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**CONNECTIONS GROUP GUIDELINES**

**Purpose Statement**   
*A dedicated networking group of Monroe County Business Alliance partners that meet to exchange valuable referrals while developing strong professional and personal relationships.*

Each group will have two Co-Captains. Co-Captains will serve one-year alternating terms. Co-Captain terms run from January 1 to December 31. Each group must keep an attendance record (including absences) and provide said record to the Monroe County Business Alliance (MCBA) monthly or as updates occur.

All participants must be in good standing (no outstanding invoices) of the Monroe County Business Alliance.

Each member's Primary Business Category must be specific. Even if the member provides a broad scope of professional services, for the group's purposes, each member must choose a specific topic and list it on the application. A Secondary Business may be listed if the member wishes to speak on other topics until such a time as a new member joins the group and chooses that as a Primary Business category.

For example: If you sell houses but you also sell commercial real estate, you will list one of those as your Primary Business category. If your Primary Business category is "Residential Real Estate" and "Commercial Real Estate" is your Secondary Business category, you may talk about commercial real estate within the group providing there is no other person choosing that as his/her Primary Business category. The category that you select may be amended by the Co-Captains of the group or the MCBA to ensure that it is specific enough to meet requirements.

Each MCBA Partner may have one representative from their business in a Connections group. Any disputes will be settled by MCBA.   
  
Each participant is allowed 4 absences per year in groups that meet twice a month. If you cannot make a meeting, you may send another person from your company to substitute for you, and it will not count as an absence. A *Substitute* is an individual designated to temporarily assume the responsibilities, duties, or attendance obligations of a primary group member who is unable to participate. The substitute must not be a current participating member of the same group. This ensures that each business represented in the group maintains integrity and independence of its participant structure and avoids any potential conflicts of interest or duplication of roles.

Attendance is tracked at each meeting. Absences without subs must be recorded. If a group member exceeds the allowed number of absences, they must leave the group, and that "Primary Business" category will be open. The first member may reapply for that seat the next time it becomes open.

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Participants should come to meetings prepared to do one (or more) of the following:  
  
▪ Pass a referral to another member of the group  
▪ Do an Elevator Speech   
▪ Give a testimonial of someone in the group with whom they have done business   
▪ Bring a guest to the group as prospective group member  
▪ Schedule a 1 on 1 meeting with another member of the group before the next meeting  
▪ Do a 10 Minute Presentation

Online tracking should be filled out by every member each time a referral is passed, a 1:1 meeting occurs, or a group member brings a guest.

Meetings are structured to run for approximately 75 minutes.

When a visitor or a prospective new group member attends a meeting:   
  
▪ The guest is to be provided with a copy of the Connections guidelines with application & the roster showing the current "Primary Business" categories that are filled.   
▪ The guest is reminded that his/her company must be a MCBA Partner in good standing to be eligible to join the group.   
▪ Prior to attending additional meetings, the guest must read and initial the Connection guidelines and complete the application.   
▪ Should the guests wish to join the group, he/she will describe to the group his/her business and the Primary Business category he/she wishes to fill. The understanding by all parties is that only the listed Primary Business categories are being considered, not individual or additional services and products that either party may provide nor the personality of the prospective member.   
▪ If the group declines to approve a prospective member, a co-chair is to email the rationale for that decision to the MCBA CEO (Chief Executive Officer). The MCBA CEO will notify the prospective member with a detailed explanation as to why they were denied.   
▪ Prospective members, being denied, may appeal to the MCBA Executive Committee.

Connections is a MCBA Partner benefit. The MCBA reserves the right to change or amend any policy or procedure of the Connections Group(s) at any time.