



A program of the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce

Policy and Procedures

Objective

Connect Berkeley connects non-competing Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce member businesses for the sole purpose of sharing leads, referrals, tips, information and advice that directly support their business.

Membership

Each Connect Berkeley group shall consist of no more than twenty-five (25) active members. These members shall represent businesses and/or organizations that do not directly compete. In order to be eligible for Connect Berkeley, one must:

- a) be employed by a member business or organization in good standing with the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce
- b) not present direct competition to an already existing member of the Connect Berkeley
- c) refrain from discussing products or services that another member may represent in the group
- d) regularly attend meetings
- e) designate an alternative representative to attend and participate at all meetings in their absence

Obligation

- a) All members are expected to provide valid business leads/referrals on a regular basis. There will be no set quota, but the member will be expected to actively participate on a continuing basis.
- b) All members or their alternative representative are expected to be in attendance regularly for all meetings. If a member or alternative representative has more than **two (2) consecutive unexcused absences** (failure to notify Chamber President within 24 hours of meeting), their status shall be subject to removal from the group.
- c) **More than three (3) excused or unexcused absences** by a member or alternative representative in a calendar year will be cause for the member to be removed from the group.
- d) The Chamber will review requests for a leave of absence. A leave of absence will ensure the member that the group will not allow a competitor to join during their leave.

- e) Members are expected to participate in a “Presentation” about themselves and their business to help other members learn more about their company.

Selection of Members

- a) An application of membership shall be submitted to the Chamber President. Prior to acceptance, the Chamber President will ensure no competition exists and that the applicant is in good standing with the Chamber.
- b) All applicants are asked to attend one meeting before acceptance into Connect Berkeley.
- c) The applicant may be denied membership based on eligibility requirements. If competition exists (group has final approval), the applicant may be offered the chance to join another Connect Berkeley group (if possible). If the applicant’s business is not in good standing with the Chamber, they will be given no more than one month to pay membership dues.
- d) Upon acceptance, the applicant will be notified by the Chamber.
- e) An individual of the same business may not participate in another Connect Berkeley group.

Visitors

- a) Visitors may attend no more than two Connect Berkeley meetings at the invitation of a current member and must be pre-registered with Chamber President.
- b) Visitors should already be members of the Chamber, but if they are not, they must join the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce before joining Connect Berkeley.

Meetings

- a) Regular meetings of Connect Berkeley shall take place on the day determined by the Chamber. The Chamber shall also determine time and location. Any changes to either the time or location of the meeting must be approved by the Chamber President.
- b) Meetings will be conducted with any number of Connect Berkeley members in attendance.

Fees and Dues

- a) Connect Berkeley is a free membership benefit to any Chamber member in good standing.

Leadership

- a) The Chamber President is the key contact for Connect Berkeley group.
- b) Each Connect Berkeley member will take on the role of the Facilitator on a rotating basis, with each member being assigned a specific meeting.
- c) The role of the Facilitator is to conduct the meeting in a professional manner keeping the participants on task.

Structure/Agenda

Noon - 12:05 p.m.	Informal networking
12:06 p.m. - 12:10 p.m.	General announcements
12:10 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	60 second (maximum) individual commercials, which should highlight what the business does, who ideal contacts or centers of influence are, and what leads or contacts they are targeting.
12:30 p.m. – 12:40 p.m.	10 minute presentation/spotlight of one group member
12:40 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.	Exchange of leads/referrals and success stories
12:55 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Final announcements/adjourn

Expectations

The following are expectations of each Connect Berkeley member:

- a) To project a positive and supportive attitude.
- b) To recognize that this opportunity is a **once a month** commitment and members are responsible for attending all meetings or finding an appropriate substitute while communicating this information to the Chamber President and/or Facilitator.
- c) To be respectful of other's time, and therefore, be prompt for the start and remain for the duration of the meeting.
- d) To seek to build trust and goodwill among members and their referrals.
- e) To be a giver of qualified leads, referrals and testimonials and not just a taker.
- f) To provide quality products and services and honor the prices quoted.
- g) To be honest and truthful with all group members and their referrals.
- h) To follow up on referrals received.
- i) To perform agreements and commitments to members of the group.
- j) To adhere to policies and procedures as specified by the Chamber.

60-Second Commercial

- a) State your name, company name and title or primary responsibility.
- b) State the product or service that you represent in the group. (be specific)
- c) Give a brief description of the product or service you represent or an aspect of the product or service that you want to educate the group on or emphasize.
- d) Be repetitive about the type of referral you are looking for over the period of a few weeks. Send the same message to build an identity of you and the referral you want. After a few weeks, change the message to add to your identity.
- e) State the type of referral you are looking for:
 1. This can be very specific (i.e., a particular person you would like to meet or a general industry request) i.e., “the type of referral I’m looking for is anyone who is in need of life insurance: re-state your name and company. Give your hook, i.e., “Tony Morano, Besco Water, “You either have a filter or you are the filter”. “Scott Gillespie, Otter Skin Roofgear, We’ve got you covered.”

Best Practices

The people in your referrals group are willing VOLUNTEERS to join your business development group. YOU must provide the tools and motivation.

The tools are the easy part – information about you and your business. Make sure that they have a number of your business cards, brochures, etc.

Your 60 second commercial and 10 minute presentation are only “refreshers” for your team members to keep them up-to-date about your business.

The important part is for you to provide the motivation for your group members to help you build your business. By the way, it’s hard to motivate a team if you don’t show up for practice.

Friends are highly motivated to help their friends, not out of obligation or expectation of reward, but out of friendship. These meetings are to improve your business network first, and to provide social interaction second.

Friendships take time and effort to cultivate. Spend the time to make new friends and over time you will see your business grow in unexpected ways.

Make it a goal to spend the time to make one new friend at each meeting. In time, you will have several new friends that are educated and motivated to help you build your business. You will also be motivated and educated to help them build theirs, one-on-one.



APPLICATION

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Business Name: _____

Business Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Business Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Email: _____ **Website:** _____

Category/Industry/Profession Requested: _____

Business description, including your product and/or service: _____

Additional information: _____

I have read and agree to the Connect Berkeley Policy and Procedures:

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

