



ST. JOHNS
C O U N T Y
CHAMBER
O F C O M M E R C E

BRAND STANDARDS

A COMMUNICATION STYLE GUIDE



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USING THIS GUIDE:

The purpose of this guide is to develop a consistent brand, a set of identifying standards, policies, and procedures. This guide serves as an aid for third parties, such as designers, printers, specialty companies, and others producing communications resources and materials for SJCCC.

These are designed to ensure that the Chamber is promoted in a formalized, professional and uniform manner, and to protect the marks from infringement.

This guide is meant to develop a consistent brand, a set of identifying standards as developed by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. These apply to all reproductions of Chamber marks whether in a traditional print or electronic form, including the Internet.

The graphic standards provided here will ensure accurate and appropriate use of branding elements.

INTRODUCTION

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce has a unique opportunity to distinguish itself in the county as both the network to help businesses succeed and create new economic opportunities for citizens in our community. The Chamber should be the lead messenger of St. Johns County's history and future, showcasing our county as the premier destination to live, shop, play, and vacation. A consistent image and message is critical in advancing these efforts.

As Chamber staff, we are on the front lines of communicating and maintaining the integrity of our message. This guide has been prepared by the Chamber's Communications Manager to help you develop communications and tell the audience who we are, what we do, and what we stand for. This guide provides guidelines on leveraging our visual assets, such as our logos and brand color palette. More importantly, it provides guidance on the Chamber's voice used in messaging, look, and style.

The guide features a wide variety of information, including how to receive communications assistance, access the tools you need to communicate effectively in your role, and aid third parties (such as designers, printers, specialty companies and others producing communications and materials for SJCCC). It also provides a detailed overview of the different ways the Chamber communicates.

The Chamber's brand and voice are key to ensuring success in our region.



BRAND PERSONALITY AND VOICE

OUR PERSONALITY

Simply put, a brand's personality is the set of human characteristics you attribute to that brand. Or, put another way — it's how you'd describe a brand if it were a person. A brand's personality shines through in brand messaging, images, and overarching marketing campaigns.

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce as-a-person is reliable, professional, and dependable. We are eager to assist our members and are their biggest cheerleaders. We strive to provide them with the best service we can to enable them to grow to the best business they can be.

OUR VOICE

Brand Voice represents your brand's unique perspective, and the values you stand for. Brand tone of voice is how your brand chooses to communicate with your audience, including the choice of words, communication style, and emotional tone. The tone of voice also varies depending on each communication channel:

Social Media:	Polite and conversational
Media Releases:	Professional
Website:	Plain spoken and matter of fact

MISSION STATEMENT

To deliver continuous value-added service to our members and the community, resulting in a business environment and quality of life where existing businesses have the opportunity to prosper, and new businesses find it attractive to locate in St. Johns County.

OUR VISION

To be considered the premier business and community organization in St. Johns County, with a strong leadership position in the community.

OUR VALUES

Councils:

Our councils help members grow their businesses by providing leadership and mentorship opportunities, cost-effective education, and networking.

Economic Development:

Our Economic Development events help business and community leaders who want to elevate their networks and opportunities by providing access to expertise.

Public Policy:

Our Public Policy efforts provide advocacy, access and influence for businesses.

Leadership St. Johns

Our Leadership St. Johns program helps business, government, and community leaders who want to develop relationships and county knowledge by experiencing a unique program that accelerates the development of community leadership skills.

Events:

Our events help members by providing cost-effective access to contacts, information and insight into trends to grow their business.

Emergency Services (ESF-14):

Our Emergency Services, in partnership with the County, provides interactive access to crucial information and resources before, during, and after an emergency to limit disruption and mitigate risk.

Ambassadors:

Ambassadors engage and guide members on our services while providing community outreach.

Chamber 101:

Chamber 101 introduces members to our programs, services, and staff empowering members to activate or customize their experience.

Tourism Development:

Our Tourism Development initiative helps Ponte Vedra businesses attract visitors and generate revenue by promoting authentic destination experiences

ESF-14 Emergency Services

Our Emergency Services, in partnership with the County, provides interactive access to crucial information and resources before, during, and after an emergency to limit disruption and mitigate risk.

Pitch Factory

The Pitch Factory helps entrepreneurs by providing access to the timeline for marketing and growing their business.

Advertising

Our advertising opportunities help members who want to market their business and gain customers by providing easy and cost-effective advertising opportunities.



LOGO & SPECIFICATIONS

This is our master logo. The master logo is the primary version that should be used across all communications where possible.

The SJC Chamber is a trusted resource that represents over 1,000 businesses in St. Johns County, Florida, as well as serves as a voice in public policy and economic development, including tourism and hospitality. The flags convey movement and progress, and create a sense of celebration and triumph.

The red, gold, and blue create a rich color palette for a modern, growing county, yet pays tribute to the historical European legacy of St. Augustine at the same time.



The master logo is made up of the language “St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce” and the flag image.

The system is designed to be flexible and work in multiple formats, different horizontal and stacked configurations and different colors, small and large sizes, and different media.

Do not attempt to recreate or create a new logo for your organization partnering with the Chamber. Contact the Communications Manager for an approved logo design.

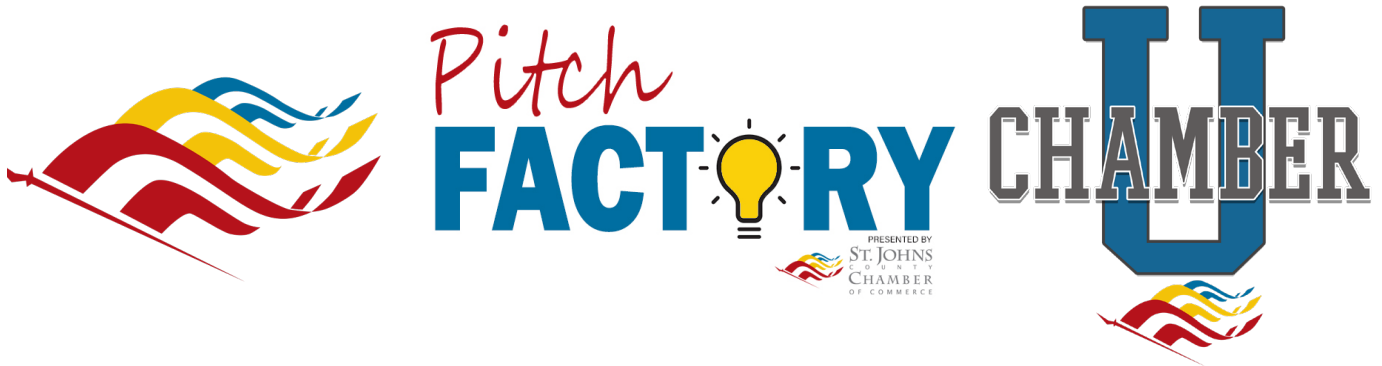


OTHER LOGOS

The complete set of logos for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce covers all their various committees and councils. Below you will find the various version that have been created for use. Any older versions or self created versions of logos for committee and councils below should not be used. Retain the orientation and relationship of the elements within each logo depicted below (DO NOT CHANGE THEM IN ANY WAY).



OTHER LOGOS CONTINUED



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



HISTORIC ST. AUGUSTINE AREA COUNCIL



SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL



HISTORIC ST. AUGUSTINE AREA COUNCIL



WOMEN WITH VISION COUNCIL



NORTH BUSINESS COUNCIL



TOURISM & HOSPITALITY COUNCIL

LOGO USE POLICY

The descriptor should not be used in lieu of the complete logo or by itself as a logo. When using the name of the Chamber in text, use the same font and size as the rest of the document.

The Chamber logo should not be combined with or made part of any logo. If used together with another logo in the same piece or field of vision, the Chamber logo should always be the dominant element. The other logo(s) should be separate and subordinate.

Do not attempt to recreate the logo by using computer type fonts, stretching, distorting, moving the position of the flag or the text. Reproducible logos are available from the Communications Manager.



APPROPRIATE FILE FORMATS & IMAGE RESOLUTION

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce logo is available through the Communications Manager in a variety of file formats, including: Illustrator, JPEG, PNG, and PDF. If there is a need for a different format, it should be requested from the Communications Manager. Do not reformat the logo unless permission is granted.

Depending upon how the collateral piece is to be produced, different processes will require different formats. PNG is typically used in printing, JPEG in digital design, Illustrator files (sometimes PNG) are generally required for signage, screen printing, and promotional items.

NOTE: Larger files can always be saved down to a smaller resolution, but NEVER adjust the resolution of a small file just by changing the dpi. This will result in a heavily pixelated image and is unsuitable.

COLLATERAL MATERIALS AND PRINT ADVERTISING

Do not create your own print ads and do not allow publications to produce ads on your behalf. Should a need arise for print materials, please contact the Communications Manager.

INFOGRAPHICS

For generic data infographics, we use a simple combination of an icon + text. Numbers and significant data is bold and scale of text is adjusted to fill the space accordingly.

LOGO USAGE IN OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS AND WEB PAGES

The logo should float in a “clear are” separated from other text or visuals. It should also be kept away from the end of the page. The separation must be at least the width of the flags at it’s widest point on the right and left of the logo, and at least the height of the flags above and below the logo. See schematic:



OFFICIAL CHAMBER STATIONARY

A stationery package has been developed to maintain high readability, quick visual identity of the institution, and simplicity of address information.

All Chamber departments, councils and programs of these entities must use the standard letterhead for official correspondence.

The official letterhead, envelope and business card is printed in four color process for the flags. The bar at the top of the letterhead and the back of the business card will be the red, blue or gold designated for the appropriate department or initiative.

The stationery may also be printed in black or monochrome in the appropriate red, gold or blue PMS color designated for the department or initiative.

Do not attempt to recreate the Chamber stationery. Please order from the Chamber Programs and Marketing Department.



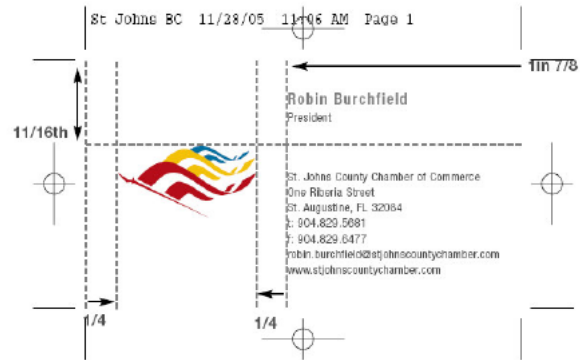


Margins for Word-generated letters should be set at 2 ½ inches from the top, 1 inch from the left, 1 inch from the right and 1 inch from the bottom. If using the second sheet, set the top margin at 1 ½ inches.



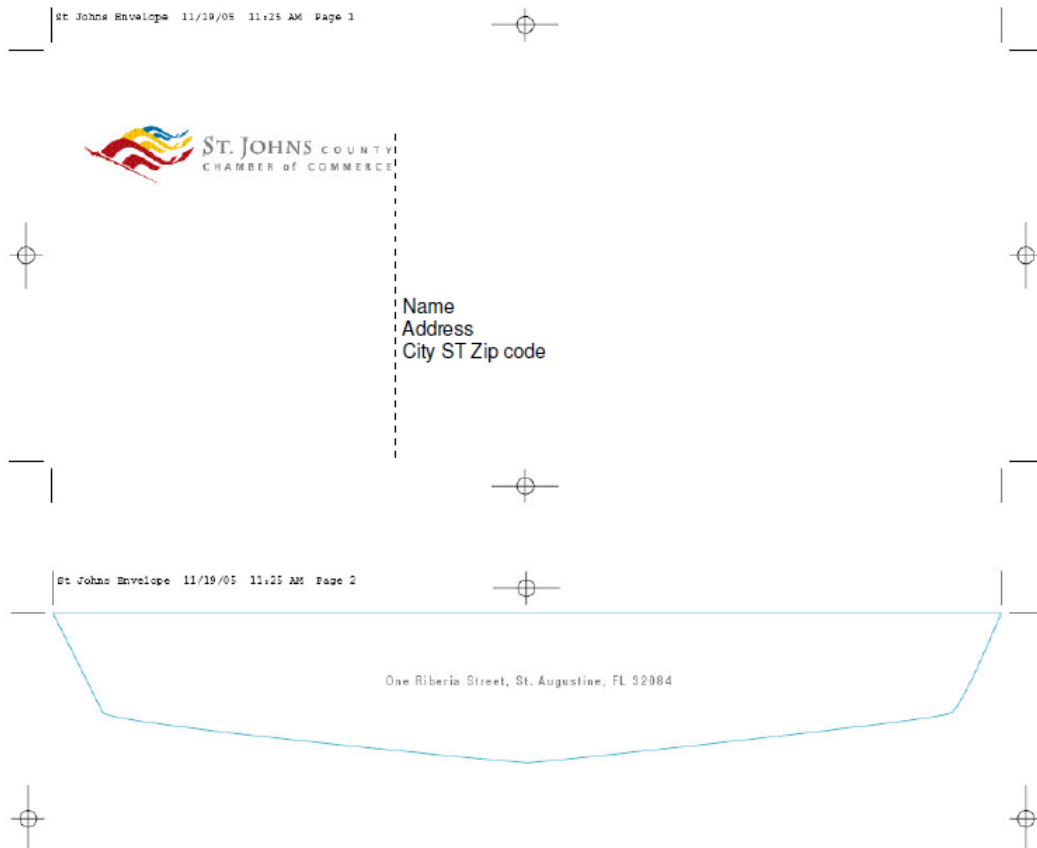
BUSINESS CARD

Business cards should be ordered from the Chamber Programs and Marketing Department. Card blanks have been printed by designated Chamber printers.



ENVELOPE

When generating envelopes from a word processing program, set the left margin in line with the right hand side of the logo printed on the envelope as indicated.



EMAIL SIGNATURES

Email signatures should look like the below examples. You can include your headshot if you so wish, or you can leave it as text only. The links to the social media sites need to be in your signature. We are featuring Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter in our signatures, and those links must be there. If you need assistance in creating your signature, please contact the Communications Manager.



Isabelle Renault

President/ CEO

Phone: 904-829-5681

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Suite 405-406
St. Augustine, FL 32086

www.SJCChamber.com



Jamie Johnson

Communications Manager

Phone: 904-829-5681 x54

Cell: 904-386-3866

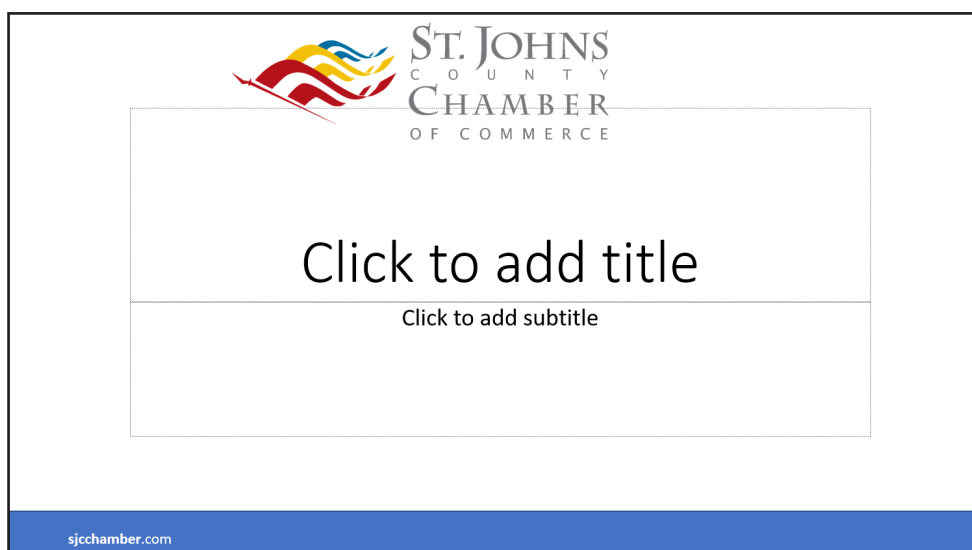
100 Southpark Blvd.
Suite 405-406
St. Augustine, FL 32086

www.SJCChamber.com



POWERPOINT

A Powerpoint template is provided in the N-Drive as **SJCCC PPT TEMPLATE**. If you need assistance locating it, please see the Communications Manager.



OFFICIAL COLOR PALETTE

The official primary colors from the chamber logo are listed below. These will be important when communicating how to correctly reproduce your colors with various vendors. All files have types have corresponding colors preselected, refer to file types on the following pages for additional information. In most instances you will use a CMYK or Websafe/RGB build of the colors listed below.



CMYK	C: 26.59 M: 100 Y: 100 K: 27.07	C: 8.9 M: 16.27 Y: 85.25 K: 0	C: 89.29 M: 59.68 Y: 26.88 K: 7.28	C: 0 M: 0 Y: 0 K: 100 65% tint	C: 0.54 M: 0.52 Y: 0.3 K: 0	C: 0 M: 0 Y: 0 K: 100
RGB	R: 146 G: 20 B: 24	R: 235 G: 203 B: 71	R: 37 G: 97 B: 137	R: 0 G: 0 B: 0 65% tint	R: 252 G: 251 B: 251	R: 0 G: 0 B: 0
Hex	#921418	#ebcb47	#256189	#000000 65% tint	#fcfbfb	#000000
PMS uncoated	1805U	7405U	307U	Cool Grey 5U 65% tint		
PMS coated	1805C	7406C	308C	Cool Grey 5U 65% tint		

TYPOGRAPHY

Typography is fundamental in creating the Chamber brand identity. It is a powerful brand signifier, bringing personality and consistency to all communications.

When used correctly, typography can convey image and feeling every bit as much and sometimes more than simple graphics.

Gil Sans Nova has been chosen as the Chamber font family. Arial has been chosen for use in the occurrences where Gil Sans Nova is not available. It is suggested for body copy use in electronic applications, such as Microsoft Word.

Tragan Pro has been chosen as our headline and accent font. In cases when this are not available, please use Lucinda Handwriting.

Other fonts can be chosen by the President, Vice President, and Communications Manager for design and artwork purposes. If you would like a specific font used for your event, please contact the Communications Manager.

Special Note: For materials presented electronically (Word documents posted online or PowerPoints) Arial must be used. Systems other than Chamber equipment may not have Gil Sans Nova (Arial is a standard font for all computers). The exception is PDF documents. If you export as an Acrobat PDF you can embed Futura and it will be maintained.

Ab

Gil Sans Nova (Primary)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv
Ww Xx Yy Zz

AB

TRAGAN PRO (HEADLINES & ACCENT)

AA BB CC DD EE FF GG HH
II JJ KK LL MM NN OO PP
QQ RR SS TT UU VV WW XX
YY ZZ

Ab

Arial (Secondary)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv
Ww Xx Yy Zz

WEBSITE

EVENTS

Events listed on the calendar should all look the same regardless of its host. This includes header images, speaker headshots, text contents, and meeting details.

- The header image should be included in the text of the event.
 - Make the width of the image 700 pixels when inserting it, and make sure the lock is closed so it keeps its dimensions.
 - At both HSpace and VSpace, put the number 25. This allows you to have some white space around the image so the text is not up against it.

Small Business Council Meeting - 6.16.22



Overcoming Obstacles in Work & Life Small Business Council Meeting

When you meet Randall Crosby, you'll meet a man who has accomplished every goal he sets. He is a successful small business owner, triathlete, and public speaker. Many would say he's a man with a clear vision for his life; and yet, Randall is also legally blind. He became legally blind at age 27 due to a rare, inherited disorder. When it happened, he was forced to quit his job and reinvent his life as an entrepreneur. Join us to hear Randall's inspiring story and learn how approaching your goals with a different point of view can help you achieve success.

Small Business Council Meeting - 6.16...

[Register »](#)

[Set a Reminder](#)

Date and Time

Thursday Jun 16, 2022
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM EDT

Location

Keller Williams, 2nd Floor (Ameris Bank Building)

100 Southpark Blvd Suite 201, St. Augustine, FL 32086

Fees/Admission

Free for members
Future Members and Guests,
contact Sam Ruiz at
sam.ruiz@sjcchamber.com

Contact Information

Sam Ruiz, 904-687-2056
[Send Email](#)

- When inserting the headshot of the speaker, make the width 240. Make sure the lock is closed so it can keep its dimensions.
 - At both HSpace and VSpace, put the number 25. This allows you to have some white space around the image so the text is not up against it.
 - Make sure the alignment for the headshot is left.
- When adding your text:
 - Put the title of the meeting first, Arial 18 pt font bold and centered.
 - List the council beneath, Arial 14 pt font, bold and centered.
 - List the details on what the topic of the meeting is next, Arial 14 pt font.
- When adding event information:
 - In 'Location Description' put only the name of the location and specific details to assist members in finding it.
 - Only put information in the 'Date/Time Description' location if there are specific times for specific things. I.E. 11:30 a.m. Networking, 12 p.m. Lunch 12:30 Event Begins
 - In 'Fee Description' put the following, changing the cost for members as needed:
 - Free for members
 - Future Members and Guests, contact Sam Ruiz at sam.ruiz@sjcchamber.com



- Be sure to fill address of location in to the Map Image section so Google Maps can be linked to the location.
- When listing contact information for your event, list Sam Ruiz for St. Augustine events and Karen Everett for Ponte Vedra events.

WEBSITE

OTHER PAGE NEEDS

EVENT BRANDING

Our priority is to protect the integrity of our branding in any situations where our logo needs to work with other logos or design marks.

- Where the Chamber is the lead sponsor or facilitator, we should always be separated by the use of space to allow our logo to remain a focal point.
- If we have equal billing, logos should have equal space between them. Keep the Chamber logo or chamber event artwork at the top of the signage.
- Never use the logo where any of the type or wording is not legible or readable.
- Always use the right logo color lockup and do not produce the logo in any other color



ST. JOHNS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BREAKFAST

Presenting Sponsor:



ST. AUGUSTINE & ST. JOHNS COUNTY
BOARD OF REALTORS®
STJOHNSREALTORS.COM

Capital Sponsor:



Sustaining Sponsor:



Growth Series Sponsors:












THANK YOU SPONSORS!








ST. JOHNS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
2022 Chamber Golf Classic Sponsor





MARKETING COLLATERAL

FLYERS, POSTERS, AND OTHER PRINT PRODUCTS

Print ads should reflect the branding established by the Chamber, following branding guidelines. Do not allow publications to produce ads for Chamber events without establishing a review process through the Chamber office.

When designing flyers or posters, strive for simplicity. Avoid adding type on photos and other graphics, unless it is clearly readable and the type does not interfere with the subject below it. For example: Text in a large area of sky or simple area is more acceptable than type over a person's image. In general, make sure the type is readable and there is enough contrast between the type and the color or image.

Avoid huge blocks of type, or small, unreadable type. If the document contains a lot of information, try breaking it up to easily digestible areas with creative use of lines, color, or graphics. If using more than one color, try to use complimentary color.

Provide enough space to clearly display the Chamber logo so that there is a clear presence and understanding of Chamber involvement or sponsorship.

The Communications Manager is available for consultation on materials being produced by an event committee or program group. Should a need arise for print materials, please contact the Chamber office.

EMAILS AND NEWSLETTERS

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce sends out weekly emails through Constant Contact with a calendar of events planned, ribbon cuttings, and other news. We also send out information to several mailing lists of various topics, including specific council news, public policy updates and news, economic development news, and letters from the President.

- When creating a list of events, alternate sides so two photos are not on top of each other.
- The title of the meeting should be in Arial, 18 point font, bold with the name of the council under it in Arial, 14 point font, bold.
- The day, time, location, and brief summary of the meeting or event should be in Arial, 14 point font, with bold text then plain text.
- Text under the photo that gives the speaker's name, title, and business, should be in Arial, 12 point font, bold and italicized
- The register button should be light blue with white text in Arial, 14 point font. Make sure the button is linked to the event or meeting webpage.

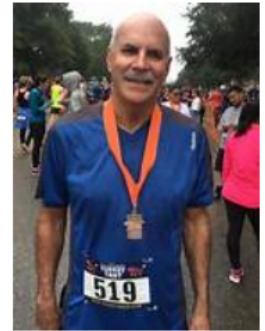


THIS WEEK CHAMBER

Overcoming Obstacles in Work & Life Small Business Council Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 16
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Location: Keller Williams, 2nd Floor (Ameris Bank Building)
[100 Southpark Blvd Suite 201, St. Augustine, FL 32086](#)
Cost: Free for Members
Future Members, please contact [Sam Ruiz](#)

When you meet Randall Crosby, you'll meet a man who has accomplished every goal he sets. He is a successful small business owner, triathlete, and public speaker. Many would say he's a man with a clear vision for his life; and yet, Randall is also legally blind. He became legally blind at age 27 due to a rare, inherited disorder. When it happened, he was forced to quit his job and reinvent his life as an entrepreneur.



Randall Crosby

Join us to hear Randall's inspiring story and learn how approaching your goals with a different point of view can help you achieve success.

[Register](#)



Kelly Wilson
Deputy Director
Emergency Management

Hurricane Preparedness for Businesses and the 2022 Predictions Ponte Vedra Chamber at Noon

Date: Thursday, June 16
Time: 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Location: Pusser's Bar and Grille
[816 Highway, A1A N Ponte Vedra Beach FL 32082](#)
Cost: \$30 for Members
Future Members, please contact [Karen Everett](#)

Kelly Wilson has served St. Johns County since 2006, beginning as the Emergency Management Planner, Emergency Management Coordinator and now as the Deputy Director of Emergency Management. Ms. Wilson specializes in Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning including hazard mitigation planning and continuity of operations planning. She also maintains their social media presence and coordinates public outreach to the community.

[Register](#)

CONTENT STRATEGY

LANGUAGE

Messaging is the cumulative effect of the words we choose to use, how we use them and the overall impression they make. It embodies and expresses our business philosophy, allowing us to create an emotional connection with our audiences. It is our standard to follow AP Style in all our writing. The following points are it's important to remain consistent when writing and talking about the following points:

USE OF THE WORD "CHAMBER"

The first reference to the Chamber in written material should always be the "St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce." Subsequent references to the Chamber can be shortened to the "Chamber." We recommend the occasional mixing of both references.

When addressing our Ponte Vedra Beach Division, it should be called the "St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division."

The Chamber is to be capitalized whenever you are referring to it as an entity, but lower case when discussing events and programs.

- The Chamber had a great time at Kelly Farms this week.
- It's a chamber event, so I'm sure a lot of businesses will show up.
- There is always a representative from the Chamber during council meetings.
- Allowing the chamber members to receive a discount is part of their membership perks.

AP STYLE

The **Associated Press (AP) Stylebook** is a writing guide for journalists. It is published and updated annually to reflect changes in writing style and new guidelines. Since its initial publication in 1953, the AP Stylebook has become a must have reference for writers, editors, students and professionals. It provides fundamental guidelines for spelling, language, punctuation, usage and journalistic style. The AP Stylebook is the reference of choice for any chamber publications. Listed below is an abbreviated list of the grammar and punctuation guidelines to which all chamber writing should adhere. For your convenience, select Style Guide items are listed in alphabetical order:

ABBREVIATIONS

Avoid abbreviations except as necessary. When used, capitalize abbreviations of capitalized words, such as Aug. for August or Mon for Monday. In tables and calendars, there should be no punctuation after abbreviations.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Capitalize specific degrees and their abbreviations following proper names. Lowercase the subject of study if it is not part of the formal name of the degree. Set the generic or informal form of the degree (ie: bachelor's) in lowercase.

- John Doe graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Mercer University.
- Linda Smith earned her master's degree in public relations from the University of North Florida.
- Susan Jones graduated from Flagler College with an M.A. in literature. (note: use periods with the abbreviated form)

ACRONYMS

List the full name or title followed by the acronym (uppercase in parentheses) in the first reference on a page. Then, use the acronym.

APOSTROPHES

Form plurals without an apostrophe (ie: Agents and Brokers license). Do not use an apostrophe when referring to a decade.

BRIDGES

Capitalize names of individual bridges.

BUILDINGS

Capitalize names of individual buildings.

BULLET POINTS

If the sequence isn't important, use bullets instead of numbers or letters in a list. Use solid black circles only. Use bullet punctuation consistently (no punctuation after a sentence fragment; period at the end of a full sentence). Use parallel construction to increase readability and consistency.

CAPITALIZATION

In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Some words and phrases that require capitalization are listed throughout this guide. When in doubt, refer to the AP Stylebook or a dictionary. Full names of legislative, deliberative, administrative, and judicial bodies; departments; bureaus; and offices are usually capitalized. Adjectives derived from them are lowercased, as are paraphrased or incomplete designations, except abbreviations.

CHAIR/CHAIRMAN/CHAIRPERSON/CHAIRWOMAN

Use chairman or chairwoman if the gender is known and capitalize before a name. For a neutral reference, use chair (chairperson is used only if it's the organization's formal title for an office).

COLON

The colon is primarily used to introduce a list, often after expressions such as the following or as follows. It is also used to emphasize a word, words, or sentence. When used this way, the colon replaces such words as "that is," "namely," and "for example."

COMMAS

Use an Oxford (or serial) comma between the last two items in a series of three or more. For instance, "I like cake, pizza, and ice cream."

COUNCIL MEMBER

Two words.

EMAIL

No hyphen.

ETC.

Short for etcetera, etc. means “and other things.” Etc. ends in a period, even mid sentence. It is traditionally enclosed in commas when it doesn’t end a sentence. Do not use etc. with a list that gives only one example: there should be at least two items listed.

HOME PAGE

Two words.

HYPHENS

Use in fractions whether nouns or adjectives (ie: one-third) and adjectives made up of two or more words (ie: full-service facility). Unless used in tables, hyphens should be set with no extra space on either side. In tables, where continuing or inclusive numbers are listed, a single hyphen with a space on either side may be used. In titles of documents, headlines, or page headers, use initial caps for hyphenated words made up of two words that can stand alone. Hyphenated words that include prefixes should not use initial caps. Set articles (a, an, the) conjunctions (and, but, or so) and short prepositions (at, for, from, in, of, on, to, with) in lowercase. Capitalize conjunctions and prepositions with four or more letters (exception: from, with).

ITS/IT’S

When written without an apostrophe its is a possessive pronoun meaning of it or belonging to it. With an apostrophe, it’s means ‘it is.’

NUMBERS

Numbers from one to nine should be spelled out as a word (one, two, three) unless they are in tables. Double digits and multi digits are written as numbers. Try to avoid beginning a sentence with a number. Use commas to separate thousands in number amounts (ie: 1,000 or \$12,345). In tables with numbers in a column, line up the decimal points.

- There were 20 people at the meeting, but only nine people at the reception.

Spell out places (first, second, third) unless they refer to street numbers or double digit numbers.

- The chamber won first, second, and third place in the website contest.
- Please contact us at 100 Southpark Blvd, Suite 405
- The county is ranked first in health and education.

PASSIVE VOICE

Try to avoid using passive voice when writing.

- Do: The council provides insight
Don't: The council was chosen to provide insight.

- Do: Pitch Factory offers a variety of services
Don't: A variety of services are offered by Pitch Factory.

PERCENT

In bullets and tables, show percentages using numbers and symbols. It makes the information stand out, and is easier to read or skim. Spell out the word percent when using it in a sentence.

PERIODS

Do not use periods between letters in abbreviations or acronyms. Use a.m. and p.m. not am and pm. Use B.A., M.A, and Ph.D., not BA, MA, and PhD.

PERSONAL NAMES

Omit commas before and after Jr. and Sr. and after Roman numerals.

POSITION TITLES

When referring to a specific employee, board member, or other representative, capitalize the title. Lowercase the title if it comes after the persons name. Generic titles should also be lowercased.

- Director of Public Policy Bob Porter
- Bob Porter, director of public policy

TABLES

Use tables to organize complex pages, to reduce the amount of space needed to display information or data. In tables that consist of a list of items, alphabetize items by going down one column, then wrapping to the top of column two, and so forth (not horizontally by row).

TIME

Use a.m. and p.m., not am and pm. Always provide a space between the hour and the annotation. 7 a.m. not 7a.m. When the time is on the hour, use the number by itself. 6 p.m., not 6:00 p.m. except in tables.

WEB

Short form of World Wide Web, the web is a service, or set of standards, that enables the publishing of multimedia documents on the internet. The web is not the same as the internet, but is a subset to other applications, such as email, exist on the internet. Web should remain capitalized when used in the phrase World Wide Web, but when used by itself, do capitalize.

WEBSITE

One word, lowercase. See also: webcam, webcast, and webmaster.

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is deeply invested in the issue of accessible technology because the development and adoption of accessible, universally designed technology is critical to making sure people with disabilities are able to access our messaging on all available platforms.

More and more organizations are using websites and social media to conduct outreach, recruit job candidates, and encourage community engagement. The accessibility is a necessity. Below are guidelines intended to help Chamber staff create content that is accessible to people with disabilities. Since, in many cases, there are limitations to the accessibility of a platform, you should check its associated documentation to determine which of its features support accessibility.

ALTERNATIVE TEXT DESCRIPTIONS FOR IMAGES

When social media platforms allow for alternative text descriptions on images, we must provide meaningful alternative text descriptions so that users of screen readers can have the image described to them. Also, we must provide ways for screen readers to ignore images that are used for decoration.

Best Practices

- Describe the image in context based on what details the image adds to the text. If the image is of a deputy and a k9, the ideal alt text could be “Deputy Smith poses with the agency’s new canine” or “everyone loves the pointy ears of the newest member of the canine team.”
- Keep the descriptions short and concise; roughly 140 characters or less.
- Do not use the word “graphic” or “image” in the description (“image of a running dog”) as the screen reader already takes care of it. Just say “a running dog.”
- Use an empty alt for decorative images like spacers or uninformative backgrounds (alt=”) to tell screen readers to completely ignore the image. Note that this empty alt must be present or the screen reader will read the filename on character at a time!

CLOSED CAPTIONING FOR ALL VIDEOS

For video content, you should provide captions of the audio for the benefit of those without hearing, who are hard-of-hearing, and who are non-native speakers. Captions can be either closed-captions (where a user can turn them on or off) or open captions (where the text is embedded into the video and cannot be turned on or off).

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN CAPTIONING

To ensure captions are high quality and accurate, edit captions that have been automatically generated. Automated captioning is improving but generally provides around 85% accuracy. Automated captioning alone should not be relied upon for the high standards appropriate to materials that represents SJSO. ALWAYS double check the captions.

CAMELCASE FOR ALL HASHTAGS

Hashtags are an important component of social media posts. When authoring hashtags that are made up of multiple words, use initial capitalization, also known as CamelCase.

Utilizing this simple technique makes the hashtag easier to read for all users and is more consumable by screen readers since their synthesized voices can recognize and pronounce individual words, and won't concatenate and garble them.

PLAIN LANGUAGE AND WRITING STYLE

Writing in plain language is a way to ensure that people can understand the information provided by a social media post. All federal agencies must write using plain language in accordance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (<https://plainlanguage.gov/law/>) which means all that publicly distributed content should be written in a "clear, concise, well-organized, manner. In order to be as accessible as possible, we will follow the Plain Writing Act in all of our writing. Key best practices for writing in plain language include:

- Choose words that are common and easy to understand
- Avoid run-on sentences. Use clear, short sentences and paragraphs
- Write in the active voice instead of the passive voice.

TIPS FOR FACEBOOK

- Don't assume your audience is knowledgeable about all acronyms. Take advantage of the space Facebook provides and always spell out the first instance of the acronym and add the acronym, in parentheses after (e.g., Social Media Emergency Management (SMEEM)). This is especially helpful for those using screen readers, because after the name is heard and the acronym is spelled out, the user will be better able to associate the sound of the acronym with the full name.
- Add captions to photos to ensure that individuals will understand what is going on in the picture. The captions do not need to be very long, but they should describe what the scene is, and how elements of the image appear and provide context for the image.
- Videos posted directly to Facebook should be closed captioned.
- As an alternative to directly uploading videos to Facebook, upload videos to YouTube and post the link to the video in a status update. Since YouTube automatic captioning can be inaccurate, prepare an accurate transcript and upload it whenever possible. This will ensure that visitors will be taken to an accessible video with captioning.

TIPS FOR TWITTER

- If possible, avoid using unfamiliar acronyms that would sound strange if read by a screen reader or that could be confusing to some readers. If space allows, try to spell out the acronyms instead, or use a different way to convey the information.
- Consider providing an indication that a link in a tweet is a photo, video or audio file (e.g. [PIC], [VIDEO], [AUDIO]). This allows people using screen readers to know what to expect before opening any link. Use uppercase formats for further clarity to sighted users.
- If your tweet links to photo, video or audio content, make your tweet act as a descriptive caption so it provides context for the item, and then link back to a website page that hosts a tagged photo, captioned video or audio with full caption. Or, send a follow-up tweet with a description.
- Ensure that you link to accessible content, i.e., a tagged photo, captioned video or audio with written transcript.
- A tagged photo simply has alternative text associated with it that describes the image. For more details on alternative text, please visit <http://webaim.org/articles/gonewild/#alttext>.
- Enable the setting on Twitter to use the “image description” feature, which will allow you to add a descriptive caption to any photo that you directly include in a tweet. For step-by-step instructions on enabling the image description feature on the web and on iOS and Android mobile apps, please visit <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20174660>.
- If you are linking to content that the Chamber has not created and/or you do not know whether that content is accessible or not, make sure your audience is aware of these limitations. Simply provide a note briefly explaining the limitation, such as that: the photo is untagged; the video will auto start; the video does not include captioning; or the audio file is not accompanied by a written transcript. Also provide contact information should the individual require some kind of alternative method to access the content.
- Try to use camel case for multiple words within a hashtag; that is, capitalize the first letters of compound words. It makes it easier visually and for screen readers to pronounce the individual words more clearly (e.g., use #DigitalGov instead of #digitalgov).

TIPS FOR YOUTUBE

- Be careful only to include high-quality audio. People who are hard of hearing may have difficulty with the soundtrack of videos that contain music or other effects, or which have not been produced to high audio quality.
- Ensure all videos have closed captions and audio description (or a link to a version that has audio descriptions). In addition, a full transcript (of captions and audio description) is useful for people who have both hearing and visual impairments including those who are deaf-blind. YouTube has a feature that will automatically caption videos. To increase accuracy of the YouTube automatic captions, videos should have very clear-spoken words and little background noise. However, since YouTube automatic captioning can be very inaccurate, prepare your own accurate transcript and upload it whenever possible.
- Descriptive language needs to be used in video captioning to denote audio and visual elements to users who may have visual or hearing disabilities. Make sure to use easy-to-understand language in your descriptions.
- To ensure accurate captioning, create a transcript of the video.
- Note that good captions are not just a transcript of what is said in the video. It is also important

to describe sounds, particularly sounds for which there is no visual equivalent (e.g., if someone in a video is giving a talk, and the viewer can't see that the audience is laughing, the captions should say that people are laughing). Tone of voice is also important to note, particularly if not obvious from a person's facial expression (or if the person's face can't be seen). A lot of meaning and information can be missed by certain viewers with hearing or cognitive impairments if they are not made aware of sounds, tone of voice, etc.; the way the meaning of spoken content is interpreted can completely change based on this information. Knowing that the background music is cheery, for example, helps signal that the producers mean for the scene to be viewed in a light way and can help shape viewers' expectations for the kinds of things that will follow. Someone saying "I'm doing great" in a sarcastic tone clearly means something very different from someone saying it in a casual or light tone. Information conveyed in the video must also be explained in screen text or audio (i.e. if someone is making a sandwich and there is no audio then there should be a text or audio equivalent to explain the action taking place in the video).

- The YouTube player on the YouTube site is not fully keyboard accessible (e.g., it can be impossible or very difficult for a user with a motor disability to turn on captions without a mouse). Therefore, if possible, it is beneficial to also embed any YouTube videos on a site that uses an accessible YouTube player wrapper and have captions enabled by default.

TIPS FOR INSTAGRAM

- Instagram allows you to type in alternative text that describes the image under the Advanced Settings tab while posting said image. To be compliant, make sure you have a descriptive explanation of what the image is in the alt-text box.
- Instagram now has auto-generated captions for all videos posted on the app. To access this, you must click on the "Advanced Settings" tab while posting said video. Scroll down to accessibility and make sure 'Show Captions' is turned on.
 - There are also plenty of apps out there available to help you in putting captions in your videos. Search in your app store for any that are available.
- Use camel case for multiple words within a hashtag if you include any in the caption.
- Avoid using acronyms in captions when possible, and always explain what the acronyms mean if you do use them.



