

BUSINESS REFERRAL GROUPS



MANHATTAN
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE



MCC Business Referral Group Policies

Membership

The Manhattan Chamber Business Referral Groups (BRG) are a program of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. Each Business Referral Group allows one individual per industry focus. This individual may only promote themselves for one business specialty even if they cover a variety of offerings within their business. Any individual of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce may become a member of the Business Referral Group on a first-come, first-serve basis. Any possible conflict with another group member should first have a discussion between the prospective member, existing member and BRG Membership Chair. The President should be consulted if there is still a concern of conflict. The group President reserves the right to make a determination on the membership and must be considered approved prior to paying the referral group fee. If the President cannot make a determination on the possible conflict then the BRG Coordinator and the MCC Director of Membership will make the final determination. A Membership fee of \$100 is paid on an annual basis, and a member must be current in both their Chamber Membership and Business Referral Group Membership to participate in the Group. An individual may only become a member of one group, even if an opening for their industry exists in another group. *Refunds are only provided if the business has closed or the member has moved more than 90 miles away less than 3 months after joining the group.*

Purpose: As a business resource for MCC members the expectation and goal of each BRG is to build business relationships and generate business for each other. This is done by each BRG member's commitment of time, focus and engagement to attend scheduled meetings, make referrals and meet outside of regular meetings to cultivate business relationships.

Meetings

Meetings are held every other week based on your group schedule at the specified location. The Google Drive calendar will list each month's BRG group meeting and time (*a minimum of two meetings out in the future at all time*). Any changes to meeting dates must be updated on the Google Dive immediately.

All attendees will introduce themselves. It is suggested that each member have a 60-second "commercial," and include an overview of their company offerings. Introductions must be kept to the industry focus they represent, or focus on members' business success, problems or needs. However, whenever guests are in attendance, each member should introduce themselves and focus on the industry they are representing.

In an effort to promote more individual one to one meetings outside of the regularly scheduled meeting, the group may offer an activity geared toward business growth or business networking. All activities and exercises will be approved by the BRG President. Activities and exercises are meant to foster interaction and enhance scheduled BRG meetings.



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A presenter may be selected to provide a 10-minute spotlight of their company in lieu of an activity. The presentation must be kept to the industry focus they represent, and should be limited in quantity to a few presentations a year, as the goal of the group is to promote learning more about a member's industry specialty outside of the group.

At times a guest speaker outside of membership of that group may be invited by the group President to speak. Topics must be generic and not overlap with the services of an existing member. The guest speaker is not permitted to promote their business directly unless the business is considered not-for-profit or the speaker is presenting on a charity event benefiting a not-for-profit organization.

Required at each meeting: Number of one-on-one meetings, as well as referral announcements, and closed business are to be reported and tracked during each meeting. Testimonials of member successes and group achievements are also highly encouraged to be reported to the MCC Director of Membership.

Tracking: All BRG groups must keep a record of attendance, referrals made and received and any resulting closed business. All tracking statistics and member successes will be reported to the MCC Office at the *mandated BRG President quarterly meetings*.

Referrals

Referrals, in large part, determine the success of the group. With that in mind each group member must make 2 referrals in each 6 month period (*January to June and July to December*). If a member is unable to contribute at least this minimum then they will be notified in writing and placed on probation for a period of two (2) months from notification date. If the member does not produce 2 referrals within this timeframe then their membership is forfeited. The same forfeiture rules apply as noted under the attendance section.

As a member, you are responsible for tracking your own referral counts.

Guests: Each BRG member is encouraged to bring guests to meetings. The purpose of guests is to bring people who may fill an open industry spot or have a business that is complimentary to the group. Guests also add new energy to the group. The BRG member should inform the Membership Chair with the name and industry of the guest prior to the meeting. If an existing member believes there is a conflict in business focus after the meeting the Membership Chair can have a discussion with the member and prospective member to make a determination.



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Attendance

Meeting attendance is essential to cultivating relationships and receiving referrals. It is YOUR responsibility as a member to maintain your commitment to the group and minimize the amount of absences. A member with excessive absences will forfeit their membership as outlined:

*Two (2) absences within six (6) months will receive a phone call follow up from the Membership Chair. You will be warned that you will be placed on probation if a third meeting is missed within the timeframe allotted.

*Three (3) absences within six (6) months will receive a phone call follow up from the Membership Chair. You will be warned that effective immediately you are placed on probation until the six month timeframe as outlined below has passed. If a fourth meeting is missed within the timeframe allotted your position is forfeited.

*Four (4) absences within six (6) months will receive a phone call and written follow up from the Membership Chair on behalf of the President indicating your membership to the group is forfeited effective immediately.

*Members may send substitutes if they are unable to attend a meeting. You can invite anyone to substitute for you as a Guest. The substitute should present your info commercial on your behalf, and will also be allowed to present their own info commercial if no overlap exists with another member of the group. A substitute does not count as an absence.

Excused Absences (Holds)

Should a situation arise that would require excessive absence (i.e. death of a loved one, jury duty, medical emergency, out of the country), a hold may be placed on your membership for up to 4 meetings without absence penalty. A notice must be received in writing to the Membership Chair and approved by the Group President prior to the first missed meeting.

All Business Referral Group's will have the same attendance timeframes: from January to June and from July to December.

All attendance issues will be communicated to the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership through the Google Drive BRG Sheet and/or by email to the MCC Director of Membership.

Punctuality

Being on time is important in creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and commitment. You are expected to make allowances in your travel plan to be sure you arrive on time. There are times when unforeseen situations may arise. You may forfeit making your introduction/commercial to the group. And excessive lateness may lead to further disciplinary action as stated in the Discipline paragraph.



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Forfeited Membership

When a membership is forfeited, a period of three months from the date of the letter of forfeit must pass before reapplying to the originating group. You may only be accepted to the originating group if your industry focus is available. Refunds are not available if your position is forfeited.

It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences. Attendance absences are provided upon individual inquiry only.

Code of Ethics

Upon new member induction, the following code of ethics will be read and approved by the new member. All must adhere to the code of ethics as outlined below. Any misrepresentation of the code of ethics will result in disciplinary action as described in the discipline section of this document.

- *I will be truthful and honest to the members and their referrals
- *I will provide good quality services at the prices I have quoted
- *I promise to follow up on all the referrals I receive
- *I will build goodwill and trust with all the members and their referrals
- *I will display a positive and supportive attitude to my group and the Chamber
- *I will live up to the ethical standards of my profession

Discipline

If any member becomes disruptive to the group, or if complaints are lodged against a member by other members for bad, dishonest or unethical behavior, or consistently fails to follow up on referrals, late for meetings, etc., the following disciplinary action will apply.

On first recognized offense, a leadership member will ask the member to stay after the meeting to discuss the matter privately. The member will be placed on probation for a period of two months (2) effective immediately and will receive a written notification by the group President.

Upon second offense, the member will be notified in writing and by phone that their membership is forfeited effective immediately. The same forfeiture rules apply as noted above under the attendance section.



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Grievance

Should a grievance on discipline or general policies arise, a BRG member must initially notify and discuss their issue with their Group President. If this is not amicably resolved at the group level, a member should contact the BRG Coordinator for resolution. Should this not be amicably resolved, the member may contact the Director of Membership of the Chamber to discuss and receive resolution.

When a grievance is initiated, it is essential that President of the group notify the BRG Coordinator. All communication will remain transparent and in writing between the group President, BRG Coordinator, and MCC Director of Membership to ensure the grievance is resolved amicably between all parties.

Leadership Team

A leadership team, elected annually, will consist of:

President - Liaison to MCC office and BRG Coordinator, runs each meeting, keeps agenda on track, approves speakers, keeps track of guests internally and sends meeting attendance list follow ups.

Vice-President - Runs meetings in President's absence, selects speakers and activities, notifies leadership team of absences and follow ups, as well as tracks absences, referrals, one-on-one meetings, closed business and attendance from the group members.

Membership Chair – Keeps track of and follows up with guests after meetings and ensures no overlap in industry focus between members. One Membership Chair will be selected for a BRG with total members of less than 15, and a second person may be added with more than 15 members. The Membership Chair will back-up the President with any other tasks on an as needed basis.

BRG Coordinator

A BRG Coordinator is appointed by the Chamber to oversee all referral groups. All referral group Presidents will report to the Coordinator, and communicate updates by utilizing the google drive sheet. Each leadership team will have access to their group's member list. The leadership team needs to keep the list current, that is add and delete members and track member dues payments. The MCC Director of Membership will enter the paid date on the group list. The BRG Coordinator will be the primary liaison between the referral groups to the chamber. The Coordinator will also receive and distribute inquiries on referral group interest to the group Presidents.

All Group Presidents, the BRG Coordinator and MCC Director of Membership will meet on a quarterly basis. Meetings will be scheduled and held at the MCC office.

The Quarterly meeting will be used to review the activities reports of each group, strategize and exchange ideas to enhance the groups and discuss any other business relevant for BRG.



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Elections

When a group is initially launched, a group President will be appointed by the BRG Coordinator after review and approval from the Chamber. The appointed President will be required to shadow existing BRG meetings in an effort to learn the process of operation. The appointed Group President will serve a one-year term based on the start date of the group, and may be re-elected at the time of the regular election schedule.

A President, Vice-President and Membership Chair will be appointed when a new group forms, and will serve a term until the regular election schedule is reached.

One month prior to the election schedule for the group, the Group President must notify the group that elections will be held on a specific date. All seats must be re-elected annually, and the President must ask for any nominations for the President, Vice-President, and Membership positions. On the scheduled day of elections, if only one person is nominated for a position, they will be appointed. If more than one person is nominated for that position, an election will be held and the person with the most votes will fulfill that role. If the results turn out in a tie, another voting must take place solely between the two candidates.

A member may be elected to a leadership position limited to a 2 year consecutive term. During an election, only BRG members in good standing of both Chamber membership and BRG membership are allowed to vote. Business Referral Group members must be present to vote.

All BRG groups will hold elections in December for the following year's leadership team.

If during the year a member in a leadership role has to forfeit their position, an election process will be conducted to fill the leadership role.

MCC reserves the right to make final the decision on any group leadership.

Payments

Each BRG member must make payment within 5 business days of receiving payment instructions. If payment is not received within 5 business days of receiving payment instructions, then the position will be forfeited. Payment may be made to the MCC Office Manager who may be reached at the contact info listed at the end of this document. The \$100 BRG fee will be waived if the member is an employee of an MCC Partner company.

The MCC Director of Membership and the President of each BRG group will have access through Google Drive Sheet a list of their members for that group. The MCC Office Manager will enter the paid date next to the member's name. It will be up to the President of the group to monitor that payment was made.



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Contacts:

All inquiries regarding the MCC Business Referral Group program may be addressed to:

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Jessica Walker, President, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
jwalker@manhattancc.org - Phone: 212-473-7875

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Rosemary Alcantara, Office Manager, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
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MCC Business Referral Group Signature Card

I have read and understand the MCC Business Referral Group policies, and will represent my industry focus within my group to the best of my abilities. And I know what the expectations and requirements to be a member of a BRG group are.

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

Group Number (Circle):

1

2

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