

Welcome To BUSINESSADVISING.ORG



**When Small
Businesses Succeed,
We All Succeed**



Empowering Small Businesses

BusinessAdvising.org is a nonprofit small business accelerator harnessing the model made famous by venture capital-backed tech startups (access to working capital, expert business advice, and extensive networks) to benefit businesses on “Main Street”.

Since 1998, businesses working with us, on average, have seen their revenues increase by 25% on average, and added jobs at 10 times the national level. We’ve empowered hundreds of small businesses to create tens of thousands of jobs.

The core of this program is you – the small business owner and volunteer advisor. Your commitment to be successful and to this community is what delivers real value for all.

This toolkit is intended to support your hard work by providing some structure, templates, tips, best practices, resources, and lessons learned to set your advising match on the right path from Day One.

In this toolkit you will find:

- Best Practices
- Templates
- Partnership Meeting Guides
- Important Announcements
- Reading List
- Social Media Referral Toolkit
- and Many Tips to a Successful Advising Match

Welcome!

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Who Can Participate in BusinessAdvising.org?

Companies – Most of the participants in our program tend to meet the following criteria:

- Operating history of at least a year (i.e. beyond start-up phase)
- Annual revenues of at least \$150,000
- 2+ full-time employees
- Located in, or hiring from, a lower-income community OR have a strong social mission

Advisors – Our ideal advisors usually have the following criteria:

- 10+ years broad business management and/or ownership experience
- Functional expertise in an area such as: marketing, sales, finance, manufacturing, operations, and general management
- Commitment to working with your matched small business owner for at least five (5) hours per month.
- Interest in local economic development and entrepreneurship

What to Expect Once in an Advising Match?

Small Business Owner

- As the advisee in this match it is up to the Small Business Owner to set up ongoing meetings with the advisor(s), come with an agenda prepared, and drive the advising relationship.
- The volunteer business advisor(s) paired with any Small Business Owner have committed a minimum of five (5) hours a month to work with a small business.
- The regular check-in surveys are the primary feedback tool helping BusinessAdvising.org manage the advising matches and assist with making sure a Small Business Owner sees value from this program.

Advisors

- The volunteer advisor in any match agrees to be available to the Small Business Owner for least five (5) hours a month and to observe the Advisor Code of Conduct (Page 12).
- While it is the responsibility of the Small Business Owner to drive this advising relationship, advisors can increase the likelihood of a successful match by coaching the Small Business Owner to set up future appointments, follow through on commitments and help hold them accountable.
- The regular check-in surveys are the primary feedback tool helping BusinessAdvising.org manage the advising matches and assist with making sure a Small Business Owner and the volunteer advisors see value from this program.

Small Business Owner Role & Responsibilities

Phase 1: Identifying Roles

- Have a clear understanding of why you want to be advised

Phase 2: Communicating Expectations

- Have a clear understanding of your expectations for your advisor
- Clearly communicate those expectations
- Stay flexible in changing expectations or plans
- Create goals with milestones and deliverables
- Inform your advisor about your preferred learning style
- Be realistic about setting timelines

Phase 3: Working Together

- Listen and contribute to the conversation
- Understand that your advisor will not have all the answers
- Accept constructive feedback
- Set time aside for self-reflection
- Evaluate progress
- Celebrate success
- Be consistent and reliable

Phase 4: Meeting All of the Goals

- Provide your Advisor with updates after the advising is completed
- Provide an evaluation of the experience
- It's helpful to show appreciation for your volunteer advisors time and effort
- Refer your professional network of small business owners to sign up with BusinessAdvising.org

Volunteer Advisor Role & Responsibilities

Phase 1: Identifying Roles

- Have a clear understanding of why you want to be an advisor
- Have a realistic assessment of your skills and experience

Phase 2: Communicating Expectations

- Have a clear understanding of your expectations for your entrepreneur
- Clearly communicate those expectations
- Stay flexible in changing expectations or plans
- Create goals with milestones and deliverables
- Adapt your feedback to your entrepreneur's learning style
- Be realistic about setting timelines

Phase 3: Working Together

- Advise, don't dictate
- Advise on what you know and admit the things you don't know
- Give good examples
- Recognize your entrepreneur's weaknesses and build on his/her strengths
- Offer constructive feedback
- Evaluate progress
- Be your entrepreneur's supporter when he/she reaches his/her goals
- Be consistent and reliable

Phase 4: Meeting All the Goals

- After advising is completed, follow up on successes
- Provide an evaluation of the experience
- Repeat the advising process with others

Refer your professional network to volunteer with BusinessAdvising.org

The Kickoff Call

The Kickoff Call is the foundation for any advising match. This is the first time the small business owner and advisor will speak, and this is where you begin to build this advising relationship.

Entrepreneurs might ask:

- What should I know about you that I would not learn from your bio?
- What are your concerns as we move forward in our advising relationship?
- How do you foresee this relationship working?
- How do you feel about me, as the entrepreneur, driving this relationship?
- What challenges might we face?
- How should we address any challenges that arise?

Advisors might ask:

- What are your concerns as we move forward in our advising relationship?
- What are your expectations of me as an advisor?
- What are your expectations of yourself?
- How should we address any challenges that arise?
- What are your interests, hobbies, etc.?
- What do you value in a working relationship?

ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES

You may use these questions to outline your partnership guidelines:

- When will we meet?
- How often will we meet?
- How will we schedule our meetings?
- What guidelines will we commit to in order to build and maintain trust in the partnership?
- What happens if one of us cancels or postpones a meeting?
- What permanent agenda items will be part of every meeting?
- What is the timeframe for distribution of the agenda and follow-up notes?
- How often will we communicate between meetings?
- Will we communicate via phone, email, Skype, etc?
- What geographic/cultural norms may influence our partnership?
- What guidelines for confidentiality will we establish to support our partnership?
- What can we do to develop a comfortable working relationship since we may or may not be meeting face-to-face?

Ongoing Meeting Agenda Template

You can use the sample agenda listed below to support your ongoing partnership meetings.

1) Check-In

1. Since our last meeting:
2. Key successes
3. Greatest challenges

2) Discussion

1. Review status of development goals and action plans
2. Discuss additional needs
3. Identify development opportunities/solutions
4. Update action plan, as needed

3) Current Topics

1. Discuss other topics or issues
2. Action planning, as appropriate

4) Next Steps

1. Confirm next meeting date, time, and agenda
2. Identify follow-up activities and pre-meeting preparation

5) Feedback

1. Exchange meeting feedback with your partner

Making the Most of Your Advising Relationship

Communicate your expectations with your advising match

- Advising is a mutual relationship. Inform your partner of your expectations of them
- Determine your goals individually and then discuss together
- Discuss what you would like to achieve together

Show respect and appreciation

- Respect your each other's time and other commitments.
- Take on an active role in the advising partnership
- Respond to your each other's contact in a timely manner is to show respect for the partnership
- Take the lead in building the advising relationship; take initiative in contacting and planning for activities

Understand roles and responsibilities

- It is up to the small business owner to take responsibility and drive this relationship forward
- It is up to the volunteer advisor to be available and present for the small business owner

And remember....

- Take initiative and maintain ongoing communication with your partner (e.g., scheduling meetings, making phone calls, and other forms of communication)
- Get to know yourself and communicate your needs to your match
- Set realistic and achievable goals (short-term and long-term goals)
- Plan and follow through with your objectives and goals

Goal Templates:

Section 1: Career & Professional Goals and Objectives	
Short-term Goals (1-2 years)	Long-term Goals (2-5 years)

Section 2: Month-to-Month Action Plan			
	Meeting Date	Objectives/Goals	Strategies/Tactics
Example	Jan 1, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify top three short-term and long-term goals. Identify professional strengths and opportunities for growth (taking military background into account). Use this worksheet to create a plan of action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed Career Assessment Questionnaire. Mentor and Protégé: Take the Jung Typology Test and discuss individual results together.
Month 1:			
Month 2:			
Month 3:			

Section 2: Month-to-Month Action Plan			
	Meeting Date	Objectives/Goals	Strategies/Tactics
Month 4:			
Month 5:			
Month 6:			
Month 7:			
Month 8:			
Month 9:			
Month 10:			
Month 11:			
Month 12:			

Frequently Asked Questions - Handling Roadblocks

Advising is a powerful connection between two people. Over the course of your advising relationship, you may experience great joys as well as some uncomfortable moments.

Issues and possible solutions

This is a list of possible issues that may arise during your advising relationship, and some suggestions for how to deal with them. This list is not exhaustive: Remember you may always contact BusinessAdvising.org for support.

Punctuality

"My mentor/entrepreneur always arrives at least 15 minutes late. What should I do?"

- Agree upfront on what should be done if either party is going to be late
- Remember that rescheduling, ahead of time, is a best practice
- Be aware that different cultures and workplaces have different orientations to time and discuss what is considered appropriate behavior

Inappropriate expectations of the other's role

"The entrepreneur asked me to find him a job."

"We spent the whole hour talking about how my advisor might expand his business interests."

- Take time to clarify roles
- Politely bring the discussion back on track – i.e. what is the purpose of your advising relationship?

Entrepreneur needs more intensive support than advisor can provide

"The entrepreneur's business writing skills are problematic."

- Discuss your concerns with your entrepreneur
- Discuss how the issue affects the goals of your work together. If necessary, review your priorities and redirect your efforts

One feels the other is not making the advising relationship a priority.

"I sent three emails and I haven't received an answer yet."

"My advisor/entrepreneur cancelled our meeting at the last minute twice."

- Communicate and agree to how long it might take for you to return calls and emails
- Let the other person know if the coming period will be especially busy
- Be forgiving
- Discuss the expectations you have of your partner. Are they realistic?
- Are there any underlying issues affecting your advising relationship?
- Assess whether or not current demands on your time allow you to meet your minimum commitment
- Contact BusinessAdvising.org for support

Advisor Code of Conduct

As an Advisor within the BusinessAdvising.org (BA) network, I agree to the following conditions:

- I agree to recognize the diversity of the BA network and respect the variety of cultures norms, beliefs and values that it contains.
- I agree to perform advising as a volunteer service at my own free will, without promise, expectation, or receipt of remuneration.
- I agree to act in the best interest of the Advisee and attempt to encourage and motivate them, pointing out both opportunities and problems.
- I agree not to accept fees, commissions, or any other form of compensation for any advice, guidance, or work done within the context of my role as a volunteer BA Business Advisor.
- I agree to comply with any applicable laws in performing services as a BA Business Advisor and recommend and encourage only legal and ethical behavior by my Advisee.
- I agree to only accept Advising projects for which I am qualified by my experience and areas of competence, and to seek help from BA if my Advisee has a problem beyond my expertise.
- I agree that it is the Advisee who makes all final decisions related to his or her business endeavors.
- I agree to maintain regular contact with BA and provide feedback and updates regarding Advising Projects.
- I agree to immediately disclose to both BA and my Advisee any conflicts of interest that would influence my objectivity as it relates to any advice or guidance I would provide to my Advisee.
- I agree to maintain the confidentiality of all materials and business ideas that have been entrusted to me by my Advisee that are non-public information.
- I agree to promptly report any violations of this Code of Ethics to my point of contact at BA.

Important Announcements and Notifications

All Businesses - Annual Impact Survey

As a condition of participation, all companies enrolled in the program agree to participate in the annual impact survey, distributed to enrolled companies at the beginning of the calendar year.

San Francisco Businesses

In compliance with the City and County of San Francisco's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), all San Francisco based business who wish to participate in our program must agree to complete a Workforce Data Request that our office will provide shortly after enrollment.

California Businesses

Attention all California businesses!

Need a loan for \$50,000 - \$200,000? BusinessAdvising.org's parent nonprofit has a small business loan program you may be eligible for. You can learn more about it here

<http://www.pacificcommunityventures.org/loans/>



Social Media Referral Toolkit – For Small Business Owners

BusinessAdvising.org is always looking for new small businesses and volunteer advisors. Please help spread the work to your professional networks:

Twitter

My small business has experienced great growth, thanks BusinessAdvising.org! @pcvtweets
#smallbusiness

My business has grown and we've created #jobs! My secret is free advising from BusinessAdvising.org
@pcvtweets #smallbusiness

Free expert business advice has really helped my #smallbusiness grow. Thanks BusinessAdvising.org
@pcvtweets

LinkedIn / Facebook / Google+

BusinessAdvising.org has helped my small business grow and create more jobs. I highly recommend any small business owner to sign up and start growing your business even faster! Their program is totally free, and signing up is easy: <http://businessadvising.org/entrepreneurs/>

Clients of BusinessAdvising.org, on average, see their revenues increase by 25%, and they create jobs 10 times the national average. I should know, I am one of these clients and your business could be too! Their program is totally free, and signing up is easy: <http://businessadvising.org/entrepreneurs/>



Social Media Referral Toolkit – For Advisors

Twitter

I'm an advisor with BusinessAdvising.org, working with #smallbusiness & low-income communities, will you join in? @pcvtweets

I volunteer 5hrs/mo. working with #smallbusiness with BusinessAdvising.org. Consider giving back too and join me. @pcvtweets #giveback

LinkedIn / Facebook / Google+

I am serving as volunteer advisor to small businesses through BusinessAdvising.org. They're looking for more talented advisors. You can help create economic opportunity by helping more small businesses succeed and create more new jobs. Join me? <http://businessadvising.org/advisors/>

I volunteer 5 hour a month working with small businesses across the country with BusinessAdvising.org. We are recruiting more advisors for this growing program. Will you join me in giving back? You can help create economic opportunity by helping more small businesses succeed and create more new jobs. <http://businessadvising.org/advisors/>

It sounds cliché, but small business owners are the engines of the economy — and they need support and expertise in areas such as marketing, sales, finance, manufacturing, operations and general management. You can help create economic opportunity. Small businesses that receive specialized knowledge from seasoned professionals like us are more likely to succeed. <http://businessadvising.org/advisors/>

Suggested Reading List

Advising

[The Art of Giving and Receiving Advice](#), Harvard Business Review, 2015

[Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives](#), Karen Kimsey-House, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2011

[Monday Morning Mentorship: 10 Lessons to Guide You Up the Ladder](#), David Cottrell, Cornerstone Leadership Institute, 2002

[Power Advising: How Successful Mentors and Protégés Get the Most Out of Their Relationships](#), Ellen A. Ensher and Susan E. Murphy, Jossey-Bass, 2005

Networking and Relationship-Building

[Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior](#), Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler, McGraw-Hill, 2004

[Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#), Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, TalentSmart, 2009

[Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In](#), Roger Fisher, Penguin, 2011

Personal Development

[Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking](#), Malcolm Gladwell, Back Bay Books, 2007

[Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us](#), Daniel H. Pink, Riverhead, 2011

[Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity](#), David Allen, Penguin, 2002

[Talent Is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else](#), Geoff Colvin, Portfolio Trade, 2010

Entrepreneurship

[The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses](#), Eric Ries, Crown Business, 2011

[11 Rules for Creating Value in the #SocialEra](#), Nilofer Merchant, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012

[Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose](#), Tony Hsieh, Business Plus, 2010

[The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It](#), Michael E. Gerber, HarperCollins, 1995

[Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't](#), Jim Collins, HarperBusiness, 2001