

Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Referral Groups Policies and Procedures

Article 1. Mission Statement

The mission of the Business Referral Groups (BRGs) is to create a network of business professionals to support each other in promoting their business and professional development in various ways, not only among the membership, but also through outside sources.

The Business Referral Groups encourage the exchange of information, ideas and business referrals, which in turn will promote the success of each career professional in the organization.

Article 2. Membership

Section 2.1. Eligibility

Membership will be available to any businessperson who is a member in good standing of the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce. Each group will be established on a “one per category” basis meaning that no business shall conflict with a category that is already filled. If a member has more than one business affiliation, he/she may solicit their other business(es) during the referral group meeting. However, the member must designate one of the businesses as a “primary” business, and other businesses that the member promotes will be “secondary” businesses. If a member has a secondary business to promote, which conflicts with another member’s primary business categories, then the member promoting the secondary business must defer to the member with the primary business category, and cease promoting that secondary business. If an existing member has a business that is in competition with a new or pending member’s primary business, the existing member can block the new member’s participation. Each member of the BRG must designate their primary business upon joining. Representation of business outside of these requirements shall result in termination from the group.

Should a situation arise wherein two members are both promoting a secondary business of the same business category, the two members must agree between themselves as to which member will be allowed to promote their secondary business exclusively. Should they not be able to agree, the member in longest standing shall prevail. The Chair will have final word on this matter, should the two members in conflict not be able to resolve the issue between themselves.

The Chamber maintains a waiting list of interested members. Vacancies should first be filled from that list whenever there is an eligible candidate. The category of each member shall be defined by their Chamber membership form.

Section 2.2 Fees and Holds

There may be a membership fee for joining a Business Referral Group. Each group has the right to charge this fee annually or bi-monthly, depending on the group's fee choice; and if so the fee will be paid by each member the first week in January, or as determined by the group, and it will be non-refundable. The fee will defray membership costs, such as membership badges, administrative costs and marketing for the group. Members pay a full one-year membership fee, or bi-monthly fee, depending on the group's fee choice, when they join. Their fee for the second year (if appropriate) is pro-rated to adjust their membership period to a calendar year.

There may also be a monthly fee for the cost of refreshments at the meetings. This fee is due at the last meeting of the prior month. Any member who is unable to attend one or all of the meetings each month is still required to pay the full fee. The cost of fees will be waived if a member is on an approved hold.

Member holds may be granted for reasons of health or travel. A formal request for a hold must be presented to the Chair, who will decide to grant the leave or not. An approved hold can be granted for no more than 90 days. A member's position within the BRG will be protected for the duration of the hold.

Section 2.3. Code of Ethics

All members must practice good business ethics. Your Business Referral Group is a part of the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce. Comments made during meetings should only pertain to your group or to Chamber announcements. It is not acceptable to solicit members of your group for membership in other Chambers, other organizations or other networking groups. Upon joining a group, all members will receive and acknowledge that they have agreed to these Policies and Procedures and this Code of Ethics.

Section 2.4. Referral Group Activities

All members participate in a 30-second promotional message, at the beginning of the meeting. Members who are not present when the meeting starts, waive their right to present their 30-second message. Additionally, all members should give promotional presentations as scheduled by the speaker coordinator. If a member is unable to attend a meeting where they are a featured speaker for a promotional presentation, it is their responsibility to find a substitute speaker.

Section 2.5. Attendance

A member shall not miss more than two meetings per 6 months. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the forfeiture of their position. However, if extenuating circumstances occur, a hold can be granted by the officers. Appropriate excuses for holds are illness or extended business commitments.

It is required that all members who will not attend a meeting shall find a person to substitute for them as an attendee for the meeting to be missed. A substitute attending for the member qualifies as attendance for the member, and thus does not count towards the 2 meetings allowed to be missed in six months. If the member cannot find a substitute to appear on his/her behalf, then the missed meeting will count towards the 2 meetings allowed to be missed in six months.

It is required that all members will notify the Chair or the Secretary of the group more than 24 hours before each meeting, of their intention to either attend or supply a substitution for their attendance, for the upcoming meeting.

It is required that all members who will not attend shall notify a group member, before the meeting, and preferably more than 24 hours before the meeting. Further, if a member plans to be late to the meeting, a phone call should be made or a text sent to a member or the Chair.

Section 2.6. Dismissal

A member shall forfeit membership by failing to comply with these Policies and Procedures. If a member of the group drops their Chamber membership, they will be dropped from the group.

Article 3. Meetings

Section 3.1. Schedule

Meetings shall be held as scheduled. Meeting agenda shall be determined by each individual group but it is tailored to include the established format of promotional messages, presentations and referral exchange.

Section 3.2. Visitors

All Chamber members and potential Chamber members are welcome to attend. A visitor may attend 2 consecutive meetings before joining. Visitors who decide to join must read and acknowledge these Policies and Procedures, pay any annual or bi-monthly dues, and any meal costs for the remaining meetings that month.

Section 3.3. Keeping Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures Current

All group members shall read and sign a current copy of the Policies and Procedures, every two years.

Section 3.4. Keeping Business Biographies Current

All group members shall supply a recent and current biography of themselves, and their role in their related business(es), every two years.

Article 4. Officers

Section 4.1. Chairperson

It is the duty of the Chairperson to preside over each meeting and to ensure that the organization and its officers run the meeting in a professional and organized manner. The Chairperson is also responsible for examining the financial records of the group on a regular basis.

Section 4.2. Vice Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson coordinates all publicity for the organization. The Vice Chairperson is responsible for scheduling speakers. The Vice Chairperson presides over meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

The Vice Chairperson chairs the Membership Committee. He or she provides a packet of information to each member that may include these Policies and Procedures, a Group Roster, and a biographical statement on each member of the group. Each member is responsible for providing their biographical material to the Vice Chairperson.

If there is no Vice Chairperson, the Chairperson is responsible for the responsibilities of the Vice Chairperson.

Section 4.3 Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for collection of any membership dues and monthly fees and depositing these into the group's checking account. The Treasurer is also responsible for reviewing the accuracy of any bills received, including any restaurant bills. All bills need to be signed off by the Treasurer. The Treasurer is to pay bills by writing checks from the group's checking account. Bills paid from the group's checking account should be limited to expenses related to membership badges, administrative costs and marketing for the group. Two signatures are required on each check that is written, the Treasurer's signature and one other signature. Bills shall be paid by using the group's checking account only; it is not acceptable to pay using the Treasurer's personal checks or credit cards. The Treasurer shall maintain the group roster. The Chamber is not responsible for any bills that a Business Referral Group incurs. Under no circumstances shall the Chamber, its affiliates, licensors, contractors or employees be held liable for the funds, or lack of funds, in the referral group's checking account.

If the group does not collect dues, or maintain financial or bookkeeping records, the position of Treasurer is not required for the group.

Article 5. Terms of Office

Section 5.1. Term

Offices are held for a term of 6 months or for 1 year. Every member should understand that they must hold a least one Officer position during the course of their tenure in the group. Elections will be held in the month of June for the installation of officers during the first meeting in July. Elections will be held in the month of December for installation of officers during the first meeting in January.

Section 5.2. Election of Officers

Members elect new officers. The Chairperson shall organize solicitation of potential officers. Officers will be nominated and voted on by all members present or by written proxy. Proxies need to be received prior to the election.

Section 5.3. Vacancies

Resignation from any officer position shall be made by written notice one month before vacating the position. If an officer fails to attend three consecutive meetings (unexcused) or fails to perform the duties of their office, they may either resign voluntarily or face possible removal by the other officers.

Article 6. Disbandment of Business Referral Groups

The Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce retains the right to disband any referral group, at any time, under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Chamber.

Article 7. Revisions

Changes or updates to these Policies and Procedures shall be voted on by a committee made up of all group officers and approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Chamber. Each Business Referral Group shall have one vote.

Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Referral Groups

Policies and Procedures Agreement

I, the undersigned, have read and agree to follow the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Referral Groups Policies and Procedures.

Signature: _____ **Company:** _____
Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____
Group: _____

Waiver of Liability

I agree to release and hold harmless the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce, any of its directors, members or employees from any and all loss of liability resulting at any time from injury to or the death of any person or persons or any damage to property owned on in the care, custody and control, of the Business Referral Group, while attending and Business Referral Group meeting or event. I further agree to indemnify the above stated organization and individuals as to all costs, expenses, damages, including reasonable attorney fees arising from any claim relating to participation in said events.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Printed Name: _____
Group: _____