

Leads to Business

Description: Networking meeting lasting 1.5 to 2 hours. Moderated by “chair” of the Leads to Business sub-committee of the Networking/Leads committee.

Format: Two five to seven minute speakers discussing their business, then each audience member has between thirty and sixty-seconds to deliver their “elevator speech”. Leads and Referrals are shared in the remaining time.

Model Agenda:

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|-----------|---|-----------|
| 7:30 a.m. | Opening Comments - | Moderator |
| 7:35 a.m. | Educational Moment | |
| 7:37 a.m. | Speaker # 1 | |
| 7:45 a.m. | Speaker # 2 | |
| 7:55 a.m. | Self-Introductions (Elevator Speeches)
30-60 seconds depending on crowd size | |
| 8:25 a.m. | I Have Segment | |
| 8:40 a.m. | Who Can Help? Segment | Moderator |
| 9:00 a.m. | Open Networking | |

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Segment Details:

Opening Comments – Welcome, introduce staff, ambassadors, committee members, and other dignitaries. Ask phones/pagers to be turned off, explain where rest room facilities are located. Explain format.

Educational Moment – Brief piece delivered by staff or committee member giving a “nugget” of networking education. Example: *“Write notes on the back of business cards you receive so that you can remember what you talked about with the person when you follow up with them – and make sure to follow up on time or within 24 hours if no time frame was set.”*

Speaker Segments – Members will want to give a sales pitch of their product and this is an ideal venue for them to do just that. However they should be coached that the real win in giving a presentation is to inform the audience what and how you do what you do and to give them an indication of the type of referral and lead you need. Those who want to buy the product or service will refer themselves, but those who don't won't be turned off by the “sales pitch” and may have leads and referrals for the presenter.

Self Introduction (Elevator Speech) Segment – Moderator should lead this segment. First, Moderator should advise all in attendance of the time restraints and then should tell audience what to expect if they “run over”. Example: *“You'll have sixty-seconds to give your self introduction. You'll know that you've gone too long if I start to walk towards you. If you don't wrap it up then, please do when you hear me say; that's great”*. Moderator can begin by choosing to go first to give an example of an effective and time sensitive delivery or by choosing someone to lead off. Either way, Moderator must keep the flow going by letting those know who runs too long and by keeping the next in line aware.

I Have Segment – Can be run one of two ways – The moderator can ask for audience members to raise their lead/referral forms in the air and they will be called on or the moderator may open up the floor and let it be free-flowing. Either way, the moderator should advise the audience that when they have a lead or referral to re-introduce themselves and their

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business “Hi, I’m Bob Smith with PDQ Widgets and I have ...”. This gives the person giving the lead or referral an added bonus of exposure while giving to others.

Who Can Help? Segment – Moderator run. After all leads and referrals have been given, moderator asks “*Did everyone get a lead or referral today? If you didn’t please raise your hand now and keep it raised.*” The moderator makes his/her way around the room, placing their hand on the shoulder of each individual, introducing them again to the audience and asking simply “*who can help?*” Example. Moderator: “*This is Bob Smith with PDQ Widgets, he sells widgets. Who knows someone who can help Bob?*” *If there are no takers, the next question is “Who would like to have a cup of coffee with Bob and find out how he can help you and how you can help him?”* In very rare cases the moderator will have to resort to the third question, “*Everyone in this room knows approximately 250 people. Surely there is someone here who knows someone that needs widgets or at worst someone who knows someone who needs widgets. Who will help Bob and let Bob help him or her?*” The key is to have Bob leave with at least a promise of a one on one meeting with someone. Everyone needs to leave with something. The last line of defense is the Moderator. If no one steps up then the Moderator will say, “*Bob, I’ll have a cup of coffee with you and talk about how we can help each other.*”

Open Networking Session – Depending upon how much time is left, you can arrange one on one meetings that happen right there after the Leads to Business event.

While we have seen numerous variations of this program including those that keep elaborate tabs of referrals and leads shared and dollars generated, simplicity is the key to this event. In the end everyone wants to get something, but they don’t want to have to work too hard to get it. If the moderator arranges “something for everyone” there is no need to keep elaborate records that justify the effectiveness of the program. After all, all the leads, referrals and business exchanged won’t mean much to me if I don’t feel like I personally got something.

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Program Launch:

We recommend that you plan to hold the program at two different times: One group should meet in the morning before traditional work hours (7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.) and one should meet just after lunch (12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.) Consider having the morning group meet on the second Tuesday and the afternoon group meet on the third Thursday or some variation thereof. Whatever day/time you choose – stick with it. Begin with monthly meetings and move to twice monthly and finally weekly. Attendance is the key to growing the frequency. Expect that when you initially increase the frequency that the attendance will dip a bit for a couple of sessions. Continue to promote the program and more will come.

You should have a “committee” of five that will work together to run this program, with two Moderators. This way you have the event covered regardless of schedules. Choosing your Moderator(s) is essential. You must choose Moderators who have demonstrated that they can be counted on to attend regularly. Moderators must enjoy being in front of a crowd and should have good speaking skills. Whatever you do, DO NOT choose someone who is already spending a great deal of time volunteering already UNLESS you replace them in their current role. If you don't, you'll be filling at least one spot (if not both) when they begin to suffer burn-out.

Begin to promote the “new networking event” six to eight weeks out at your other events, on the website, and through your chamber email and newsletters. Choose your first two speakers carefully to ensure that they won't give too much of a sales pitch and that they will be enjoyable to listen to. Also make sure to have the committee and moderator talk up the event and have the speakers invite guests to hear them talk.

At four weeks out, send an email to the entire membership asking for RSVP's (you should make that easy – a hyperlink in the email or a request to “Reply with Yes or No” or “Reply to this email with your choice, Tuesday a.m. or Thursday p.m.”). Tell them what the program will be like and make sure to emphasize the opportunity to “get leads and referrals from up to 50 business members”. If you have a good draw for a speaker (a

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popular business owner or perhaps a board member) make sure to note that in the email. Anyone that the general membership might not have frequent access to will be a good draw. Board members are great.

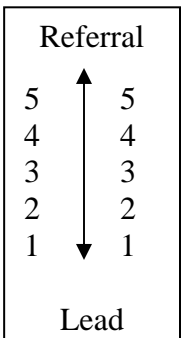
At two weeks out, send another email to the entire membership. Use “You won’t want to miss....” in the subject line. Ask for RSVP’s again.

Continue to mention the new event in the regular chamber communications and at regular meetings. **At three days out send one final** email to the entire membership with “It all begins in 72 hours!” in the subject line.

If you choose our launch date, committee, and Moderator carefully, you will have great success with this program. Of course offering continental breakfast or box lunch as a part of the program increases the draw. This program is easily sold to sponsors to help provide food or to caterers and restaurants in trade.



Chamber of Commerce Lead Form



To: _____

From: _____

Contact: _____

Company: _____

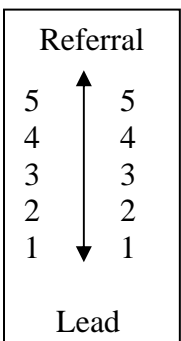
Phone: _____

Email: _____ Relationship: _____

Notes: _____



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Notes: _____
