

## GULF COAST NETWORKING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

**OVERVIEW:** Gulf Coast Networking 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. in the Port City Cafe' at 2418 14th Street, Gulfport, Mississippi. 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.
- 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.
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.
4. 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.
5. The weekly meetings last 90 minutes.
6. Members should arrive on time and stay for the entire meeting. This should be a recurring meeting on your calendar.
7. Attendance is crucial to the group. You can send a substitute such as an employee or client and you counted as you present. You cannot have another GCN member substitute for you. A member is allowed three absences in a three month period. Repeated absences may result in your position being opened by the leadership team.
8. A member may take medical leave(with notification to the leadership team) if their fees are pre-paid for that period of time and they attempt to have someone "fill in" during their leave.

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9. Members should bring bonafide 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.
10. Visitors may attend two meetings in a three month period. Like professions will be covered by the leadership team. Potential membership, conflicting professions, and any related issues will not be discussed during the open portion of any meeting.
11. Members will speak on their specific profession/business in rotation based on "date joined". 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 two 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. If GCN membership is at 24 members or below, one speaker will be scheduled for the meeting. If GCN membership is 25 members or greater, two speakers will be scheduled per meeting. Special speakers and/or network training may be scheduled once a quarter.
12. 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.
13. In case of problems with a member, leadership team may, at their sole discretion, put a member on probation relating to the member's business practices or commitment to the group.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. Membership lists are for the purpose of giving referrals and not for soliciting (via e-mail, Direct mail, or other means).
17. Policies are subject to change. All proposed policy changes need to be reviewed and accepted by the leadership team.

### **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.

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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 voting.
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.
7. GCN Policies and Guidelines will not exceed three pages.

**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

**Leadership Team:** Consists of past presidents, 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.

**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.

**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.

**Treasurer:** Serves as the bookkeeper, maintains checking account. Creates a budget to be approved by Leadership Team and membership. Provides treasury report at quarterly meetings. 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.

**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 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.