



## **Lewisville-Clemmons Chamber of Commerce Networking Groups Overview and Guidelines**

### **Overview**

Networking groups, in partnership with the Lewisville-Clemmons Chamber of Commerce (LCCC), are networking and referral groups for small business owners. Regular meetings are held to develop strong, mutually beneficial relationships with other small business owners and to provide motivational and educational resources for members. The core objectives are to help fellow members increase business through referrals and to provide opportunities to develop individual potential for success.

### **Membership**

Membership in a networking group is open to all LCCC members. Each new member is required to complete an application for membership. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis by date of application. Every effort will be made to accommodate applicants while maintaining one seat per primary business type. Applicants whose primary business type is already represented will be placed on a waiting list until an opening becomes available. Exceptions to allow or disallow participation of a business or entity will be determined by a vote of the majority of members in attendance. Such a vote will be scheduled not less than one week and not more than three weeks from the time of application.

Potential new members are encouraged to attend regular meetings before applying for membership. They may attend up to two times before joining the LCCC and submitting their application to join the group.

Membership in more than one LCCC networking group is allowed; however, attendance must not infringe on any other member of the networking group. When an application for membership is made by someone with the same business type, the current member must choose which networking group to attend and forfeit their seat in the other group to accommodate the new member.

## **Leadership Team**

The group leadership team consists of 3 volunteer leaders in the following roles: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Chamber Liaison. Each term of service is for one calendar year (January-December). There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms a leader may serve. Nominations for leadership will be accepted at the discretion of the leadership team, but no later than the last regular meeting in the month of October each year. A vote by secret ballot will be scheduled by the leadership team no later than the last regular meeting in the month of November each year. An individual must have been a member of the group more than one month to exercise a voting privilege. If it becomes necessary to replace a leader during the course of their term, the process and timing will be at the discretion of the leadership team.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Chair**

- Conduct regularly scheduled meetings
- Implement policies set forth by LCCC and leadership team
- Delegate, as needed, certain responsibilities to improve the group
- Act in the best interest of the LCCC and group members

### **Vice-Chair**

- Assist the group Chair
- Conduct meetings in the absence of the group Chair
- Create and maintain a continuous schedule of member presentations
- Regularly communicate with members about group schedules and activities
- Send a weekly email to all members outlining next meeting date, time, location, etc.

### **Chamber Liaison**

- Serve as primary contact with LCCC
- Announce events and communicate Chamber information
- Ensure all members of the group are current Chamber members
- Distribute, collect, and review all new member applications
- Keep a record of attendance and membership list
- Communicate termination of membership with group and Chamber
- Maintain a waiting list from potential new members when business categories are filled

## **Attendance/Participation**

Members of the networking groups are expected to attend and participate in regular meetings. If a member is not able to attend a meeting, they should contact a member of the leadership team to inform them that they will be absent.

As with most situations, the more you put into the group, the more you will get out of it. Perfect attendance is an unrealistic expectation for professional business owners and their representatives; however, **if a member fails to attend four consecutive weeks or attends less than 50% during a three month period, their seat will be considered open.** Members must be at the meeting for at least 30 minutes before leaving to be considered in attendance.

If a group member changes companies, they will not automatically remain in the group. They must go through the application process and be reaccepted to the group, regardless of business category. Membership in the group will remain with the individual whenever possible.

Each week members are given an opportunity to promote their business through brief “infomercials.” The length of these infomercials will be determined by the group Chair at each meeting and are typically 60 seconds. This gives members an opportunity to share special promotions, new products, good referral sources, etc. with the rest of the group. At each meeting, a 20 minute time period will be reserved for a spotlight presentation. Members desiring to give spotlight presentations should schedule a date with the Vice-Chair.

An important element in creating an effective group is one-on-one meetings among the group members. One-on-one meetings facilitate and support strong relationships, referral trust, and true community. There is no specific requirement for one-on-one meetings; however, they are strongly encouraged.

## **Substitutes**

Members of the networking groups are encouraged to send a substitute to represent their business. The substitute must be an employee of the business the member is representing. The substitute must be prepared to give an introduction about the business and only promote the business that is the member of the Chamber.

## **Weather Policy**

The networking groups will not meet if Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools are closed. Travel to any networking group on days of inclement weather should be a personal judgement call.

## **Network Marketing Professionals**

Network marketing and multi-level marketing professionals are allowed to become members of the group. However, they should only promote products and services during the meeting. The recruiting component of their business should be reserved for one-on-one meetings with other members.

## **Grievances**

Members who have a grievance are encouraged to seek resolution through the leadership team. If resolution cannot be achieved the Chairperson will take the matter to the VP of Networking. If the VP of Networking cannot resolve the matter, he or she will present the situation to the Chamber Board for final resolution.

These guidelines are in place to provide guidance and direction for our members and the leadership team. At times, we may have situations that are not clearly defined by this guideline. When these situations arise, the leadership team in conjunction with the VP of Networking will determine what is fair and equitable in these specific situations.