

Making the Most of Your FDCC Membership—While Staying Within the Bounds Presentation Outline (2–3 pages)

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

A. Welcome and Framing

- Brief explanation of the FDCC’s mission: fellowship, education, and elevated practice.
- Reinforce the FDCC as a “safe space” for corporate counsel and industry members.
- Acknowledge the unique balance FDCC members must strike:
 - **Engage openly about their work**
 - **Avoid overt solicitation or salesmanship**
 - **Build authentic professional relationships**

B. Purpose of the Presentation

- Offer practical guidance on maximizing the personal and professional value of membership.
 - Highlight permissible, productive ways to discuss your work and expertise.
 - Demonstrate how participation naturally leads to trusted business relationships without breaching organizational norms.
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II. Understanding FDCC Culture and Expectations (10 minutes)

A. What “Safe Space” Means in Practice

- Environment where in-house counsel should feel comfortable, not pressured.
- Emphasis on candor, collaboration, and mutual professional support.
- Importance of discretion and professionalism in conversations.

B. The Line Between Relationship-Building and Soliciting

- What is *appropriate*:
 - Sharing the type of work you do and your areas of expertise.
 - Discussing interesting cases, challenges, or legal developments.
 - Being a resource and thought leader.
- What is *not appropriate*:
 - “Pitching” your firm directly.
 - Asking for business, RFPs, or upcoming matters.
 - Aggressive follow-up or cornering in-house counsel during social events.

C. Why Transparency About Your Practice Is Encouraged

- Members should not feel the need to minimize their work, specialty, or business interests.
 - Sharing what you do helps others understand where you fit within the organization.
 - Transparency facilitates referrals, collaboration, and speaking opportunities.
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III. Authentic Relationship-Building: The Foundation of FDCC Success (10–15 minutes)

A. Showing Up—The Most Important Factor

- Attend Winter, Summer, and regional meetings regularly.

- Repeated presence builds familiarity and trust.

B. Engage in Conversations with Purpose and Curiosity

- Ask about others' practices, challenges, and legal interests.
- Share your own experiences naturally, not as a pitch.
- Use “professional storytelling” rather than marketing language.

C. Supporting Peers and Contributing

- Volunteer for committees, planning groups, or mentorship.
- Offer insights when someone discusses an issue in your wheelhouse.
- When members associate you with value, business follows organically.

D. The Importance of Follow-Through

- After meetings, send friendly follow-up notes.
 - Connect on LinkedIn.
 - Share relevant articles or developments occasionally—never as a sales tool, always as a resource.
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IV. Leveraging Speaking and Writing Opportunities (10 minutes)

A. Why Visibility Matters

- Speaking = expertise.
- Expertise = credibility.
- Credibility = trust, which leads to relationships and, eventually, work.

B. How to Get Speaking Opportunities

- Volunteer early for panels or breakouts.
- Respond to Section calls for speakers or authors.
- Collaborate with another member or in-house counsel for joint presentations.

C. Making the Most of Speaking Engagements

- Position yourself as knowledgeable and approachable.
- Use practical examples, not self-promotion.
- Deliver content that helps members be better at their jobs.

D. Writing for FDCC Publications

- Submit articles for *Insights*, *Litigation Management*, or Section newsletters.
 - Offer case summaries, practice guidance, or recent trends in your specialty.
 - Written work circulates widely and creates lasting presence.
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V. Practice Area Sections: Your Professional Home Base (10 minutes)

A. Importance of Joining Sections

- Primary mechanism to meet members with shared interests.
- Smaller communities where relationships form more quickly.

B. Benefits of Active Participation

- Leadership opportunities.
- Section-specific CLE programming.
- Projects that foster collaboration and recognition.

C. How Sections Naturally Encourage Business Discussions

- Members speak openly about trends, clients, and legal challenges.

- You learn who does what—and who may need what you provide.
 - Conversations remain professional and informational, not sales-driven.
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VI. Making the Most of Meetings and Events (10 minutes)

A. Be Intentional in Your Attendance

- Plan ahead:
 - Which sessions align with your practice?
 - Which members do you want to connect with or deepen relationships with?

B. Show Up at Social and Informal Events

- Receptions, dinners, excursions, and hospitality suites are where deeper rapport is built.
- Be genuine; let people know you as a person, not just a lawyer.

C. Engage in the “Long Game”

- FDCC relationships grow over years, not days.
 - Members often refer matters after a long arc of connection and mutual respect.
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VII. The Right Way to Talk About Your Work (10 minutes)

A. Elevator Statements that Fit FDCC Culture

- Short, clear descriptions of:
 - What you do
 - Who you help
 - Your industry focus
 - Your special strengths
- Not a pitch—just clarity.

B. Using Case Examples and War Stories

- Share stories to highlight your experience.
- Focus on lessons learned or issues confronted—not on selling your firm.

C. When Someone Asks About Your Practice, Don’t Downplay It

- Be confident and specific.
- Transparency is not solicitation—it is professional engagement.

D. Being a Resource Without Being a Salesperson

- Offer to brainstorm issues.
 - Share insights, trends, or experiences.
 - Let others come to you if they need help.
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VIII. Ethics and Boundary-Setting (5 minutes)

A. Navigating Ethical Constraints

- Avoid conflicts or the appearance of impropriety.
- Maintain confidentiality in conversations.

B. Respecting the FDCC Community Norms

- Never make others feel targeted for business.
- Prioritize connection over conversion.

C. Recognizing When You’re Crossing the Line

- If your conversation would feel like a pitch in a non-FDCC setting, revise your approach.
 - Focus on value, not business generation.
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IX. Practical Tips, Best Practices, and Common Pitfalls (10 minutes)

A. Tips to Maximize FDCC Membership

- Attend at least one major meeting per year.
- Join and actively contribute to at least one Section.
- Volunteer to moderate or speak once per year.
- Reach out to new members—they often become long-lasting connections.
- Be intentional about follow-up after events.

B. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Treating events like networking mixers.
- Only talking about yourself or your practice.
- Failing to show up consistently.
- Not taking advantage of opportunities to write or speak.

C. Quick Wins

- Prepare your “friendly professional introduction” ahead of events.
 - Bring business cards, but hand them out only when naturally requested.
 - Connect new acquaintances with other helpful members.
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X. Conclusion (5 minutes)

A. Recap of Key Themes

- FDCC success is built on **relationship-first engagement**, not solicitation.
- Share openly about your work—just do so with authenticity and professionalism.
- Participation leads to visibility; visibility leads to trust; trust leads to opportunity.

B. Call to Action

- Commit to one new engagement opportunity this year—speak, write, join a Section, plan a program.
- Be present, be generous, and be yourself.

C. Closing: The Federation Formula

Show up + Contribute + Connect → Professional growth and lasting relationships.
