

## WELCOME STATEMENT

The West St. Tammany Business Alliance welcomes visitors to our organization.

Our main purpose is to create business for our members through referrals and, therefore, increase our incomes.

We meet weekly to provide the continuity necessary to be successful. We do not consider ourselves a single event networking organization such as the Chamber. We offer much more and our commitment to each other is integral to our success. Membership in the West St. Tammany Business Alliance is a privilege, not a right.

If your needs and desires are consistent with the principles of the West St. Tammany Business Alliance, we welcome you to consider our organization. If there is an available position, then we encourage you to submit your application.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the "West St. Tammany Business Alliance" is to:

- Generate income for our members as a natural consequence of referrals;
- Hold each other accountable;
- Expect the finest of services;
- Extend our mutual commitments;
- Create both business and social alliances

## NETWORK vs. ALLIANCE

WSTBA is an 'alliance' as opposed to a 'networking' organization. What's the difference?

Traditional networking is about how many people have your card or how many people you can meet at a chamber event.

An alliance is about how many people know you, value what you do, and feel comfortable referring their friends and colleagues to you.

This is such a critical distinction that it's difficult to over-emphasize it. Over the years, you've probably known dozens of professionals and business people who say that they joined a service club or professional organization "but it never did any good." If you asked them to tell you how they actually spent their time at the meetings, they usually say they attended, tried to be friendly, exchanged business cards with lots of people, and greeted as many people as possible.

If you ask them how many referrals they made to the people they met, you would probably get a blank look. If you ask them about how many luncheons or follow-up phone calls they made, there's usually silence. If you ask them if they served on a committee or as an officer, the most common answer is "No."

An alliance is about bonding and building connections. It's about building trust. It's about building a mutual relationship that benefits both parties.

Think about how many people the average physician, attorney, stock broker or salesperson contacts in a year.

If your attorney knows and understands the value of your business and feels comfortable referring to you, he or she might make dozens of referrals per year.

Think of an alliance as the art of building a solid, long- term alliance with a circle of fellow business people. A circle of a dozen can be worth a million dollars a year in referrals. It's not the number business cards, it's the quality of the relationship that counts.

Build your network in terms of solid, reciprocal alliances that benefit each member of your "quality circle."

## WHAT IS A GOOD REFERRAL?

A good referral is a qualified referral given to a member. The referral names a prospective customer that has already been contacted, thus giving the member an opportunity to conduct business.

When giving a referral:

- Make a mental note of someone that may have voiced a need.
- Offer to help by providing a name or business card to that individual.
- Relate your personal experience if you have done business with that person.
- Ask the prospective referral for their name, phone number and two copies of their business card.
- Get permission to have a member call them.
- If allowed, complete a referral slip and give it to the member as soon as possible.

## EXAMPLE OF A "GOOD REFERRAL":

A new neighbor moves in and has a terrible toothache. You recommend a dentist who is in your group. You notify the dentist member that your neighbor will be contacting them. At the next WSTBA meeting, you submit a "referral" sheet to the referred member.

## BUSINESS TIP PRESENTER OF THE WEEK

Each member will take this role as assigned, and the "Business Tip" presenter is next week's "Speaker of the Day".

The Business Tip Presenter of the Week is responsible for:

- Suggesting ideas for fresh/unusual ways to promote one's business
- Motivating members to overcome the natural reluctance to "sell" themselves as well as their products
- Introducing the Speaker of the Day
- Bringing the breakfast to the meeting for that day.

## PROCEDURE

### Meeting Format

- Networking Session (15 minutes)
- Meeting Called to Order
- Introduction of Visitors
- Business Tip Report
- Vice-President Report
- Membership Report
- Pass Member Business Card Binder
- Member 60 Second Introductions (Officers announce their position as part of their Introduction)
- Speaker of the Day (10 Minutes)
- Roundtable Brainstorming Session to Provide Feedback to Speaker of the Day
- Referrals and/or Testimonials
- Visitor Evaluation of Meeting
- Old Business
- New Business

### Business Meeting

On the second Wednesday of the month, the regular weekly procedure will be suspended and a business meeting held in its place. The officers will provide an agenda for each business meeting.

## SPEAKER OF THE DAY

A weekly 10 minute presentation will be assigned to each member.

This is done in order for the other members to fully understand the presenter's business.

As a result, members will be able to pass qualified referrals to the presenting member.

Handouts are always encouraged so that members have reference materials on each member.

## OFFICERS & TERMS

- President: 6 months
- Vice President/President-Elect: 6 months
- Secretary/Treasurer: 6 months
- Membership Coordinator(s): 6 months

## TERMS

- Each officer will hold office for a 6-month term
- Vice President automatically moves up to the President position
- All other positions are nominated and elected positions.
- New Membership Coordinator(s) will be appointed at the end of each term.

## OFFICERS DUTIES

### President

- Conduct weekly meetings
- Follow the agenda
- Keep meetings within time limits
- Welcoming of visitors
- Maintain business card binder
- Discuss old/new business
- Introduce officers
- Provide opportunity for officer reports
- Provide opportunity for referrals and testimonials
- Close Meeting

## OFFICERS DUTIES

### Vice President/President Elect

- Coordinate group activities with President, other officers and committee members
- Reports on number of visitors
- Reports on number of referrals passed
- Tracks member attendance
- Assumes responsibilities of the President, when necessary
- Reiterates the purpose of the group
- Conducts "reality check" at each meeting (status of two previously submitted referrals from two weeks back)

## OFFICER DUTIES

### Secretary/Treasurer

- Banking/accounting for organization
- Writing checks pertaining to the groups expenses
- Report bank balances
- Track membership dues
- Scheduling of weekly speakers and business tip reporting



## OFFICER DUTIES

### Membership Coordinator(s)

- Encourage members to submit potential recruits
- Encourage members to contact and invite potential recruits
- Track progress using tracking system
- Report to group monthly
- Meet and greet visitors
- Present visitors to other members in their sphere group upon arrival
- Plan and coordinate "Visitors Day"
- Follow up with a phone call to visitors
- In the event of a conflict among members, mediate a mutually agreeable resolution.

### Community Service Coordinator

- Organize Community Service Cause
- Plan Community Outreach Activity Each Quarter

## POLICY

### Membership

- Only one individualized profession or occupation will be allowed in the group in order to avoid professional conflict.
- Meetings are held weekly each Wednesday at 7:30 am. Weekly attendance is crucial for giving and receiving business referrals.
- Each weekly meeting consists of a 15-minute networking session prior to the business meeting.
- In order to maintain commitment and loyalty to the West St. Tammany Business Alliance, members can only belong to one referral group or organization.

### Attendance

- Absenteeism is limited to three (3) times per quarter.

### Dues

- Membership dues are three hundred (\$300.00) dollars, paid annually on August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Membership dues for individuals joining will be pro-rated to August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Membership dues are non-refundable once your application is approved.
- Membership dues are payable at the time of accepted membership.