



BUSINESS REFERRAL GROUPS

Guidelines and Objectives

How Referral Groups Work

Referral Groups are based on trust, commitment and referral. A successful Referral Group has committed members who attend meetings regularly, develop trusting and professional business relationships, and pass quality business leads and referrals. In order to uphold loyalty between group members, individuals may only participate in one group.

It is normal for new members not to receive referral in the first few months, since this is time spent conveying your company needs and identifying your potential customers. It also takes time for your group members to understand and trust your product and service. It is important for you to effectively convey your needs to the group members so you can receive quality leads and referrals. Likewise, offering quality referral to your group members develops and strengthens your position in the group.

Meetings

Groups meet typically in the mornings, as early as 8 a.m., or over the lunch hours, beginning at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday's. Referral Group meetings are held at the Chamber Office 9401 East Stockton Blvd. Elk Grove. Referral Groups meet two to four times a month at a regularly scheduled, mutually convenient time established with the Chamber staff coordinator. The suggested meeting time is an hour and a half. If the meeting falls during mealtime, Members are encouraged to bring meals however, water and coffee will be provided. Once per year, groups may come together to host an after-hours social at a chamber member restaurant or the chamber building lobby, expenses to be paid by group members.

Membership

A company representative of a Chamber member company may only join one group. However, a member company may have up to two (2) representatives sitting in different groups at one time. Referral Group participation is open to all members in good standing with the Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce.

A Conflict of Business Interest

Referral Group members promote what generates the bulk, or 70 percent, of their business or industry. Each member has a designated industry. A conflict may occur when a new member wants to join a group and has an overlapping industry or focus area in that industry. The new member may not join the group if there is a conflict of industry with someone already in the group.

Leads and Referrals

Quality referrals are essential to maintaining a quality Referral Group. The following are some different types of referrals that can be passed:

Warm referrals Contact may or may not need your service but would like to hear from you

Hot referrals Referral has discussed doing business with you; contact immediately

Referrals may be obtained anywhere, such as social or business functions, family events, luncheons or seminars. Referrals can be passed among group members at group meetings or outside the scheduled meeting time.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is critical and mandatory in a Referral Group. Prompt and regular attendance shows your commitment to your Referral Group. Group Chair takes attendance at each meeting. You are expected to communicate an absence to your group and/or group Chair and be absent no more than once per quarter. The Chamber requests that you relinquish your position in that group if you cannot meet the attendance policy or frequently and/or consecutively miss meetings. Please contact your Leaders and the Chamber Staff Coordinator if you need to drop out of your group.

Visitors and Guests

Guests or visitors are encouraged to attend a Referral Group meeting. Visitors must contact the Leaders before attending a group. Guests may attend once at the invitation of a current group member. Visitors and guests are welcome to pass a referral, but we ask members to refrain from passing referrals to guests. Visitors and guests are asked not to put their business cards in the group card binder. Visitors and guests may join a group if they: are a member in good standing of the Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce; there is no conflict of industry; the \$150 annual fee has been paid, and they have agreed to the guidelines and objectives.

Meeting Rooms

The Chamber meeting room should be kept clean. All food, drinks and papers/brochures should be removed after use. Food and drinks are allowed in the meeting room and beverages (coffee for morning groups) are provided for the Referral Groups. Chairs and tables should be returned to their regular configuration after each meeting.

Annual Fee

There is a \$150 annual fee for each member of a Referral Group. This fee is collected at the time of application and cashed when you are accepted to a group. The fee is non-refundable. You will be billed the \$150 fee on the anniversary of your joining the group unless you are no longer an active member. Each year you will be expected to pay another \$150 for the 12 months following your anniversary date.

Waiting List

You will be contacted and placed on the waiting list if there are no openings for your industry. When a position opens you will be contacted by the group leaders. The wait list is reviewed by all group Leaders on a monthly basis.

Ready to Attend?

After you have joined a group, please bring sufficient business cards and materials for your group members. Please come prepared to speak about yourself and your business, and to meet and learn about your group members. Your introduction includes your name, business name, industry and the types of business you seek.

Instructions for Joining a Referral Group

Please submit your completed application and payment to the Elk Grove Chamber staff. Be sure to specify your industry and other pertinent information on the application. Once your application has been submitted, you will be contacted by Chamber staff or Group Leaders. If you have any questions, call 916.691.3760 for assistance.