Denver IT Executives Focus Group (DITEX)

Mission – Values – Guidelines

<u>Mission</u>: The mission of the Denver IT Executives Focus Group (DITEX) is to support a select group of transitioning information technology professionals who have previously served as Directors, Vice-Presidents, CIOs or similar level of scope of responsibilities to obtain their next position in a like role. The mission of each member is to help every other group member graduate from the group by supporting them in finding and landing a new role. The partnership continues from the landing point, as alumni make hiring from within DITEX at any level a priority.

<u>Values</u>

- *Trust* - Denver IT Executives Focus Group (DITEX) is fundamentally built on trust to openly share job search information with active members. In some cases, this may not be possible when members are bound by confidentiality agreements; in other cases, members may not have time to share all of their job search information in weekly meetings. But in all cases, we endeavor to help each other by sharing relevant job search information in a timely manner.
- *Service* – We leverage our strengths to assist group members. We make every effort to participate in scheduled group meetings, and provide professional and moral support. This includes, but is not limited to, one-on-one meetings, teambuilding activities, introductions, socials and community events. DITEX alumni members are expected to make contact with at least one active member every quarter through the DITEX social or individual contacts.
- *Abundance* – We operate with an abundance mentality. We believe there are enough roles available for everyone in the group, and do not see each other as competitors for particular positions. We endorse others from the group to submit simultaneously for a role with the goal that at least someone from the group would land the role. We share networking opportunities and job leads with group members in a timely fashion, as well as what we learn in job interviews.
- *Reputation* – DITEX as a whole, and each individual member, proactively maintains and protects the group's executive-level presence; branding to partners, recruiters, and potential employers; and the quality of its active membership in all activities, including but not limited to recruiting new members, meeting with partners, and in communicating with all alumni, recruiters, and potential employer representatives.
- *Partnership* – To expand DITEX influence and reputation, and create new engagement opportunities for members, we seek and work with partners outside our group who share our values and take the long-term view of professional relationships. We seek enduring professional relationships with other group members and partners that will span all levels of roles and promote the "pay it forward" guiding principle. This value is nurtured by activities such as guest SMEs, alumni relations, job coaching, and partner meetings.
- *Volunteerism* – We do not charge for group membership, nor do group coordinators receive any payment for their service. We are a team with a shared goal, and volunteer our passion for working together towards this goal.

- *Confidentiality* – We exercise high confidentiality in our partnerships, as well as data and content shared within the group. We have a trusted advisor perspective, with open sharing in our group and partner relationships, and only share information with discretion and permission.

Guidelines

1. Group Size – Optimally, the group size should be approximately 12 members, with 15 as a maximum for active group membership. Once the maximum size is reached, some options are:
   a. Use managerial discretion to temporarily allow a small "overflow" beyond 15, if this is deemed acceptable and manageable by the group.
   b. Find an additional Coordinator from within the group or a new qualified member from the outside and split the group, perhaps along geographic lines or in whatever way makes sense.
   c. Evaluate current group membership to determine if there are members not living up to core values, commitments and guidelines and counsel them out of the group.
   d. Maintain a waiting list for new members. Continue to support the 'what to do with the waiting list' discussion until resolved.
2. Membership Eligibility
   a. Membership of the Active Group should be restricted to executive-level candidates actively in transition, i.e., unemployed, resigned from their employment with a departure date or have been given notice by their current employer.
   b. Appropriate executive-levels for prospective candidates are "on average" expected to be Sr, Director, VP, or Chief-level. It is understood that role titles may vary between industries and companies, but we are actively maintaining and protecting the DITEX brand for executive talent. Exceptions are allowed per group voting.
   c. Membership is by invitation from an active member only. Partners may recommend candidates to the group, but their DITEX contact must initially agree and sponsor that candidate into the vetting / interviewing process.
   d. It is critical to interview and screen prospective group members. Candidates are expected to treat DITEX interviews like a job interview and meet with at least two active members of the group who understand the purpose of the group.
   e. Before being interviewed, all candidate members are required to complete a Bio from the template provided by the Coordinator. Eligible alumni are required to provide an updated Bio.
   f. Returning eligible alumni are placed at the head of any waiting list when returning. This is provided, however, that they have maintained quarterly contact with DITEX, are still members of the "Denver IT Executives (DITEX) Alumni" LI group and are still connected to the generic DITEX LI profile.
3. Meeting Attendance and Participation –
   a. Member's participation in scheduled meetings is critical to the success of the member and the group. Members who are unable to be prompt for meetings or attend regularly will be deactivated from the member list and not invited to scheduled

meetings. As a courtesy to other members and our hosts, members should arrive at least five minutes prior to the scheduled meeting time.

   b. If a member consistently misses meetings that member will be contacted by the Group Coordinator in order to ascertain the member's interest in remaining as an active member.
   c. Each member should have responsibility to locate appropriate hosts/partners and get the introduction to the coordinator to plan a future meeting.
   d. Provide networking events and other events helpful in job search to the Google calendar administrator.
   e. Post articles, names of books, web sites, blogs, etc., relevant to networking, job search and enhancing soft skills.
4. Weekly Meetings – The group meetings are usually held once per week and kept on a regular schedule to allow members to plan to attend. Usually these meetings are two hours and thirty minutes in duration during business hours
5. Meetings should be planned to meet the changing needs of the group. The Group Coordinator should solicit ideas from the members on what would be helpful to them. Additional agenda items for regular meetings, and/ or causes to hold special meetings may include the following.
   a. Presentation – by a partner when they are hosting the group or by a group member with expertise of interest of the group.
   b. Résumé review workshop – members help each other in tuning their resumes.
   c. Value Statement – members help each other in tuning their value statement.
   d. Mock interviews – can be conducted as panel interviews or individual interviews. Preparation for such an exercise is important and should include definition of the position being applied for, interview questions, and roles to be played by group members. After the interviews, there should be an opportunity to provide constructive criticism to the mock interviewee. When possible, the mock scenario should reflect an actual interview coming up for a group member including position, corporate interviewing style, and position description.
   e. Networking Event Preparation – the group can prepare by sharing best practices and intelligence about attendees at other networking events such as SIM meetings or C-Level at Mile High.
   f. Celebrations – the group may wish to organize an event to celebrate recent graduates or holidays. Always consider inviting alumni members to such events.
   g. Meeting with other group coordinators in the Denver Focus Groups, or inviting them to the regularly scheduled meeting for information sharing.
   h. Hold quarterly social event where we invite hosts, partners, alumni and other potential influential individuals to network at a local establishment agreed upon by the active members.
6. Partners – There are a number of consulting and staffing companies, as well as IT services vendors, who would welcome the opportunity to host the group meetings and bring value to the members and extend the network.
   a. Screening prospective partners is just as important as screening prospective group members. The Group Coordinator should meet with the prospective partner see if there's a fit and manage expectations.
   b. Coordinate an agenda with the partner. It is up to the group if they would like to have a portion of the meeting to themselves without partner personnel present.

c. First impressions matter. Remind members to dress professionally when meeting at a partner site, bring business cards and to prepare questions for the partner.
d. Send the partner point of contact the list of group members with their contact information (including LinkedIn site), highlighting those who will be in attendance at the meeting hosted by the partner.
e. Prepare the host with bios, backgrounders, and any topics of focus, ie. Target roles that are pertinent to the group so the host may have up to date information to share on that target role.
f. The Group Coordinator and members thank the partner following the meeting.

g. Coordinate with the partner and group members to see if it makes sense for the partner to host the group again in the future. In some cases, it may make sense to set up a periodic meeting schedule with the partner.

7. Group Coordinator – The Group Coordinator should embody the principles of servant leadership in her/ his governance of the group. In a group comprised of people accustomed to being organizational leaders, it should not be difficult to find someone qualified to take on the role of coordinator. Nevertheless, to fulfill the Coordinator role successfully, a significant time commitment is needed and the group may want to consider implementing two Co-Coordinators. A Co-Coordinators approach also makes for smoother transitions in leadership, as one of the coordinators may graduate from the group. The primary responsibilities are as follows.
    a. Schedule group meetings – time, place, and agenda.
    b. Facilitate the succession plan for the coordinator role.
    c. Screen prospective partners and support other members introducing partners to the group.
    d. Facilitate a greater degree of involvement from group members, finding ways to allow them to share their ideas and strengths with the rest of the group.
    e. Be a fierce advocate and enforcer for the values of the group.
    f. Administer the LinkedIn group, group sharing folder and group shared calendar.
    g. Coordinate with other Focus Groups, as appropriate.
    h. Keep alumni informed of group needs, notify of graduating members and request assistance from them, as appropriate.
    i. Delegate – in a group full of senior leaders, the Coordinator should be sure to delegate tasks to group members, as appropriate.
    j. Must have courage for the subconscious of the group. If needed, remind the group of common business practices and protocol, i.e. Dress code for offsite meetings, presentations and objectives at hosted events, digital etiquette, business cards, bios and all other forms of representative communication where and when's.
    k. Building Relationships – The ability to serve fellow members is often limited by how well they know and can represent each other. We are not likely to recommend people for positions, and should not for healthy brand management, if we do not know them as more than acquaintances. One good approach to foster stronger lifetime professional relationships is an "Allow me to introduce" exercise. Make pairing assignments to each member of the group so they can plan to meet one-on-one. The objective of the one-on-one time is for them to interview each other so they can introduce one another in the next group meeting.
        - They should be developing a strong "elevator pitch" or "30 second me" to introduce their colleague. Interview questions should be directed accordingly

to uncover relevant experience, transferable skills, industry experience and the position the type of position the person is looking for.
  - This is an opportunity to overcome some of the challenges more modest group members when pitching their own abilities. It is often easier to promote someone else than to promote ourselves.
  - All members should understand the importance and seriousness of the assignment. The first impression to a new member or partner made by both parties may hinge on the quality of the introduction.
  - Rotate pairing assignments prior to the next meeting and repeat the process.
  - Alumni – Those who land (find employment) “graduate” from the group and become alumni. The alumni can be a valuable resource to DITEX.

l. Alumni are critical to the DITEX organization.
  - Alumni are expected to make contact with DITEX by attending the quarterly social, responding to active member inquiries, attending focus groups, mentoring sessions or other related activities.
  - The Group Coordinator and members should all make an effort to network with alumni members.
  - There is no size limit to the alumni group.
  - LinkedIn – The LinkedIn groups are a valuable tool for the DITEX and should be administered by the Group Coordinator. While the sites are a great communication and networking tool, they should not take the place of face-to-face networking and relationship-building. Oftentimes, IT professionals are more comfortable with computers than people and it is critical to have face time with others and network in the real world. The LinkedIn group is actually separated into two groups.

m. The main group is the larger of the two, for all stakeholders including alumni and partners.
  - Membership should still be by invitation only.
  - The group should be hidden to general LinkedIn users so the Group Coordinator doesn’t have to deal with a large number of requests to join.
  - Once someone graduates from the subgroup, they should be removed from this group.
  - Members should post job opportunities to this group when they want the core active members to have first shot at them.
  - Information about group meetings can be posted to this subgroup.