

# Operating Guidelines

## Cochecho Networkers

[www.cochechonetworkers.com](http://www.cochechonetworkers.com)

A Member Referral Group

### Introduction

Cochecho Networkers (CN) is a structured networking group designed to enhance business development and personal growth opportunities for members. The group provides the opportunity and setting for referral exchange and business advice in order for participants to strengthen their business and expand their individual network. CN members commit to increasing each member's business. This is accomplished by developing strong relationships and the exchange of ideas, resources, and referrals among members.

### Purpose

The purpose of Cochecho Networkers is twofold:

- First, we aim to build and strengthen the businesses of our members through word of mouth referrals, relationship building between members both during and outside of meetings, and through our networking education programs during meetings.
- Secondly, we aim to build and strengthen our community. This is also achieved through relationship building both during and outside of meetings, as well as through our charitable contributions.

### Meetings

Meetings are held every Thursday morning beginning at 8:30 am. Each meeting is a structured session providing the opportunity to give and receive referrals. Meetings are formatted to allow each member to give a 60 second "commercial" about their business. In addition, one member is spotlighted by giving a 10-minute presentation. Quarterly the 10-minute presentation is a business education training to help members improve various business and networking skills. A sample agenda is provided. The format, location and duration of meetings may be modified as necessary to accommodate the particular needs of the group.

Members may attend meetings virtually via the platform provided by the Leadership Team. Please understand that virtual attendance does not have the same relationship building effect as attending in person, and thus may not result in as many referrals. Members attending virtually are required to:

- Keep their camera on at all times during the meeting.
- Stay attentive to the meeting, and not engage in any other activities during the meeting, just as they would if they were attending in person.
- Mute themselves as appropriate to minimize audio distraction for other members.

Unfortunately, prior attempts to have a 10-minute presentation virtually have not proven successful for a number of reasons. Therefore, members must attend in person to be included in the 10-minute presentation rotation. You can communicate with the secretary to discuss this further.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### CN Members

- Adhere to all guidelines, including the attendance policy
- Only represent their primary occupation during meeting time
- Participate in all regularly scheduled meetings
- Responsible for acting in the best interests of the group

### Past President

- Mentors the incoming President
- Attends monthly leadership team meetings to address issues within the group
- Conducts all meetings in the absence of the President

### President

- Conducts all CN weekly meetings
- Implements new policies put forth by the group
- Responsible for effective communications with the leadership team

### Vice President

- Conducts meetings in the absence of the President and Past President
- Tracks the referrals passed, closed business, and one-to-ones
- Provides a regular printed report (no less than quarterly), displaying the activities of the members of the group, to be distributed during the meeting.
- Is the leadership representative of the Membership Committee

### Membership Committee

- Keeps track of member's attendance
- Tracks visitors
- Reviews and accepts or denies new applications
- Deals with any membership conflicts

### Treasurer

- Collects annual dues and other payments
- Tracks all financial activity
- Writes checks as needed
- Deposits and distributes charitable funds as appropriate
- Provides a quarterly printed report of the group's financial activities to be distributed at the meeting

### Secretary

- Schedules the 10-minute speaker rotation
- Introduces the 10-minute speaker each week
- Records important decisions made at Leadership Team meetings and shares the notes with the Leadership Team before the next meeting.

### Education Coordinator

- Arranges for a 3-5minute lesson on how to improve networking skills and business relationships each meeting

## **Leadership**

Leadership positions are 1-year terms, with the exception of the Treasurer which is a 3-year term. Elections are held annually, in May, by secret ballot with the new term beginning in June. In the event there is only one volunteer for a position the Leadership Team may choose to forgo an election for that position.

The Leadership Team is comprised of: Past President; President; Vice President; Membership Committee; Secretary; Treasurer; and Educational Coordinator.

Certain positions in the Leadership Team functions on a shifting schedule to keep continuity throughout the group. Therefore, the following positions automatically shift forward:

President to Past President

Vice President to President

The Treasurer position is a 3-year term.

Quality of Service: In the event of an official and valid complaint made by any member of CN in regards to one's ability to effectively and professionally meet the requirements of a leadership role, the complaint will be relayed directly and anonymously to the person of concern so they may rectify the problem. If 3 or more separate complaints are made by different individuals the person may be asked to resign from the position.

## **Membership**

Eligibility: Perspective members may visit and fully participate in meetings 2 times prior to making the commitment to join. Applications will only be considered if there is availability within the group for the business type. Any potential conflicts of business type will be addressed by the Membership Committee prior to approval of a new member. After their 2<sup>nd</sup> visit non-members will not be permitted to speak during the 60 second presentations, but may still attend meetings.

### To become a member

- One must offer a valid and legal product or service to the general public
- Have an application completed, reviewed, and approved by the Membership Committee
- Pay the annual membership dues. (If a new member application is received within 90 days of the annual membership renewal, the annual membership renewal dues will be waived for the new member, for that year.)

### Termination

- Members can discontinue membership at any time verbally or in writing to the President, Vice President, or Membership Committee.
- Membership will be discontinued by CN in the event of 3 or more consecutive unexcused absences. (An excused absence is one discussed with and *approved* by the membership committee at least 24 hours in advance of the absence.)
- Membership may be discontinued by CN at the annual renewal period if the member has missed more than 50% of the meetings within the last 12 months.
- Membership will be discontinued by CN if the annual membership dues are not paid on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> each year.
- Membership may be discontinued by CN in the event of an official complaint of ethical or legal concern made by any other member of CN. The final decision will rest with the Membership Committee.
- Membership may be discontinued by CN in the event of 3 separate official and valid complaints made by any member of CN in regards to one's ability to effectively and professionally participate in the group. Any such complaint will be relayed directly and anonymously to the member of concern, so they

may rectify the problem. The final decision as to the validity of any such complaint will rest with the Membership Committee.

- Members must re-apply for membership in the event of a change in business type (ie: If you change profession from dog walking to personal trainer and now wish to change your seat in the group to personal trainer).

### **Monetary Commitments**

The only required payments from members is the annual membership dues paid with application and due again June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. If membership is terminated for any reason the annual dues will have to be re-submitted with re-application. If a new member application is received within 90 days prior to the annual membership renewal, the dues do not need to be re-paid by the new member that year.

There is no location fee incurred by either the group as a whole or the members individually at Cochecho Networkers. As a result, you are strongly encouraged to order something from the restaurant at each meeting in compensation to Strafford Farms for use of the space.

### **Attendance**

Members are expected to demonstrate their commitment through consistent attendance. Members are allowed 2 consecutive unexcused absences before losing their membership status. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive absence, they must complete and submit a new application along with the annual membership dues of \$25.00. All applications will be subject to review by the Membership Committee.

It is acceptable to have an employee or other agent representing your business fill your seat during a meeting if you are not able to attend that meeting. This option brings the added benefit of introducing someone new to our network, and can lead to new referrals.

An attendance hold is available if you have extenuating circumstances (i.e. short-term work/personal commitments or medical issues), you must communicate that to a member of the Membership Committee at least 24 hours in advance. All hold requests must include a set beginning and end date, and must be for an extended period of more than 2 weeks to qualify for consideration by the Membership Committee. Each situation will be reviewed by the Membership Committee before a hold is granted. Notification of the need for a hold does not automatically result in a hold; approval must be granted by the Membership Committee first.

Attendance is necessary in order to build relationships and keep the group effective as a networking team. As such, members must attend a minimum of 50% of meetings each year. This requirement will not apply to any hold period approved by the Membership Committee. Failure to meet these requirements will result in termination of membership at the annual renewal.

If a member is late to arrive to a meeting (arrives after 8:30am) that member may still participate in the meeting, but will not be permitted to do a 60 second presentation that week.

### **Snow Day Policy**

When Dover public schools are cancelled or have a delayed start due to weather, Cochecho Networkers in-person meetings are cancelled. A virtual meeting will still be held.

Members commuting from outside of Dover are excused if school is cancelled or delayed in the member's home town. The member must communicate this fact to the Membership Committee to be excused.

## **Community Service**

Cochecho Networkers has a Community Service Committee which oversees the awarding of funds collected during each meeting to a local charity on a quarterly basis. Funds are collected by passing around a receptacle at each meeting for members and visitors to add a voluntary contribution. At the end of each quarter, the collected funds are awarded to the charity selected for that quarter, in the form of a check provided by the Treasurer.

Charities are selected through the following process:

- During the last month of a quarter, members suggest local charities they would like to see receive all funds collected during the following quarter.
- The chair of the Community Service Committee keeps track of the names of all the charities proposed during that month.
- On the last week of that quarter, the chair prepares secret ballots listing all the proposed charities and members vote on their favorite charity.
- The charity with the most votes becomes the recipient of funds for the following quarter.
- If there is a tie vote between two charities a coin will be flipped. One charity is selected for the upcoming quarter, and the other charity will be the focus of the following quarter.

## **Staying Connected**

To expand your network, be sure to take advantage of the following:

Website - After becoming a new member, you will need to share your contact information with Kat Roedell to get a listing on the Membership page of the website. You may want to bookmark this page to have quick access when referring other members to your contacts.

Face-to-Face Meetings – Used to meet with members outside of the regularly scheduled meetings. The better rapport you have with each member, the more referrals you will both be able to give one another. There is a list of current members on the website as well as on the Facebook page so you can keep track of who you have met with and who to contact for a one-to-one meeting.

Facebook Page – If you are a Facebook member, be sure to connect with each member of the group along with “liking” their business pages. Sharing each other’s information/pages is another great way to extend our marketing reach with and for one another.

You will also be connected to the Cochecho Networkers Group page which is a “closed” discussion forum that only members of the group can post to. Posts should be business related and be presented in a professional manner as the public can read the posts. If there is an inappropriate post, it will be deleted and the author will receive a warning.

If a member opts out of the group page and later wants to rejoin it, they must provide a written request to the Leadership Team for review.

Status on the group page changes if:

1. Membership is terminated for any reason.
2. Inappropriate/unprofessional posting continues to occur after initial warning.

# Tracking Slips

## Referral Slips-

- From: Your name
- To: The CN member you are passing the referral to
- Referral: The name of the person who will be hiring or purchasing from the CN Member. Ideally this person has been asked if the CN Member can call them and the phone number is written on this slip.
- **WHITE**: Goes to the CN Member receiving the referral **PINK**: Goes in the basket

Note: **PINK** is also used for **visitors** you have invited to the meeting. Simply write "VISITOR" across the slip along with your name. Bringing a visitor is considered a referral to the group, so please do submit a slip for your visitors.

## Closed Business Slip-

- Purpose: This form is to track revenue from completed business generated from a CN referral.
- Thank you to: The member that gave the referral.
- Income reported in the amount of: this is not meant to be an exact science for reporting purposes. There are a number of ways to report income from a referral. Below is a general explanation based on the type of business you are in:
  1. If you are commissioned, put down your commission figure.
  2. If you bill hourly, the total received for the contract should be stated.
  3. If you are in a position which you do not get compensated based on the actual business you generate, then give the dollar value of the referral. (Ex: If a banker receives a referral for a \$50,000 commercial loan; that should be considered as \$50,000 worth of business for the bank).
- From: Your Name (The person or business that received \$)

## Face-To-Face Slip -

- Purpose: This form is to track face-to-face meetings.
- Completion: The member who initiated the meeting should be the one to fill out this form. Only one blue slip is submitted for each one-to-one that occurs.

# Cochecho Networkers

## AGENDA

8:30 am	Meeting Begins, Opening Comments/Introductions Leadership Positions Visitors	President
	Networking Education Segment	Ed. Coordinator or Other member
	60 Second Commercials	All Members
	Speaker Rotation Announcement Introduction of 10-minute Presenter	Secretary
	10-minute Spotlight Presentation	Chosen Member
	Group Reports/Announcements Group's Performance Data Membership Committee Events Committee Community Service Treasurer (Quarterly)	Vice President Chair Chair Chair Treasurer
	Referrals & Testimonials	All Members
	Announcement of upcoming/area networking events	Secretary
9:30 am(ish)	Adjournment	President
	Open Networking	All Members
10:00 am	Room should be vacated	