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THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MCDP

The Marion County Development Partnership (MCDP) serves as both the local Chamber of Commerce and the economic development organization for Columbia and Marion County. That dual role makes membership especially valuable for local businesses — it means you're part of something larger than yourself while also directly contributing to the community's growth.

Here are five well-documented benefits of joining:

1. Make Valuable Business Connections

Membership puts you in the middle of a supportive network of fellow business owners, professionals, and community leaders. These connections often lead to new opportunities, referrals, and collaborations that help your business grow. Being part of this network means you always have a sounding board for new ideas and a community of peers invested in your success.

2. Build Credibility and Trust

Customers notice when a business is part of the chamber. Research shows that when consumers know a small business belongs to its local chamber, they are **44% more likely to think favorably of it and 63% more likely to purchase goods or services from it in the future**. Simply displaying your membership signals that your business is reputable, community-minded, and invested in long-term success.

3. Increase Visibility in the Community

Membership keeps your business in front of people. From being listed in chamber directories to having opportunities for recognition at events, members benefit from increased exposure that reinforces their presence in the local marketplace. This visibility not only raises awareness with customers but also positions your business as part of the community's larger growth story.

4. Access Resources and Support

Chambers have a long history of being the "voice of business." Through workshops, training opportunities, and shared resources, membership can provide practical tools to help you strengthen your operations and adapt to changing times. And because MCDP also leads

economic development, members benefit from being aligned with the organization working to attract new industries, investment, and opportunities to Marion County.

5. Contribute to Community Growth

Joining MCDP is more than a business decision — it's a community investment. As the local chamber and economic development agency, MCDP works to improve the overall business climate, attract new jobs, and strengthen the economy. When your business is part of that mission, you help build a healthier environment for businesses, families, and future generations.

Why It Matters

An MCDP membership is more than a listing — **it's a partnership**. By joining, you're not only investing in your own business but also partnering with the organization that works every day to strengthen Marion County's economy and community. Together, members and MCDP create a stronger voice for local business, attract new opportunities, and build a healthier environment where businesses and families can thrive.