

freshconnections

Powerful Networking  Professional Women

MEMBER

HANDBOOK

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freshconnections Handbook

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| Welcome | 3 |
| Three Core Statements | 4 |
| Membership | 5 |
| Dues | 7 |
| Meetings | 7 |
| Attendance | 8 |
| Governance | 8 |
| Termination from freshconnections | 9 |



Network ~ Learn ~ Grow ~ Prosper

Welcome to freshconnections, an organization founded in January of 2010 by professional women for professional women, with the goal of unleashing the power hidden within through the power of building networks, connections and relationships.

Our primary goal is to provide a nurturing, non-threatening atmosphere for women in which they can comfortably promote their business through the use of friendly, relaxed networking opportunities with other professional women.

Another important goal is to help each member gain the confidence to meet their biggest challenge – whatever it may be.

Together, we will learn techniques to present ourselves to potential clients, market our products or services, and connect with women in industries outside of our comfort zone to obtain direct and indirect referrals.

While there are no guarantees, through the knowledge and strengths gained from active involvement with other members of freshconnections, your business relationships will grow and prosper with the added benefit of gaining new friendships which have formed along the way.

As we develop and grow as a group, freshconnections is making a commitment to help members develop and sharpen a full complement of networking tools to enable your business to successfully prosper and grow to its full potential!!

Lorraine Sanborn, *Founding President, freshconnections, inc.*

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Vision Statement

A community where professional women use the power of mutual connections to network and reach their maximum business potential and growth.

Mission Statement

To provide, in a friendly, non-competitive atmosphere, the education, support and networking opportunities needed to enable our members to grow, prosper and meet their individual business goals.

Values Statement

At freshconnections, we treat all members with dignity and respect. We recognize and value diversity, individuality and collaboration. We also create an atmosphere that provides a supportive, friendly environment where ambition never over-rides integrity and teamwork, and personal growth and fun are essential elements of all meetings, workshops and events.

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Membership

Rules & Regulations

1. Prospective members must be invited by a current member.
2. Membership is by invitation only and is in keeping with the core values of freshconnections where we treat all members with dignity and respect and where we recognize and value diversity and individuality.
3. Prospective members must be members in good standing in their local business community and the offerings of their company must not be in conflict with any profession represented by the current members of freshconnections.
4. Current members are responsible for vetting prospective members to ensure there are no professional conflicts with current members.
5. If there is a current member who feels there is a potential conflict, that current member should meet with the prospective member to discuss the potential overlap.
6. If after meeting with the prospective member, the current member still feels there is a conflict and no room for collaboration, the current member should notify the Chapter President and the prospective member should not be invited to submit an application.
7. Applications submitted without an invitation from the Chapter President will not be considered.
8. Membership is granted on an individual basis **for a term of one year** and is not refundable or transferable.
9. After prospective members have attended **TWO MEETINGS** and no conflicts have been reported, the Chapter President will invite the prospective member to submit an application.
10. Initial chapter dues are \$150/year. Pro-rated payment as detailed on the application is due when you submit your application.
11. **Membership is voided if annual dues are in arrears by 30 days or more. Dues paid are non-refundable.**
12. A Chapter may have up to 25 members.
13. Acceptance of an applicant shall be in keeping with the founding core values of freshconnections and the membership application process set by the Board.
14. Membership will be based on the calendar year.
15. Freshconnections members shall have an obligation to support each other in their professional endeavors and shall strive to provide a MINIMUM of FIVE (5) business “connections” per year to other freshconnections members. **To qualify as a successful connection, the potential new client, customer, and/or contact and the freshconnections member must actually “connect” with each other by email, phone, in person, etc.** Members should log all leads in the chapter Lead / Connection Counter sheet at each meeting.
16. **Membership renewal.** At the December meeting, the Chapter President will remind all eligible members that it is renewal time and that membership renewal will be considered based on attendance, connections, one-on-ones, new member sponsorships

and spirit of participation in freshconnections. If a member is found to be in good standing, she will be offered a renewal term of one year and will be sent an invitation/invoice accordingly by the Board Treasurer. If a member wishes to renew, in order to avoid any interruption in membership, she should email the renewal application to the Board Treasurer before the first meeting in January and should bring or mail a check to the first meeting in January. Again, **membership may voided if annual dues are in arrears by 30 days or more. Dues paid are non-refundable unless an application for membership is rejected.**

17. Members are encouraged to recruit new members for freshconnections per the above guidelines. In exchange, they may receive credit in the form of **freshcents** for each sponsored guest who becomes a member of any chapter of freshconnections. Effective January 1, 2012, members will receive \$25 in **freshcents** for each sponsored guest that becomes a member. **Freshcents** may be used as credit toward membership dues, up to a maximum of \$150/year. **Freshcents** expire at the end of each member's membership year.
18. Members who fail to abide by the contents of the freshconnections Handbook may be asked to resign. A member's membership may be revoked for cause upon 2/3 vote of the membership. In addition, the Board reserves the right, to revoke the membership of any individual member for cause. A member, whose membership is either revoked or not renewed, may appeal such revocation or non-renewal to the Board, who may overrule any Chapter's revocation or non-renewal and reinstate or renew.

POLICIES

1. If a member is unable to provide a minimum of five (5) business connections per year to other members of freshconnections, her membership may be reviewed and a request for renewal may not be granted.
2. Guests must attend two freshconnections meetings before they may apply for membership for two reasons: 1) so the guest can be sure that she wishes to become a member; 2) so the chapter membership can decide if they feel the prospective member will be a good fit for the chapter, from both the perspective of their profession as well as their personality.
3. Members are encouraged to bring guests who could be potential members to meetings and will earn \$25 in freshcents for every guest who becomes a member of any chapter, up to a maximum of \$150 freshcents per calendar year.

PROCEDURES

1. If a guest is interested in joining freshconnections, AND has attended two meetings, she should download the application found on the website at www.freshconnectionsforwomen.org/Membership.html. Prospective members should complete (preferably on the computer) the application with their profession and then print & sign it and mail it, along with the applicable application fee (see #3 below), to: freshconnections, 186 Virgo Drive, Groton CT 06340 or you can hand it to the Board Treasurer.

2. The check sent with the application should be made payable to **freshconnections, pro-rated based on the month she applies**. The Board Treasurer will hold the check until the application has been accepted by the chapter. If the application is denied, the check will be returned.
3. Following receipt of the completed application the Chapter President will send out a poll to the chapter members asking for a ‘thumbs up’ or ‘thumbs down’ vote based on an unacceptable profession conflict/overlap or objection.
4. During this waiting period, prospective members may continue to attend meetings.

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Dues

Rules & Regulations

1. Chapter dues are \$150/year.
2. Dues shall be payable to freshconnections by a non-post-dated check and are not refundable or transferable *unless a membership application has been turned down*.
3. **Membership may be voided if annual dues are in arrears for 30 days or more.**

POLICIES

1. Dues shall be payable to **freshconnections** by a non-post-dated check and mailed to freshconnections, 186 Virgo Drive, Groton, CT 06340. Dues are not refundable or transferable, *unless a membership application has been turned down*.

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Meetings

Rules & Regulations

1. freshconnections meets every 2 weeks.

POLICIES

1. The official duration of all meetings should be no less than 1 hour and no more than 1½ hours and all meetings should include:
 - time for at least 15 minutes of open networking at the beginning of each meeting allowing members to schedule one-on-ones with each other
 - time for chapter business
 - time for 30 second ‘escalator’ speeches by all members, brief introductions by guest sponsors and guest 30 second escalator speeches
 - time for showcasing, freshstorming, speed networking, workshops, etc.
 - time to share connections, testimonials, make announcements, and/or pass out flyers

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Attendance

Rules & Regulations

1. Members shall strive to demonstrate a culture of commitment to freshconnections and are expected to attend all scheduled meetings.
2. If a member is unable to attend an upcoming meeting, she shall notify her Chapter Leadership **at least one hour** before the scheduled start of a meeting.
3. **Any member with four consecutive absences shall be contacted by the membership committee to determine whether said member is interested in continuing her membership.**
4. **If any member has more than twelve consecutive absences and there is a prospective member with the same profession, said current member shall be notified that she shall be deemed to have resigned.**

POLICIES

1. The Chapter President will make every effort to commence and conclude meetings promptly at the posted hours out of consideration for the members and guests.
2. Members are asked to be considerate of others as well and arrive at meetings on time.

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Governance

Rules & Regulations

1. Each chapter shall have a President and a Secretary. The Chapter President will receive \$50 in freshcents towards her annual membership fee. The Chapter Secretary will receive \$25 in freshcents towards her annual membership fee.
2. Each chapter shall also have a Membership Committee, Program/Events Committee, and a Hospitality Committee. These committees may be composed of between one (1) and three (3) members.

POLICIES

1. The President is responsible for setting meeting agendas, running Chapter meetings, providing management oversight to the Chapter and all other duties as described in the Training Guide.
2. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining chapter attendance records and all other duties as described in the Training Guide.
3. Chapter Meeting locations must be free of charge and be handicapped accessible.
4. A Training Guide is available to anyone interested in a leadership position.

Termination from freshconnections

Rules & Regulations

1. Members who fail to abide by the Rules & Regulations in this Handbook may be asked to resign.
2. Freshconnections members who do not provide a MINIMUM of FIVE (5) business “connections” per year to other freshconnections members may be asked to resign.
3. Any member with four consecutive absences shall be contacted by the membership committee to determine whether said member is interested in continuing her membership.
4. If any member has more than twelve consecutive absences and there is a prospective member with the same profession, said current member shall be notified that she shall be deemed to have resigned.
5. If a member has not generally been an active member in good standing she may not be offered a renewal at the end of her current membership term and instead be issued a termination letter.
6. A member’s membership may be revoked for cause upon a 2/3 vote of the membership of the Chapter. Any member, whose membership is revoked, may appeal such revocation to the Board of Directors.
7. The Board of Directors may overrule any revocation and reinstate the member. The Board also reserves the right to revoke the membership of any individual member.