

## Georgia Certified Chamber Executive Designation Application

### My views on performance as a Chamber Executive

Evaluating yourself is never an easy task. Personally, it is easier to be critical rather than celebratory. During my 9 years at the Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) I've had opportunities for both. In reflection, I wish I would have taken more opportunities to celebrate successes. As Chamber executives, we are really servants to our member businesses, our boards, the community and our elected officials. The true challenge becomes finding a balance. This is something I continue to strive for.

When I was hired as CEO of the Chamber my initial goal was to apply my knowledge and experience effectively, yet be open to exploring new ideas. After all, I had no experience in the Chamber industry other than an outsider looking in. Each day has provided an opportunity to grow and develop new skills. I have been a construction manager, a mediator, and a plumber to name a few. The important lesson to remember is the need to remain flexible and open minded. We work in an ever-changing environment, one that requires us to be cognoscente of our business surroundings and act accordingly.

Naturally I am a list maker. I do not feel accomplished unless the list has been checked off at the end of the day. Early on I had to make a choice to forego my "list addiction" and become more flexible or go insane. I have now become a master at drag and drop onto tomorrow's list. I love the opportunities that come with this journey as the CEO. My comfort zone is to be the worker bee. I thrive on working behind the scenes and serving people; however, I find my place in a leadership role that puts me in the spotlight with a big red target. I have realized that the quicker we become like ducks and let things slide off our backs – the more apt we are to succeed.

Success comes with a price. After a couple of years in the position, I found myself searching for leadership. My previous job provided outstanding leadership through the staff and board. One of my mentors harshly reminded me that it is lonely at the top. While this is a true statement, I gained a renewed determination to ensure my staff never felt they were lacking the leadership they needed from me. This is another area of continued focus as my perception may be very different than that of my team.

I often question what determines success in an industry that is so multifaceted and so similar to a roller coaster. Sir Winston Churchill eloquently stated, "*Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm*". This quote has created a philosophy for me to live by as it relates to success. So as long as I remain enthusiastic about what I am doing...I have succeeded! There have been and will continue to be failures to teach me and hopefully there will be many more opportunities to celebrate with enthusiasm.

While working with Bob Harris on our strategic plan he mentioned to the Board of Directors that while we may be a small Chamber in number of members, we did not function like a small Chamber. This was the highest form of flattery I could have been given as this is a personal passion of mine. I truly believe in a higher standard. Even though we are a small rural community we can shine just as bright as the larger metropolitan Chambers. When GACCE

announced the Georgia Certified Chamber program, I knew it was something we had to accomplish on the first round and I am proud to say we did.

I commend those with the vision for GACCE to offer a certification that Chamber Executives and Chamber organizations of all sizes can obtain. GACCE has put forth criteria that shows outsiders that our industry has standards for its professionals and organizations. This designation demonstrates a person's commitment to the industry and their personal development. I am hopeful that my accomplishments and involvement over the past nine years have made me worthy of consideration for the Certified Chamber Executive designation.