



## **Retail Managers Working Group**

A new Chamber initiative to provide support and assistance to retail businesses in the Fairfield area

### **Retail Managers Working Group FAQs**

**What is this “working group” all about?** Chamber Director Detra Dettmann is creating an opportunity for retail managers to come together to share information and perspectives. She had experience with the “working group” concept while working in local food system development at Pathfinders RC&D. For several years she attended a statewide working group that regularly convened to create a forum for food system developers to exchange information and support one another. This participation gave her information, ideas, insight, a network of mentors, and empowerment. She thinks this can be a great model at the local level for other groups with a shared interest.

**Who is invited to attend? Just retail store folks?** For the purpose of this working group, we welcome BOTH retail shop/store managers and restaurant managers in the Fairfield area.

**What is the purpose of coming together?** The purpose is to come together to network, share information about best-practices and challenges you are facing, and identify common challenges that the Chamber can help address by finding the right information, resources, or experts. Additionally, members may find they are able to mentor one another in some areas.

**I see this is being organized by the Chamber. Is this only for Chamber members?** No, it is open to any retail (store or restaurant) manager who wishes to participate.

**Is this only for downtown? I heard the Chamber was going to try do something for only downtown.** No, this is for ALL retail managers in all sections of town. Perhaps a downtown-specific project may eventually rise out of this effort, but for now we want to meet with all interested managers, regardless of which part of town your business is located.

**When will these meetings be held? For example, I run a restaurant and cannot make a noon meeting...** Detra will send out a survey to identify the best day and time for interested managers to attend. We know there is no single day and time that will work for all, so we will use survey data to plan the initial meeting to accommodate the most participants we can.

**Where will these meeting be held?** Location is to be determined. We will ask for suggestions in the survey.

**How long will the meetings be? How often will we meet?** The initial meeting will be less than 1 hour. As time goes on, the group will decide how long they want to meet and how often they want to meet. It could be monthly, it could be quarterly, could be something else.

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**How is this different from the Downtown Merchants Association that was organized a few years ago and fizzled out?** This effort has no prescribed agenda, the interest and energy of the group will determine where it goes. For example, there is no goal to try and make people participate in group advertising...unless there are people that WANT to pursue that. Also, the Chamber is planning to do most of the work to assemble the expertise and resources to address the challenges brought forward. We know you want to focus on running your business, so participating in this should give you energy instead of feeling like it's a waste of time. We know that to sustain this effort we need to support an experience that delivers value and worth to the participants each and every time.

**Is there a cost for me to participate?** No, this is offered free of charge to everyone.

**Is the goal to identify "group projects" we have to work on together?** No, the main goal of the working group is for you and your fellow business owners to identify what you need to make your business the very best it can be...and then take steps to provide you that information or resources. It's possible a shared project could emerge from this, but it's not a goal.

**Okay, you've got my interest. When is the next meeting?** The Working Group held their first meeting in late February and will meet again on **Monday, March 27 from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. at the Hy-Vee Club Room. Please join us!!**

**For more information,** contact Detra Dettmann at the Chamber.  
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