

## GULF COAST NETWORKING INC. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

**OVERVIEW:** Gulf Coast Networking Inc. is a group of Gulf Coast business professionals meeting to develop relationships and grow their businesses through word-of-mouth referral. Our meeting is held on Thursdays at 8:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. at a location to be determined by the Leadership Team. All interested business professionals are welcome to attend.

**MISSION:** Our mission is to grow our businesses by developing relationships with other business professionals. These relationships are developed by face-to-face interaction, informational presentation, social gatherings, and weekly business announcements. By developing these personal relationships between business professionals, the flow of word-of-mouth referrals is enhanced and businesses grow through the influx of new clients and positive image presentation.

### CODE OF ETHICS (as written on GCN application form)

- I agree to abide by the following code of ethics during the tenure of my participation in the organization.
- I will provide the quality of services at the prices that I have quoted.
- I will be truthful to the members and their referrals.
- I will build goodwill and trust among members and their referrals.
- I will take responsibility for following up on the referrals that I receive.
- I will display a positive and supportive attitude with the members of Gulf Coast Networking Inc..
- I will live up to the ethical standards of my profession.

*Professional standards outlined in a formal code of conduct for any profession supersede the above standards. Any violation of the Code of Ethics is ground for dismissal at the review of the Membership Committee.*

### GENERAL POLICIES

1. Only one person from each profession is permitted to join. Any person interested in joining must announce their intent to join the group as a certain profession/business. They must then fill out an application to be submitted with membership fee for approval. The leadership team has final say relating to possible conflicts. Potential membership, conflicting professions, and any related issues will not be discussed during the open portion of any meeting.

1a. It is the member's responsibility to file a concern with the leadership team if a visitor submits an application that in any way conflicts with their position. This should be done **before** the visitor is approved for membership. If there are no complaints, the leadership team will assume their consent.

1b. The Secretary shall notify the existing member of a potential conflict of the person/company wanting to join GCN in that same or similar profession, to allow the existing member to object if he or she wishes to do so. If two or more individuals from the same profession wish to join the group or jointly serve as group members, those individuals shall meet outside of the open meeting and attempt to work out a suitable arrangement that will not infringe on the member's seat in that profession who joined the group first in time, if that member is in good standing. If those individuals are unable to work out a suitable arrangement for both to be members of the Group, the member in that profession who joined the Group first in time can refuse entry of the new potential member.

2. Members should represent their primary profession/business as stated in their application.

3. Any member who wishes to change their profession/business must announce their intent of change. They must then fill out a new application to be submitted with membership fee (if applicable) for approval.

## GULF COAST NETWORKING INC. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

4. The weekly meetings last 90 minutes.
5. Members should endeavor to arrive on time and stay for the entire meeting. This should be a recurring meeting on your calendar.
6. Attendance is crucial to the group. A Member can send a substitute (employee, client, friend, family) and be counted as present. You cannot have another GCN member substitute for you. A Member may only represent one company per meeting. A member is allowed three (3) absences in a consecutive three month period. A member who fails to attend four (4) or more meetings in any consecutive three (3) month period (and **not** per quarter) shall be considered to not be in good standing and shall lose their exclusive seat in the group, but shall be allowed to remain a non-exclusive member of GCN. The member who has lost exclusivity shall have the opportunity to regain exclusivity by attending (personally or via substitute) all of the next four (4) meetings in a row, but such exclusivity shall not be regained if during those 4 weeks, a potential member applies for and is granted a seat in the Group in that same profession. A member missing six (6) meetings in any consecutive three (3) month period (and **not** per quarter) shall be asked to leave the group, but may reapply for membership the following July. A potential new member can join during the 4 week probationary period of the existing member who has lost exclusivity, but the new member shall not have exclusivity, unless the existing member leaves the group.
7. A member may take medical leave (with notification to the Secretary) if their fees are pre-paid for that period of time and they attempt to have someone "fill in" during their leave. Other, non-medical, leaves of absence shall be reviewed by the Executive Team on a case-by-case basis. All leaves of absence shall have an expiration deadline, which shall be stated publicly to the Membership as a whole, and which may be extended on a case-by-case basis.
8. Members should bring bona fide referrals and/or visitors, and conduct face to face meetings with other members. Referral slips should be done for new customers/initial services and not for ongoing services and business. Closed business slips will be done for any monies (gross profit) made from the referrals.
9. Visitors may attend two meetings in a three month period. Potential membership, conflicting professions, and any related issues will not be discussed during the open portion of any meeting.
10. Members will speak on their specific profession/business in rotation. Membership numbers will vary throughout the year, but member speakers can generally count on speaking approximately twice a year. New members will be inserted into the speaker schedule as quickly as possible and then fall into the regular rotation. Speakers should be in good standing, not missed more than three meetings in the past three months, and dues paid or their turn as speaker will be skipped. Speakers will have ten minutes to speak. Questions and answers will be handled after the meeting has ended or during a face to face. Special speakers and/or network training may be scheduled once a quarter.
11. Member speakers will bring a door prize. Door prize should be a tangible gift, minimum \$20 to \$25 such as a gift card or merchandise, (not an offer requiring purchase such as 10% off.) Only members with completed referral, face to face, closed business or guest slips are eligible for the prize drawing. Special speakers or short notice speakers are not required to provide a door prize. Slips will be held until the next meeting with a member speaker.

## **GULF COAST NETWORKING INC. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

12. In case of problems with a member, the Leadership Team may, at their sole discretion and after a simple majority vote of the Leadership Team, put a member on probation relating to the member's business practices or commitment to the group.
13. A member's position may be deemed opened for failure to comply with the policies and/or the code of ethics of GCN by the Leadership Team.
14. An individual member cannot be in any other group whose primary purpose is to pass referrals to one another, because it substantially reduces their commitment to the chapter members.
15. Membership lists are for the purpose of giving referrals and not for soliciting (via e-mail, Direct mail, or other means).
16. Policies are subject to change. These Policies and Guidelines may be amended at an Open Meeting by a vote of the Membership, with two (2) weeks advanced written notice (letter, email or text message) to all Members. No visitors will be invited the week of the vote.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

1. There is an initial membership fee and annual dues. Contact the local treasurer for amounts. Fees may be paid with cash or check.
2. Fees are non-refundable and cannot be transferred from one person to another unless the fees are from the same company or individual and will then be pro-rated upon approval of new application.
3. A member has three working days in which to resolve any returned checks written to GCN. Any returned checks not resolved within this period will be turned over to collections. All returned checks will be assessed a returned check fee. If a member passes a second NSF check, that member will be subject to immediate termination.
4. For GCN purposes, our calendar year starts 1 August and ends 31 July. Leadership team and other positions will be changed on 1 August. Positions vacated during the year will be filled as necessary by the leadership team from the membership and member will serve until the end of the calendar year, 31 July.
5. Nominations for positions should be done the First Thursday in July. Members nominated should be in good standing and may decline the nomination. Nominations will be reviewed by the leadership team with the purpose of maintaining the integrity of GCN as a well-functioning networking group; preserving and meeting the mission of the group. A vote will be conducted the third Thursday in July. One third (1/3) of the membership constitutes a quorum for all voting. A simple majority is required for each vote taken.
6. A member's annual dues will be reduced \$25.00 for every guest they bring that becomes a member, not exceed four new members per fiscal year.

**BUDGET:** The annual dues collected by GCN are used approximately as follows: Administrative supplies including referral slips, business card holders, GCN business cards and brochures, and other GCN marketing materials. At least one event (home, business expo) per year such as the budget allows.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## GULF COAST NETWORKING INC. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

**Executive Team:** Consists of immediate past president, current president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and the sergeant at arms. Purpose is to maintain the integrity of GCN as a well-functioning networking group; preserving and meeting the mission of the group and ensuring adherence to group policies and guidelines. Secondary purpose is to ensure the administration of the group remains simplistic and does not become burdensome. The Leadership Team is the Membership Committee.

**Leadership Team:** Consists of the immediate past president, current president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, network educator, speaker coordinator, social media team, and event coordinator.

**President:** Runs meetings. Part of Leadership Team.

**Vice President:** Runs meetings in absence of president. Part of Leadership Team. Maintains email correspondence with guests and warm prospects obtained through events, inviting them to attend GCN meetings. Maintains a binder of the Group's monthly bank account statements for review by any Member upon request. Performs monthly reconciliation of Group bank account, and immediately reports any discrepancies to the Leadership Team in writing. Provides a quarterly report to the Group at an open meeting of the monthly reconciliations. Has access to the bank account online/printed bank statements but is not an account signatory.

**Secretary:** Maintains membership listing and information, applications, bios on members, tracks and reports attendance weekly/quarterly, keeps track of visitors, and ensures admin supplies are sufficient. Compiles referral slips and provides quarterly reports. Runs meetings in absence of president and vice president. Part of leadership team. Will serve until all appropriate documents are properly transferred to a new secretary. May form a Secretarial Committee to assist in administering the tasks of the position. Timely notifies existing members of potential new member that might conflict with exiting member's exclusivity. Is a signatory on the Group's bank account.

**Treasurer:** Serves as the bookkeeper, maintains checking account, signs checks. Does not receive mailed bank statements and does not reconcile bank account. Creates a budget to be approved by Leadership Team and membership. Provides detailed, specific treasury report at quarterly open meetings (the first meeting of the month in January, April, July and October). Provides an **EXACT** total of the funds on deposit in Group bank account no less than one (1) time per each calendar month during the open meeting. Runs meetings in absence of president, vice president and secretary. Part of Leadership Team. Will serve until all appropriate banking, bookkeeping is properly transferred to any new treasurer.

**Sergeant at Arms:** Timekeeper, general rules and guidelines. Part of Leadership Team. Runs meetings in absence of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.

**Network educator:** Provides networking education for two minutes at each meeting. May also send educational material via email. Reviews and explains the Policies and Procedures to the Members on a routine basis during open meetings.

**Speaker Coordinator:** Coordinates and maintains listing of speakers to speak in order of date joined group, fitting in new members as soon as possible. Emails speaker schedule to membership, weekly.

**Social Media Team:** Responsible for organization/management of online events and website. Manage and

## GULF COAST NETWORKING INC. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

interact with each social network weekly to keep fans engaged. Document and upload photos. Utilize all forms of Social Media deemed appropriate by Leadership Team to help drive business to the group.

**Event Coordinator:** Coordinates, evaluates, and actively searches for networking events that can add to the growth of GCN. Submits events to Leadership Team and membership for approval. Coordinates volunteers from the membership to attend the events as representatives of GCN. Leads the Membership Team.

**Immediate Past President:** Serves on Executive Team, Leadership Team, advises, and provides continuity.

**Membership Team:** Greets visitors, thanks visitors for attending GCN meetings, and follows up with visitors via phone call and/or email. The Event Coordinator leads the Membership Team. This Team is open to other members who wish to serve.

If approved by the Membership, these Policies and Guidelines shall take effect on August 1, 2019.

Upon vote of the Membership, these policies and procedures are officially adopted as the policies and procedures governing Gulf Coast Networking, Inc. This the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

## **GULF COAST NETWORKING INC. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Attachment 1**

#### **Meeting Agenda:**

Open Networking

Open meeting

Prayer and Pledge

Welcome guests and visitors, introduce leadership, give purpose of meeting

Networking education

Secretary, and Treasurer reports

Members give one minute commercial on business followed by guests and visitors

Speaker gives 10 min presentation

Pass referrals, or give testimonial

Draw for door prize

Brief announcements

Adjourn