement and use that information to inform marketing initiatives and increase engagement.

Strategy 4.5: Identify, monitor, and communicate key indicators of Chamber activity and financial health. **FY23**

Tactic 4.5.1: Create the framework for an online dashboard of key indicators of activity and finances.

Tactic 4.5.2: Use indicators to inform future decisions.

Tactic 4.5.3: Use indicators to set performance goals.

Tactic 4.5.4: Include dashboard data and year-to-year trends in annual reports to the membership.

Strategy 4.6: Engage members and leadership in support of Chamber strategies. **FY23**

Tactic 4.6.1: Create a 12-month calendar of Chamber events to better inform members and encourage engagement.

Tactic 4.6.2: Create a volunteer group of Ambassadors who will systematically meet/contact members to collect intelligence that can inform Chamber initiatives, provide business feedback to economic development officials, and engage members to improve retention.

METRICS

It is critical to monitor activity to maintain alignment with the vision and mission but also to demonstrate progress toward the goals of the strategic plan. The measurables suggested in this plan are matched to the overall strategies and will point to outcomes and uncover challenges and opportunities that will define the success of the strategic plan.

GOALS: As part of the annual program of work, set growth targets in:

- Number of members
- Membership revenue
- Retained members
- Innovation partner revenue
- Sponsorship revenue
- Event net revenue

TRACKING: Keep a dashboard of activity to demonstrate progress or identify concerns on an ongoing basis. While it will take the length of this strategic plan to collect meaningful trends, the dashboard should be provided to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors as part of every meeting package and included in the annual report to the membership. Sample metrics to be kept:

- Number of active members by month
- Number of dropped members by month
- Attendance by event
- Ambassador visits/connections by month
- Expenses, revenue, and net by month
- Connections by email, social platforms, and other modes by month
- Annual attendance chart for meetings of the Board of Directors
- Leadership Southside participants per program year
- Progress on strategic plan initiatives on a 0-10 scale

SURVEYING: Design an annual membership survey aligned with strategies of this plan. Share the results with leadership and membership. Also, consider repeating all or part of the survey instruments that were used in development of this plan and sent to key community stakeholders and Board of Directors to monitor changing impressions of the DPCC.