

# Business First

## Women Who Mean Business

### **CONSTITUTION**

#### **ARTICLE I: NAME OF ORGANIZATION**

The name of this association will be Business First, Women Who Mean Business.

#### **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

**SECTION ONE:** To provide a professional environment for businesswomen to exchange referrals to help increase each other's business.

**SECTION TWO:** To provide an educational and personal support network for career oriented women.

**SECTION THREE:** To provide models for the community.

#### **ARTICLE III: OFFICERS**

**SECTION ONE:** The officers of this association shall be President, Vice President of Membership, Vice President of Events & Operations, Secretary, and Treasurer. These five officers shall constitute the Board of Directors

**SECTION TWO:** An Advisory Member may be formed at the request of the Board of Directors or the General Membership by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. The Advisory Member shall be comprised of the most recent past president, who is currently active and in good standing. The member shall be invited to all Board meetings and will not have voting privileges

**SECTION THREE:** All officers shall be elected at the October meeting for a period of one year starting each January 1 and installed at the December meeting. No officer may serve for more than two years consecutively in the same office.

**SECTION FOUR:** The official nominations shall be held at the September Membership Meeting for the following year. The Board may, in its discretion, allow nominations for an office to proceed beyond the September Membership Meeting if no person has been nominated to fill that office. If there are any persons nominated for an office before the end of the September Membership Meeting, that office is closed to further nominations.

**SECTION FIVE:** Results of elections shall be announced at the November membership meeting.

**SECTION SIX:** Interim vacancies in an office may be filled by a member in good standing upon a majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors.

#### **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**SECTION ONE:** The October meeting will be the annual election of officers.

**SECTION TWO:** Meetings should strive to follow the set agenda and membership will not interrupt the flow of the meetings.

#### **ARTICLE V: QUORUM**

**SECTION ONE:** A simple majority of the membership of the association shall constitute a quorum at any meeting, but at no time shall the lack of a quorum prevent those present from proceeding with the business of the day.

**SECTION TWO:** A quorum of the Board of Directors shall be three.

#### **ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION ONE:** This Constitution may be amended at any Annual Meeting (October) by two-thirds vote of all Members in good standing present. Amendments shall state whether they shall be applied retroactively, otherwise they shall be applied prospectively.

**SECTION TWO:** All by-laws and standing rules may be adopted, amended or repealed at any meeting by a majority of the membership present.

#### **ARTICLE VII: DISSOLUTION**

**SECTION ONE:** Upon dissolution of the association the assets of the association shall be distributed to a) Faith House or b) University of Louisiana at Lafayette with instructions that the assets be used for women's scholarships or c) split the assets equally between the two. The final Board of Directors shall make the determination by a majority vote.

# **BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I: DUES**

**SECTION ONE:** The annual dues of Members shall be \$50.00 due by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the new membership year. There shall be a grace period of thirty days. Members who do not pay their dues by January 31<sup>st</sup> shall be dropped from the membership rolls, opening up an available position for a new Member.

**SECTION TWO:** Dues will be prorated for those joining during midyear according to the following schedule: January-March \$50.00, April-June \$37.50, July-September \$25.00 and October-December \$12.50. The Member shall pay the prorated fee due in the month in which their application is submitted.

**SECTION THREE:** A thirty-day refund is available if approved by the Board due to extenuating situation.

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION ONE:** Memberships shall be unlimited and consist of one Member per profession.

**SECTION TWO:** The membership shall be composed of Members in good standing who may attend all meetings, serve on committees, serve as an officer and enjoy all other benefits of membership. Members representing multilevel marketing companies shall NOT utilize their sixty second presentation or their eight minute presentation to recruit for their down line, but to promote their products.

**SECTION THREE:** In order to maintain a membership in good standing, each Member must pay dues in the amount and on the date set by the Board of Directors. A member is considered absent should they arrive after 11:45 a.m. **Members must personally attend a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  (9) nine meetings a year in their absence Substitutes are encouraged.** However, extenuating circumstances, submitted in writing to membership may be reviewed for consideration

**SECTION FOUR:** All Members must represent their full-time profession. If a Member changes her profession and/or company she should report this information to the membership committee immediately, and prior to the next scheduled meeting. The membership committee will then review this information. If approved, the membership committee shall announce the change to the Members accordingly.

**SECTION FIVE:** All memberships are personal to the Members. If the Member's employer pays for the Member's dues and the Member later withdraws from Business First, then the employer may send a replacement to fill the previous Member's position, but the replacement must go through the interview and approval process. The replacement, if approved, shall not be responsible for additional dues in the year in which they are admitted, but shall assume the absences of the Member they are replacing.

**SECTION SIX** Once a Member has withdrawn from Business First, in good standing, they are not permitted to come as a visitor. If a previous Member wishes to return to Business First, they may submit their application.

### **ARTICLE III: DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**SECTION ONE:** The officers of this association shall perform their duties in order to achieve the purposes of this association.

**SECTION TWO:** Officers may serve in the same position for two consecutive years after which they may serve in another position. Once an officer has served in the same position for two consecutive years, they can only run for office in the same capacity once a year has transpired since their term in that position has transpired.

**SECTION THREE:** The duties of the officers shall be as implied by their respective titles as well as additional duties specifically listed herein.

**SECTION FOUR:** The President shall appoint all standing committees subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. The President, with the approval of the Board, may appoint special committees as needed. The President is responsible for

1. Insuring the Constitution and By-Laws are maintained and amended as needed.
2. Running the General Membership meetings and Board of Director meetings
3. Chair the Professional DEVELOPMENT Committee, if created

**SECTION FIVE:**

A. The Vice President of Membership is responsible for:

1. Chairing Membership Committee
2. Chairing Welcome Committee, if created

B: The Vice President of Events & Operations is responsible for:

1. Securing locations for all membership meetings and encouraging attendance at all general membership functions.
2. Disseminating information about Business First, its meetings and activities, to the general public.

C: The Secretary is responsible for:

1. Keep minutes for the General Membership meetings and Board of Directors meetings
2. Track member attendance throughout the year

D: The Treasure is responsible for:

1. Maintain the financial obligations of the Association
2. Chair the Scholarship and Community Service Committee, if created

**SECTION SIX:** All officers may appoint other Members in good standing to assist them as a committee, with prior approval of the Board.

**SECTION SEVEN:** The Board of Directors shall examine the books of the Treasurer prior to the January meeting each year.

**SECTION EIGHT:** The incoming Board (newly elected) shall attend the November Board meeting of the acting Board (currently in office). The incoming Board shall be sworn in at the December membership meeting and conduct the December Board meeting as their first official act. The acting board shall conduct the November Board meeting and the December membership meeting. Nothing here shall be taken as a prohibition against the incoming Board meeting at any time during this transition period to plan for the next year.

#### **ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES**

**SECTION ONE:** There shall be three (3) standing committees: Scholarship, Membership, and Welcome Committees.

**SECTION TWO:** The Advisory Committee, if created, shall serve as counsel to the current Board.

**SECTION THREE:** The Scholarship Committee shall consist of at least two Members in good standing. The Treasurer shall chair the committee. The Committee shall be responsible for creating and reviewing application guidelines for the women's educational scholarship for women who will be entering their junior or senior year of a four year accredited college. The Committee shall receive applications for the scholarship from January to June, annually, when the Board determines there are sufficient funds to begin. The applicant will be approved at the July Board Meeting, and the scholarship will be awarded at the August meeting with the funds to be paid directly to the college.

Our standing community service organization, shall be an organization supporting women, shall be chosen by January by the incoming Board of Directors. Funds collected for the organization shall be paid quarterly.

**SECTION FOUR:** The Membership Committee shall consist of two Members in good standing and shall report directly to the Vice President of Membership who shall serve as the chair of this committee. The Membership Committee shall conduct all prospective new Member interviews with at least two committee members present (personally or via telephone) and accept or decline each applicant for cause. This committee shall advise the Board and then the chapter when there is availability in the chapter.

**SECTION FIVE:** The Welcome Committee, should one be appointed, shall consist of two Members in good standing. The Vice President of Events & Operations shall chair this committee. They shall make sure guest(s) are signed in and handle any necessary introductions.

**SECTION SIX:** Should there be a Professional Development appointed; the Committee shall consist of two Members in good standing. The President shall chair this committee. The Committee shall have 3-5 minutes monthly to present educational material or have a Member present educational material.

#### **ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**SECTION ONE:** The Board of Directors shall have the power to transact general business of the organization at all Board of Director's meetings, to fill vacancies in any office, and to act upon matters concerning membership in accordance with the powers and responsibilities outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**SECTION ONE:** Meetings shall be held from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. the second (2<sup>ND</sup>) Wednesday of every month, unless otherwise advised.

**SECTION TWO:** Special interest meetings, if authorized by the Board of Directors, may be scheduled at any time and may be used to fulfill membership attendance requirements.

## **ARTICLE VII: GRIEVANCES / CONFLICTS**

**SECTION ONE:** It is a member's responsibility to file a written letter of concern with the Membership Committee if an applicant poses a conflict of interest to a current member's professional classification. This should be done within four days of an applicant being announced to the active members. The Membership Committee will make every effort to screen potential members for possible conflicts, as well as notify active members of all new applications being received. If there are no concerns raised with the applicant the Membership Committee will "assume their consent" and proceed with processing the new application. All concerns will be considered and verified by members of the Membership Committee, and the decision on whether or not applicants shall be allowed to join the organization solely rests with the Membership Committee. All applicants' suitability for membership shall be vetted by the Membership Committee, and their decision cannot be appealed.

**SECTION TWO:** In a case of concerns or conflict with an active member of Business First Women Who Mean Business, a member **MUST** submit a formal written grievance to the Vice-President of Membership. The Membership Committee, with the guidance of the Board of Directors, may put the member on probation or revoke a membership in order to preserve the integrity of business practices of members, interactions of members with other professionals, and member's commitment to the organization. In the event the grievance cannot be resolved, the Membership Committee may recommend to the Board that a member's membership can be terminated with no reimbursement owed for dues paid.

## **Article XI: Code of Ethics**

**Section One:** All members must sign and adhere to *the Business First Women Who Mean Business Code of Ethics* following principles:

1. Abide by the Bylaws of the **Business First Women Who Mean Business** and rules of operation for any applicable programs of the organization. The Bylaws serve as the governing document for all programs and will supersede all other documents.
2. Refrain from publicly disparaging the business practices of fellow members, their representatives, employees and associates, the Board of Directors, and the organization itself.
3. Refrain from condoning or engaging in misrepresentation or unethical practices in any manner. This includes, but is not limited to, in-person communication, electronic communication, and online interactions of any nature.

4. Conduct business and professional activities in a reputable manner so as to reflect honorably upon the business community and fellow members.
5. Respect the reputation, profile, and status of ***Business First Women Who Mean Business*** and represent the organization accordingly.
6. Understand, support, and promote the Vision and Mission of ***Business First Women Who Mean Business*** and cooperate with fellow members in the application of this Code of Conduct.
7. When possible, participate in the functions and activities of the organization and actively promote the business growth within the greater Acadiana area.
8. Observe the highest standards of ethics in rendering services and/or delivering products based on your knowledge and expertise.
9. Refrain from engaging in practices prohibited by law or seeking unfair advantage over fellow members while conforming to all laws established by Municipal, State, and Federal governments for the control of said business when applicable.
10. Put forth true presentation in all marketing and advertising. Goods and services shall be advertised in accordance with all Municipal, State, and Federal legislation.
11. Respect the role and decisions of the Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee Chairpersons.

***Membership Approved: May 8, 2019***

# Business First

## Women Who Mean Business

### GENERAL POLICIES

1. Membership is unlimited, one professional per category.
2. Should membership concerns arise the Membership Committee shall address the issue and the Member or applicant agrees to any request and / or actions imposed by the Membership Committee.
3. The membership and guest roster cannot be sold or used for spam or unsolicited mailings of any format.
4. Each guest may only attend two meetings per year.
5. A guest is a guest and does not have the same privileges as a Member. A guest is allowed to introduce herself with her name and company only. A guest is encouraged to utilize the open networking time to distribute her business cards or related items and discuss her line of business. A guest may *pull* from the Business Card Box. A guest may purchase a 50/50 ticket. The sponsoring Member of a guest is responsible for ensuring that her guest adheres to these rules.
6. Each guest and/or applicant must have a sponsoring Member and be mutually beneficial to Business First.
7. All new applicants must submit her application to a Member of the membership committee and attach a current business card. A check must be submitted within 30 days of the application.
8. If a Member has a problem or concerns with an applicant, that Member should discuss it privately with the Membership Committee and those concerns will be taken into consideration.
9. Junction Function guidelines
  - a. Must be approved by the VP of Events and announced at the meeting prior to the JF
  - b. Must attend JF in the same quarter as the absence in order for the absence to be excused
  - c. A maximum of 2 JF per year are allowed to offset absence

# Business First

## Women Who Mean Business

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS TIMELINES

FEBRUARY	Drop all who have not paid their dues
MARCH	Begin receiving scholarship applications
APRIL	Treasure appoints scholarship committee
MAY	Scholarship Committee is announced
JUNE	Close scholarship applications
JULY	Scholarship applicant is approved by the board
AUGUST	Scholarship winner is introduced and awarded at the general meeting
SEPTEMBER	Nominations for new officers
OCTOBER	Annual meeting. Elect new officers
NOVEMBER	Announce results of elections. Incoming officers attend board meeting
DECEMBER	Install new officers

# Business First

## Women Who Mean Business

### Facebook Group Guidelines

A Facebook group has been created!

If you have a Facebook account, simply search for the group, *Business First-Women Who Mean Business* and request to be added to the group. This group is a closed group, meaning only the members of Business First are allowed to participate in postings. The purpose of this group is to provide a new venue for our group to communicate between meetings. While this is a great way to share information we would like to offer the following guidelines to keep this group focused on the business of networking.

Do's	Don'ts
Do share information and invite members to upcoming events as they relate to your business or the business of other members.	Use this group as a way to promote events that are not related to the business you promote in Business First.
Do give accolades to members when you catch them doing something spectacular.	Moan and groan about others within or outside our group-let's keep this experience a positive one!
Brag about other members and one-to-ones that are constructive.	Place judgments on others when posting or commenting on a post.
Keep posts concise. KISS-keep it simple silly!	Ramble on and on and on and on and on.
Announce when you pass along referrals.	Announce identifying information regarding the referral information you pass along.
Post testimonials from your clients.	Post your client's identifying information without their permission.

We understand that everyone does not have or regularly use a Facebook account, therefore let's be careful to rely on other methods of contact (email, phone call, or good ole' fashion knock on the door) in addition to Facebook.