



Business Links for Small Business Success

A Partnership of the Town of Gilbert
and the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce



Updated August 2011

Background

Successful small businesses are the cornerstone to any community's fiscal stability. Gilbert has experienced tremendous growth in all areas of commercial, employment, and manufacturing types of businesses. Specific emphasis has been placed on the attraction of businesses and, given the stage of our development, rightly so.

In order to achieve community fiscal sustainability as we head toward build-out, we must also focus on how to retain businesses in our community and encourage them to grow and succeed.

The success of small businesses has been a concern of community leaders for quite some time and we've had many discussions on various avenues to help these owners as they set up shop, grow their customer base and size of business.

The Town of Gilbert and the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce have partnered for decades on building our business base and have worked collaboratively on programs to encourage this success. The following programs outline the collaborative effort between the Town and the Chamber under the umbrella of BUSINESS LINKS.



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Shop Gilbert

The goal of this campaign is to get the word out to residents and businesses about the importance of shopping local and how doing so provides much needed sales tax dollars to provide programs and services to the community. Businesses are encouraged to enroll in the program and to display a Shop Gilbert decal in their place of business. There is no cost for a business to participate in the SHOP GILBERT campaign and it is open to all businesses in Gilbert. Other community partners, including Gilbert Public Schools and Higley Unified School District, assist in the distribution of program collateral material, including bookmarks and sustainable shopping bags.

Town of Gilbert:

- Provided \$10,000 seed money to promote the campaign which is used for marketing material and website design expenses only; and
- Assists with Channel 11 SHOP GILBERT broadcast series and distributes SHOP GILBERT bags at the monthly Student of the Month presentations.

Gilbert Chamber of Commerce:

- Provides administrative staff to manage the campaign to include website, committee, communications and marketing, and campaign management.

The Gilbert Republic:

- Designed the logo and tagline for the campaign;
- Provides a ¼ page advertisement for SHOP GILBERT businesses up to 3 times per week at no charge; and
- Publishes monthly community editorial.

For more information go to: www.gilbertaz.com/shopgilbert





Small Business Assistance

Providing Small Business Assistance continues to be a priority for the Chamber and Town; in an effort to provide accurate, up-to-date information we are working together to provide various educational resources to help businesses become more successful.

FRONT RUNNER ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAM

The FRONT RUNNER Entrepreneurial Program allows Gilbert business owners to study their business in an intense 10-week setting with other business owners. Previous FRONT RUNNER programs placed a strategic focus on growing business through optimizing business tools, market research and analysis, using financial tools, one-on-one coaching, and guest speakers providing expertise on a variety of topics. Previous classes placed an emphasis on social media marketing as well as survival tips during this economic period. A focus on technology training is new in 2011; course content will include The Lean Startup; produce market fit; Guerilla Marketing; revenue and business models; managing cash, company culture, and financing resources.

Town of Gilbert:

- Manages the administrative duties such as securing consultants to teach the program and location;
- Manages the funding requirements and follow-up with participants;
- Coordinates with the Chamber for marketing messages based on potential changes to program;
- Provides demographic updates as to the success of program; and
- Organizes Alumni events.

Gilbert Chamber of Commerce:

- Manages the media and marketing duties of the program;
- Assists in bidding process for catering; and
- Provides a one-time \$100 dues discount for all members who graduate from the program.

SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Gilbert Chamber's SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL identifies needs of small businesses and provides educational and mentoring opportunities to address these needs. A social media workshop series has been created to help small businesses navigate through the muddy waters of business uses as it relates to social media. A mentoring program has been established to connect business owners with a specific need with an expert in that industry through a structured mentoring program. Monthly business tips will be provided through the Chamber's Business Review. With recommendation from this council, printed and on-line brochures were produced to outline the steps to receiving a certificate of occupancy from the Town of Gilbert and the rules for temporary signage. Free SCORE counseling is also made available to all businesses at the Chamber office.

Town of Gilbert: Provides updated information on brochures and posts information on their website.

Gilbert Chamber of Commerce: Manages and funds these activities and regularly updates the on-line brochures as needed.

Partners in Progress

Partners In Progress is a partnership with the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce Town of Gilbert Economic Development Division and Development Services Department, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, and ASU Polytechnic to promote and facilitate a healthy Gilbert business environment for growth, expansion, and retention within targeted industry sectors.

- Engage targeted industries aligned with the Town's Business Development Plan with the Gilbert Chamber, Town officials, education and other key partners,
- Build networks for collaboration of industries for mutual benefit,
- Create opportunities for growth of industry sectors,
- Create opportunities for expansion of individual companies,
- Sustain an environment that supports retention of existing businesses and industry sectors

Each partner will appoint designees to serve on the PIP committee and will contribute resources to the program, either through in-kind services, dedicated dollars, or assistance in securing financial investments; promote the program as a partnership; and will report opportunities to collaborate through the PIP on events scheduled by their particular entity.

Town of Gilbert Economic Development Department and Development Services Division:

- Provides lists of businesses that will be used for consideration of invitation to participate in the PIP survey/events; and
- Serves as the lead role in the surveying process with designated key businesses.
- Provides resources and follow-up regarding Town issues identified.

Gilbert Chamber of Commerce:

- Serves as the managing partner of the PIP, including
 - Oversight and maintenance of the database;
 - Planning and execution of events;
 - Staff assistance for meeting management;
 - Drafting marketing materials;
 - Managing media coverage; and
 - Securing financial investments to cover resources to manage program and events.

Chandler-Gilbert Community College and ASU Polytechnic:

- Provides faculty and curriculum to develop the survey;
- Prepares students to conduct the survey portion of the PIP;
- Will create the database.
 - The database will be developed to capture information from the survey that will also allow appropriate report generation.

Tourism Promotion

The Gilbert Chamber of Commerce serves as the visitor center in the Heritage Village Center and tourism management team as a contractual partner with the Town of Gilbert. With the opening of several hotels and SanTan Village Mall along the SanTan Freeway and other tourism locations through the community, the Chamber has established a Tourism Advisory Committee.

The purpose of the committee is to identify marketing opportunities to promote Gilbert as a designation spot for visitors, families, and residents of other communities in an effort to help tourism-related businesses success but also to provide financial sustainability for the Town of Gilbert.

A five-year strategic plan has been developed to set a solid foundation for future efforts to include the www.visitgilbertaz.com and www.visitgateway.com websites, promotion in key publications and online opportunities, as well as, expanding regional partnerships to leverage marketing dollars. Due to current and future on-line opportunities efforts will shift from the traditional visitor center to a much more sophisticated marketing plan.

At the end of the five-year strategic plan it is recommended the Town Council evaluate the next steps in Tourism marketing and management.

Town of Gilbert:

- Serves as the Town's liaison to the Tourism Advisory Committee;
- Provides funding for tourism-related activities under this contractual arrangement through a portion of the annual bed-tax collections.

Gilbert Chamber of Commerce:

- Manages the visitors' center, the Tourism Advisory Committee, on-line and printed marketing materials, messaging, and identifies trends and new avenues to increase tourism activities in the Town of Gilbert.
- Provides measureable data for the Town Council to review efforts.