QUALIFICATIONS
Program membership is by invitation only; please call for an application.

Minimum qualifications are:

1. Business owner.

2. Second stage entrepreneur; at least one year in business

3. Annual sales of $100,000 +/-.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?
Some questions to consider before joining a group:

Will I be able to commit the time, energy and brainpower to make this work for me and other members?

Can I be truly comfortable sharing aspects of my business with the group?

Do I respect or like other group members and the facilitator?

What do I believe that I can bring to the group?

Central Virginia Small Business Development Center
210 Ridge-McIntire Road, Suite 250, Charlottesville, VA 22903
Phone (434)295-8198 Fax (434) 979-4123
www.avenue.org/sbdc

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Business Advantage Circles are professionally-facilitated peer advisory groups composed of business owners from the same region in non-competing businesses.

Sponsored by:
The Central Virginia Small Business Development Center hosted by the
The Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development.
WHAT CIRCLES DO

1. Unlike networking groups, our primary purpose is to provide a confidential, non-competitive forum for problem solving, sharing best practices and, ultimately, contributing to the success of members' businesses.

2. We provide an environment that facilitates peer exchange leading to improved business performance and enhanced quality of life for its members.

3. We work with Circle small business owners to define issues which hinder growth; once defined, action items are assigned to specific members and resolutions are discussed at the following meeting.

WORK GROUP EXPECTATIONS

Business Advantage Circles are composed of no more than 8 members with similar sized businesses from the same area, not in competition with each other. Meetings are monthly for two hours.

Groups are WORK groups. Members are expected to prepare for each meeting and participate in the discussion and resolution that may be suggested.

The Facilitator keeps the meeting on strategy and provides resources as required by the group; however, the members set the meeting agenda and define the issues.

TYPICAL WORK GROUP PROJECTS/ISSUES

- Strategic planning
- Staffing/hiring/retention
- Marketing strategy/Branding
- Operations/Time Management
- Financial management

HOW TO WORK WITHIN A GROUP

Members getting the most from work groups are people who are willing to change how they lead or how they run their business and are curious about what others are doing. We all have islands of experience and the work group process moves practical experience from those who have it to those that need it, without reinventing the wheel. First hand experience is paramount to all other educational resources.

Each member must be committed to the process. Some may need to retrain themselves to slow down and listen more carefully before giving others advice. Listening is the key to helping each other.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

Circle membership fills in weaknesses and shares strengths. “I am a great designer, but I couldn’t sell water in the desert.”

Circle membership helps you manage your business. Are you lost in paperwork? Putting out too many fires? If so, you may be working in your business not on it. Others can help.

Circle membership will give you connections to experts and once in a lifetime experience you otherwise could not afford.

AT FEES YOU CAN AFFORD

Utilizing the program can often save you more money than the cost of management consultants alone. So why not apply today?

Subscriptions are $90.00 per month, payable quarterly in advance. Those who belong to a Chamber of Commerce and other participating organizations receive a 10% discount.

For additional information and to apply:

Contact Nora Gillespie
(434) 295-8198 or sbdc@cstone.net

Central Virginia SBDC