

Whatcom Referral Network - Bylaws | 2013

The **Whatcom Referral Network** is a group of non-competing businesses working together towards a common goal of business growth for each member. The group provides an open environment for idea sharing, education, and most importantly, lead and referral generation for each member.

Meeting Agenda: (Beginning at 7:00 AM) The meeting agenda is as follows:

1. Open networking (15 minutes)
2. Call to order and welcome.
3. Introduction of guests
4. Why we network?
5. Educational Minute
6. 60 Second Elevator Pitches
7. Referrals/Testimonials/One-on-One reporting
8. Featured Speaker /Power Partner
9. Hot Seat
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment

Meeting Date and Time: The Whatcom Referral Network meets every Thursday morning at 7. Meetings are held in the Rainier Room of the Gateway Centre (Third floor, 1313 E Maple St. Bellingham, WA 98225).

Holidays: The Whatcom Referral Network will not meet on Thanksgiving or during the last 2 weeks of December. If other holidays happen to fall on a Thursday, it will be the decision of the group as to whether or not a meeting is held.

Membership Dues: Membership dues are \$125 per year if paid by check or \$130 per year if paid online via PayPal. Initial Annual Dues and a separate non-refundable \$25 Application Fee is due when application is returned to the Membership Committee. Continuing Annual Dues are directly to the Treasurer at member's anniversary date. Application and dues fees shall be delivered to the Treasurer upon receipt by the Membership Committee.

Attendance: Each member is expected to attend all meetings to ensure they are receiving the most out of their membership. Additionally, each member may arrange for a substitute to attend the meeting in his/her place. Extenuating circumstances and leaves of absences will be considered by the leadership committee on a case by case basis.

Substitutes: The substitute will be expected to deliver a 60 second elevator pitch on behalf of the absent member during the regular members pitch time. He/she will also be able to speak about their own business for 60 seconds after all the members have all given their elevator pitches. Substitutes do not need to be from the same company, field, or industry as the member they are replacing. Substitutes may also be from an industry that is filled by another Whatcom Referral Network Member although substitutes from a non-competing industry would be preferred.

Visitor: Any business person from any industry is welcome to visit the WRN three times before submitting an application. Visitor may apply for membership after their first visit. If a conflict exists between a visitor and a member the visitor will be so informed, and the visitor's contact information will be saved by the Membership Committee in the event the conflicted member leaves the group, so an opening in the WRN may be filled. Conflicts may be negotiated with the "Conflicted Members" if overlap of services does not detrimentally affect the current member.

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60 Second Elevator Pitch: An "Elevator Pitch" is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced description about your company that anyone should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator. At every meeting, each member will have the opportunity to stand up and deliver their 60 second elevator pitch to the entire audience.

Featured Speaker: Each WRN member will have the opportunity to speak about his/her business or industry in greater detail one or two times per year, depending on the size of the membership. The featured speaker is expected to stand in front of the group and deliver an 8 to 10 minute presentation about their business, or showcase one aspect of their business. It is recommended that a portion (one minute) of the presentation be spent on what a good referral looks like to the particular featured speaker. After the presentation, the speaker should be prepared to answer 2 – 4 minutes worth of questions.

Hot Seat: Each week one member will be selected to be in the hot seat. The hot seat is a 2 – 4 minute segment which requires no preparation by the selected member or by the membership. The member in the hot seat will sit in the middle of the room and answer questions from the membership. This is a very informal segment designed to get to know each member better.

Power Partner Portion: A portion of one meeting per month may be dedicated to exploring potential power partners for existing members. Power Partner Portion will focus on members' businesses and will study and explore the business to help the member find potential power partners, both to bring into the group and discover partners that may not be a good fit for the group, but would be good for the members' business. This portion of the meeting will be facilitated by the President.

Referrals: The primary purpose of the Whatcom Referral Network is lead generation and passing referrals. Near the end of each meeting, each member will have the opportunity to announce referrals for members, ensuring that the member receiving the referral has the following information:

1. Name of referral
2. Means of contacting the referral
3. Expectation of the member receiving the referral (for example: call immediately, please send email, expecting a quote, etc.)

Testimonials: The Whatcom Referral Network encourages public feedback from the members. If members have a good experience working with one another, that testimonial is encouraged to be shared during the referral portion of the meeting.

One-On-One: A One-On-One is a meeting between two or more members of the Whatcom Referral Network outside of our regular meeting time. One-On-Ones are a great way to learn more about fellow members.

Leadership Committee: The leadership committee is made up of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Committee members, educational director, and public relations/publicity manager. Each position is a one year term and elections are held at the first meeting in January. Consecutive terms are allowed. Past Leadership Committee members are expected to be available to the new Leadership Committee should their advice/direction be needed.

The leadership committee is expected to meet once per quarter. The President shall update the membership about Leadership Committee decisions at the next membership meeting.

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LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: The duties of each position are as follows:

President: The president is expected to facilitate each meeting, and is responsible for taking attendance and maintaining attendance records for each meeting. The president is responsible for the educational minute should the Educational Director be unable to attend a meeting, and is also in charge of creating and distributing the featured speaker and hot seat schedule.

Vice President: The vice-president is expected to facilitate the meeting should the president be absent. The vice-president is also tasked with ensuring that the Whatcom Referral Networks' website is kept up-to-date with current members.

Secretary: He / She will take minutes of each meeting or confirm a substitute in the event of absence. He/She shall publish the minutes of the meeting to the membership by email at his/her earliest possible convenience, and maintain a file of all such minutes. Within the minutes, the Secretary shall keep track of all referrals, One-on-Ones, and Testimonials, and attendance.

Treasurer: The treasurer position is responsible for maintaining the Whatcom Referral Network checking account, paying any bills that the Whatcom Referral Network may incur, and receiving all membership application fees and dues. Treasurer is responsible for sending reminders to members before their annual renewal date.

Membership Committee: The committee shall be comprised of the Senior and Junior members to assure continuity. A new junior member is elected each year and will become the Senior member for the second year. It is the responsibility of the membership committee to interview all applicants, contact applicant's references, and make a recommendation on whether or not an applicant should become a member of the Whatcom Referral Network. A vote by the membership committee and then the leadership committee is needed before an applicant can officially become a member of the Whatcom Referral Network. The membership committee is also in charge of any membership drives, as directed by the Leadership Committee.

Educational Director: The educational director is responsible for the educational minute at the start of each meeting, or to appoint a substitute in the event of an absence. The President will fill in by default if an absence is unexpected.

OPTIONAL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Public Relations/Publicity Manager: The public relations/publicity manager is responsible for getting the Whatcom Referral Network meeting time and place into the local business publications (The Bellingham Herald, the Northwest Business Monthly, and the Bellingham Business Journal). Distribution of other press releases about the group is also the responsibility of the PR/Publicity manger.