



Business Outreach Talking Points

Here are some quick tips on how to reach out to local business owners.

On average, about ¼ of the businesses that you ask will participate in this campaign—if you speak to 20 business owners, expect that only 5 will sign on. Set a realistic goal for your team, and don't get discouraged if the first few owners aren't interested. Statistically, the more you ask, the more success you'll have.

Tip: Keep the conversation short and simple—try not to overwhelm the business owner with too many details or statistics. Personalize the interaction: use your own experiences and energy to convince the owner to sign on.

Introduction:

Hi, my name is _____. I live here in the area and am a big supporter of local business, in part because I think supporting the local economy is great way to begin dealing with climate change.

Problem:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is bad for small business, so I'm volunteering with a national effort to expose the harmful activities that the Chamber. While the majority of local chambers of commerce are on board with clean energy solutions and environmental protections, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is one of the biggest spenders in Washington DC in opposition to those issues. They are lobbying against the Clean Air Act and clean energy innovation, and spend millions in support of climate change deniers during elections, and they do it in your name.

Solution:

We want to stop the destructive activities of the U.S. Chamber, so that it can no longer lobby and corrupt our democracy with impunity.

Strategy/Ask:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has proven over and over again that it isn't acting in the best interests of your business or our community. Will you join hundreds of other small businesses and local chambers in declaring "The US Chamber doesn't speak for me"? You'll help build a critical mass representing the true voice of business, and help convince hundreds of municipal chambers of commerce to leave the U.S. Chamber.

Some additional talking points:

- The US Chamber of Commerce claims to speak for 3 million members—average Americans running small and large businesses alike—but just 16 companies comprised 55% of their revenue in 2009.
- The U.S. Chamber has lost its credibility and has come under scrutiny for a variety of unethical and unjust business practices: defending the Wall street pay practices that contributed to the financial crisis, running false ads on health care/financial reform/lawsuit abuse, and spending obscene amounts of money to deregulate federal environmental protections and question well-established climate science, all in the name of huge profits for its biggest contributors.
- Many large businesses, like Apple, Nike and PG&E, have already quit the chamber, and many local chambers have already distanced themselves from the U.S. Chamber as well,

because of their inflated membership numbers, undemocratic structure, extreme right-wing rhetoric and anti-climate policies. The CEO of the Greater New York Chamber of Commerce has stated: "They don't represent me."

Here are a few ways to sweeten the deal when speaking to your local businesses:

+ Suggest to the owner that you want this campaign to be beneficial for their business, and that you will organize your local group to specifically patronize the first businesses to sign the declaration. You can use the Carrotmob approach—one we've found to be particularly useful: <http://www.carrotmob.org/>

If the business owner agrees to join the campaign, ask them to do the following:

+ Sign on to our nationwide declaration that "The U.S. Chamber Doesn't Speak for Me." Ask them to put a window sign in their store front, and see if they'd be interested in offering a quote as to why they feel the Chamber doesn't speak for them. Make sure to record the information using the form below.

+ See if they'll agree to recruit five other local business owners to declare that "The U.S. Chamber Doesn't Speak for Me."

+ Suggest that they ask the local and state chambers of commerce if they still have ties to the U.S. Chamber, and if so to consider ending them.

Make sure to log all the results at <http://chamber.350.org/declaration> so we can keep track of how many businesses have signed the declaration.

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Business Name

of Employees
(estimate)

Business Address

Business phone #

Name of Business owner or rep.

Business owner email

Quote: