

BNI Policies and Guidelines Overview

BNI General Policies

Membership Committees of each chapter have final authority related to BNI Policies. Membership Committees may put a BNI Member on probation or open a Member's classification for failure to comply with the Member Policies, the Code of Ethics or BNI Core Values.

1. Only one person from each BNI classification can join a chapter of BNI. Each Member can only hold one BNI classification in a BNI Chapter.
2. BNI Members must represent their primary professional focus.
3. BNI Members must arrive on time and stay for the entire published meeting time.
4. An individual can only be a Member of one BNI Chapter. A Member cannot be in any other program that holds Members accountable to pass referrals.
5. A BNI Member is allowed three absences within a continuous six-month period. If a Member cannot attend, they may send a substitute; this will not count as an absence.
6. Members are expected to be engaged in the BNI Chapter by bringing qualified referrals and/or visitors.
7. Visitors may attend BNI Chapter meetings up to two times.
8. Only BNI Members who have completed the Member Success Program, and BNI Directors/Director Consultants can do Feature Presentations during the BNI Meetings.
9. Leaves of absence are possible for certain extenuating circumstances (e.g., extended medical issue that prevents member from working) at the discretion of the Membership Committee.
10. Members who wish to change their BNI classification must submit a new membership application for approval.
11. All BNI membership lists are for the purpose of giving referrals only. Before sending any marketing or business solicitation communications to BNI Members outside your chapter or Director/Director Consultants, the recipient must give their consent. Consent must be freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous.

Policies are subject to change. All proposed policy changes need to be reviewed first by the International Board of Advisors.

BNI Code of Ethics

1. I will provide the quality of services at the prices that I have quoted.
2. I will be truthful with the Members and their referrals.
3. I will build goodwill and trust among Members and their referrals.
4. I will take responsibility for following up on the referrals I receive.
5. I will display a positive and supportive attitude.
6. I will live up to the ethical standards of my profession.*

* Professional standards outlined in a formal code of conduct for any profession supersede the above standards. This means that a Member belonging to a profession that has a more stringent standard must adhere to that higher standard.

Administrative Policies

1. There is an initial application fee. Participation fees are paid annually or biennially. Contact the local Secretary/Treasurer for amounts and payment instructions.
2. BNI may establish Chapters in every city or community with people interested in developing a referral-based business. In addition, BNI reserves the right to open more than one Chapter per community or city where demand of BNI's services are requested.
3. Membership fees are payable 30 days prior to the due date. Members not paid by the first day of the month they are due, are considered late and will be assessed a late charge. If fees are not paid within 15 days, the Member will be officially dropped by BNI.
4. Fees are non-refundable. A Certificate of Credit will be given, upon request, to Members in good standing for the unused portion of their time. This certificate of credit will be valid for a duration of 2 years from the issue date.
5. Fees cannot be transferred from one person to another unless the fees are from the same company.
6. BNI has a strict policy on returned checks. A Member has three working days in which to contact their Regional BNI office and resolve the matter. Any returned checks not resolved within this period will be turned over to collections. All returned checks will be assessed a minimum \$25 returned check fee. If a Member passes a second NSF check, that Member will be subject to immediate termination.
7. BNI is a marketing service provided by BNI Global, LLC. BNI or any of its franchisees reserve the right to discontinue a Member's participation in this program.
8. A Member requesting a transfer from their current Chapter to a new Chapter will be required to submit a completed new Member application to the Membership Committee of the new Chapter. In addition, if the Member has less than 6 months of paid membership credit, they must submit a renewal payment. Or, if the Member has more than 6 months of paid membership credit, no additional investment is required. Upon acceptance into the new Chapter, the credit from their previous Chapter will be added to their membership in the new Chapter as well as the renewal time, if applicable.

Program Guidelines

Program Guidelines are not policies but recommended practices that allow Chapters to run more smoothly and effectively.

Visiting Chapters

- Before visiting another Chapter, the visiting Member should call that Chapter's President first.
- Members visiting other Chapters should announce that they are from another Chapter.
- Visiting Members must not do or say anything that competes with a Member of that Chapter.
- The Chapter should be cautious in giving referrals to individuals they don't know, including visiting Members.
- Visiting Members should pay for their own meal.
- Visiting Members follow the same visiting policies as non-members; no more than two visits allowed.

Absences and Tardiness

- Absences and tardiness mean less business for Members; therefore, the Membership Committee may give warnings to Members who are consistently late or leave early. If the problem continues, the Member's classification may be subject to being re-opened.

Substitute Program

- Potential substitutes include customers, friends, family, BNI Members from other chapters and/or employees.
- The primary purpose for a substitute is to represent a BNI Member. BNI recommends minimal use of a substitute. However, a Member may use substitutes up to three times in a six-month period.
- Members should alert the Chapter of a substitute so that the Visitor Host can be there to greet him/her.
- At the discretion of Chapter Leadership, if the substitute's classification is not filled then substitutes may be permitted to present their business during the visitor meeting section.

Business Representation

- Members agree to only represent the professional classification approved by the Membership Committee.
- Members of BNI who represent multi-level marketing organizations should represent their products and services in BNI and not the business opportunity element of their business.