

**Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber of Commerce  
Policies & Procedures for Non-Compete Networking Groups**

**SECTION 1: Objective** - The Network Referral Groups (Groups) are directly related to the Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber of Commerce of Commerce (Chamber). The objective is to provide networking opportunities, which will generate new business through referrals from fellow networking members. Membership will consist of no more than 20-30 members at any one time.

**SECTION 2: Membership** - Membership shall consist of Chamber members representing non-competing businesses. To be eligible in any of the Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Networking Referral Groups, a member must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a member in good standing of the Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber of Commerce.
2. Participate in only one Networking group. Companies (not individuals) may belong to more than one networking group in the Chamber.
3. Be able to participate and reciprocate legitimate referrals to other members within the Group.

**SECTION 3: Member Selection Criteria**

1. Applicants interested in joining a Group, are required to visit selected Group a mandatory one or two times (timeframe based on Group) before completing an application into Group. During the mandatory visit, guests are allowed to distribute business cards only. Literature will not be allowed for distribution until member of Group.
2. All information on application must be completed in full prior to Advisory Board review.
3. Once accepted into a Networking Group, if a member of the Group wishes to expand his/her services offered through the Group after initial acceptance, he/she must submit in writing to the Advisory Board for final decision.
4. Any member of the Group may object to an applicant based on membership eligibility requirements. These objections will then be reviewed by the Advisory Board. Applicant may challenge the objection in writing, which will be presented to the Advisory Board for review.
5. Advisory Board may deny membership to an applicant based on membership eligibility requirements. Should applicant be denied, application will be placed on a waiting list for periodic review. Waiting list will be kept and maintained by the Chamber and the advisory board of the networking group.
6. Under majority rule vote, should an applicant be denied membership, reason for denial will not be disclosed.
7. Upon applicant's approval into Group, applicant will become a member upon receipt of Networking Groups membership dues. Refund of dues is not offered, unless member moves or leaves business.
8. A two-month trail period for all new members will begin upon acceptance of application. The following items will be reviewed by the Advisory Board:
  - a. Attendance
  - b. Number of referrals given
  - c. Management of referrals received
  - d. Commitment to the group

*Following two month period, member will be added to Trade Talk Schedule*

**SECTION 4: Obligations of Members**

1. Members must attend all regularly scheduled meetings. A limit of five absences over a twelve-month calendar year is considered acceptable. Three consecutive may result in termination of the Group. Should member not be able to attend, it is the members responsibility to contact (via phone or email) the designated contact person for the Group.
2. To help other members learn more about each other, members will be expected to present a "Trade Talk" about their business.
3. Members must be in good standing for Networking Group dues as well as Chamber Fees.
4. It is the responsibility of each member to actively recruit new members into the Group. Each new member brought into the Group will count as one referral.
5. Members are expected to provide at least two qualified leads per month. Every effort will be made to help the members accomplish this goal through training and encouragement. Should the Group determine that this has not been achieved by the member, he/she may be asked to terminate their membership from the Group. Referrals are submitted by using the Referral Networking Form. A copy must be given to the Secretary for tracking purposes.

## **SECTION 5: Membership Fees into Networking Group**

1. To enroll in a Group, member must be current with Chamber membership dues. Annual networking dues are \$50 which are payable upon acceptance into Group. Should individual enroll into Group after July 1st of any given year, initial dues will be \$50, however, upon January 1<sup>st</sup> of first enrollment Group year, member will be billed pro-rated amount of \$25 rather than full \$50 for the first year only.
2. A recurring charge of \$50 each year will be due upon start of each new year. Dues will be collected during bi-weekly meetings. Of the \$50, \$25 is applied to administrative costs for the Chamber. The remaining \$25 is applied directly to the Networking Groups operational costs and other items, including;
  - e. Materials bought that are required for Network members – forms, record keeping materials, nametags (if applicable), brochures, etc.
  - f. Other monies distributed to be determined by the Group.
3. If at the end of the year there is a surplus of money remaining with the Group, it may be considered to be used as payment for an event to be determined by the Group.
4. Fees are non-refundable.

**SECTION 6: Leave of Absence** - Any Group member requesting a leave of absence will be allowed, as long as another competing business is not interested in joining the Group. Should this occur, the current network member will be given right of first refusal. Member will remain responsible for all fees and dues. A Leave of Absence shall be on more than two consecutive months, unless determined by a vote.

**SECTION 7: Duties of Advisory Board** - The Advisory Board shall consist of the following:

1. The **Chairperson** of the Advisory Board shall preside over all meetings of the network group and shall coordinate all functions of the Advisory Board. Chairperson shall only vote in the event of a tie.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> **Chairperson** shall assist the Chairperson in the responsibilities of the Advisory Board duties. In the event Chairperson is absent, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chairperson shall preside at meetings of the network and Advisory Board meetings.
3. The **Program Coordinator** shall be responsible for conducting the bi-weekly trade talks of members and organizing other activities determined by the Advisory Board and Group.
4. The **Treasurer** shall be responsible for the monthly accounting of member attendance, dues paid from Group members. Treasurer shall also be responsible for the tracking of expenditures for the Group. It will be the responsibility of the Treasurer to coordinate with the Chamber office the depositing and distribution of funds.
5. The **Secretary** shall record minutes of the Advisory Board meetings and bi-weekly networking meetings. Secretary shall also be responsible for the accounting of member attendance as well as tracking of referrals given and distributed. Secretary shall present to the Chamber Board of Directors a written report on the status of the Group on a quarterly basis.
6. The **Chamber Liaison** shall be responsible to advise Group membership of upcoming Chamber events and activities.
7. The Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber must pre-approve any contractual obligation the Network Group is attempting to secure if acting under the Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber of Commerce name. Contracts may only be signed by the Executive Director of the Chamber.
8. Network Groups may not take any public political position or jeopardize the Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber's nonprofit tax status in any manner.

**SECTION 8: Advisory Board Selection** - Individuals interested in participating on the Advisory Board for the following year, may write a letter of intent to a board member no later than November 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year (for office in the following year). Upon receipt of letters, elections will be at the first meeting in December with positions beginning in January. Current Chairperson will be given and announce the following years Advisory Board.

**SECTION 9: Grievances** - Grievances will be submitted by phone or in writing to the Advisory Board for its consideration. If necessary, grievance will be presented to the Group for input and discussions. At no time shall the Advisory Board make a decision affecting the Group without the majority vote of the Group.

*Note:* In addition to the above Policies and Procedures, each Group may have additional guidelines for that particular Networking Group which have been presented and approved by the Chamber Board of Directors.

