

Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce ChamberNet Guidelines

Revised February 2011

Purpose

ChamberNets are a collection of Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce members in non-competing businesses that share business referrals and/or introductions with one another. Participation in each group is limited to one person per industry. ChamberNets help members develop professional networking relationships.

ChamberNet Membership Requirements

Be a Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, Bloomington Chamber of Commerce or Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce member in good standing.

Attend the regularly scheduled meetings. Tardiness and/or failure to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notice (24 hours) to the ChamberNet chair or Chamber staff may result in probation. Failure to attend the next meeting after being placed on probation may result in dismissal from the group.

Give at least one qualified business referral or introduction to another group member every month. New members receive a two-month grace period.

Invite business people to visit the group. Guests and observers are welcome by invitation from any group member or a Chamber staff person. The Chamber staff representative should be notified of any visitors at least 24 hours prior to any meeting. Each member is to invite one guest per quarter or until the group has reached its desired number. All guests are exempt from the payment of any fines.

Advisory Committee

The advisory committee consists of the ChamberNet chairs. The advisory committee meets as needed to discuss issues that relate to each ChamberNet. The purpose is to provide direction for the overall ChamberNet program and those issues relevant to or reflected in the bylaws.

Group Size and Scope

Groups begin with four to six charter members who determine the group's focus. This focus may change; it is up to the group. The group's chair is responsible for encouraging and fostering group growth to a minimum of fifteen members. It is ideal for groups to grow to twenty-five or more synergistic members. This size allows for some attrition and maximum referrals. Research has shown that some attrition and movement should be expected. The Chamber staff representative will maintain a waiting list of interested individuals. The group members are responsible for inviting guests and/or observers.

ChamberNet membership is limited to one group per person.

Recruiting New Members

New members are selected from different business categories. Keeping in mind the value of diversity, each ChamberNet group determines which type of businesses would benefit their group's needs and if the group could benefit the prospective member's networking needs. After attending one meeting, a prospective member (usually an invited guest) is admitted by a quorum vote. Guests in businesses with possibly conflicting services or products of an existing member's are discussed prior to voting. It is important to remember that this is a Chamber function and not a private club. When in doubt, inclusion of an interested party is best.

Guests, Visitors, and Observers

Guests - Chamber members and nonmembers invited by the chair or a member.

Visitors - Another ChamberNet group's member who has asked (with the approval of the chair of the group he wants to visit) to visit another group. No conflicting business visitors enhance cross referrals and the value of ChamberNets through cross-communication.

Observers - Prospective Chamber members or Chamber members who have expressed an interest in ChamberNets but are not necessarily interested in being voted into the group.

Fees/Fines

The fee for members is \$50 annually, which funds the marketing mailings, meeting room, meeting refreshments and staff support.

History shows that the most successful networking groups have some sort of nominal (and sometimes humorous) regulation and fine system. Each ChamberNet group determines fine regulations and enforcement. The following are optional and/or suggested regulations and fines (usually \$1): tardiness to meeting; absence without prior notice; failure to give one referral in a one-month period of time; failure to invite a guest in a quarter; failure to show when scheduled as the motivator or showtimer.

Business Items/Definitions

Showtimer (optional) - A twenty-minute presentation which provides a brief review of the organization and clearly states what type of referrals are being sought from the group.

Motivator (optional) - A five-minute presentation that provides positive motivation in the form of a reading, short story, poem, etc.

Timekeeper (optional) - The timekeeper uses a stopwatch to keep all commercials and presentations on time and provides the speakers with early time limit warnings.

Thirty-Second Commercial - To open the meeting, each member gives a thirty-second informative commercial that describes their product or service and indicates what type of referral they are interested in receiving from the group.

Referral - The process of one ChamberNet member's informing another member that a prospective client is expecting a call or visit or that the member should initiate a call or visit.

Introduction - A face-to-face introduction of the potential client and a group member.
*Bylaws created on July 14, 1994. Revised February 1996, October 1996, January 2000,
August 2005 & February 2011*