



Small Business
Development Centers



Mastermind Group Guidelines

GROUND RULES

It is expected that each member be present and on time for the meeting, which will promptly begin at the scheduled time.

Members are expected to respect the meeting agenda. When a person takes considerably more than their share of the agenda or dominates discussion periods, they rob from everyone else in the group who is looking to gain from the experience as well. When the group follows the format, everyone will have an opportunity to speak within the framework of the group, and each member will participate equally.

Everyone is here to support each other. Please keep in mind there will be constructive criticism, and people will attempt to hold you accountable, but there should be no putting down or criticism of other group members. It should be an open and positive experience for all.

In order for people to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns within the framework of these meetings, trust is vital. Therefore, everything that is revealed within a Mastermind meeting must be held in strict confidence.

Avoid trying to convince people to your way of thinking. You are encouraged to share your opinion respectfully, even when it differs from the rest of the group, but avoid being argumentative or condescending.

Listen when others are talking and avoid cross-talk and side conversations.

Encourage intelligent risks. You can't be an entrepreneur while simultaneously avoiding risk. It's inevitable. But we must refuse to be reckless. If group members really care about each other, they will not lead each other down a path that they think will cause someone ruin.

Always approach Mastermind Groups as an opportunity to invest in others. Remember that a rising tide raises all boats.

Look for opportunities to bring more people into a Mastermind Group. Invite people into your group when there are open seats. Encourage others to start new groups. Perhaps even start a group of your own once you've been a part of a group for a while.

STANDARD MEETING FORMAT (60 MINUTES)

15 minutes – Two Minute Updates: each member shares a win from the previous week/month and/or an update on the goal they mentioned in the previous week/month.

15 minutes – The Hot Seat Presentation: one member who is in “the hot seat” shares something they are working on, describes how that thing is going, and asks the group for advice and experiences that might help him or her.

15 minutes – Hot Seat Feedback: members provide help to the person in the hot seat.

15 minutes – Two Minute Goals: Each member shares their goal for the next week/month.

STANDARD MEETING FORMAT (90 MINUTES)

20 minutes – Three Minute Updates: each member shares a win from the previous week/month and/or an update on the goal they mentioned in the previous week/month.

20 minutes – The Hot Seat Presentation: one member who is in “the hot seat” shares something they are working on, describes how that thing is going, and asks the group for advice and experiences that might help him or her.

20 minutes – Hot Seat Feedback: members provide help to the person in the hot seat.

20 minutes – Three Minute Goals: Each member shares their goal for the next week/month.

10 minutes – Goal Feedback: Members have an opportunity to share advice or resources related to the three minute goals that were just shared.

MASTERMIND COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Determine the meeting length, frequency, group size, and general guidelines for member recruitment, preferably with buy-in from other founding group members.

Maintain a schedule of meeting dates, hosts (locations), and whose turn it is to be in the Hot Seat.

Ensure that group members are following ground rules and sticking to the agenda as much as possible (without “leading” the meeting).

Communicate with SBDC staff with regard to the overall health of the Mastermind Group and whether there are any open seats in the group. SBDC staff can sometimes recommend new members they think would be a good fit.