



Mentor FAQ

An Unofficial Guide to How Things Work

HOW DO I SIGN UP TO BE A MENTOR?

Scan the QR code and complete the application. If your application is selected, you will complete an interview with Dr. Sheila Snoddy, program director. After the interview, you will receive an acceptance decision if approved.

If selected to be a mentor, you will have to complete a Mentor Training Session (1 full day) to prepare for the program. It's imperative you attend this training.

OK, SO I'M A MENTOR – WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

Our mission is to guide – not to do. We listen, we coach, and we advise. Mentors provide candid and honest appraisals of the entrepreneurs and their small business pointing out options and recommending courses of action. But it's up to the entrepreneur and her or his team to execute. This is their business, not ours; we are not the CEOs. The choices and the decisions are up to the entrepreneurs.

HOW DO I START WORKING WITH A SMALL BUSINESS?

Based on your industry experience and areas of expertise, you will be paired with the appropriate business and mentor team for the Pilot Program. As the program grows in scale, you will have the opportunity to volunteer for a specific business that fits your area of expertise/interest.

HOW CAN I GET SOME BACKGROUND ON A SMALL BUSINESS I MAY BE INTERESTED IN MENTORING?

Once you are assigned to a small business, you will be provided with their application and basic information. Much more information for each business is stored online, but in keeping with our concern for confidentiality, only the assigned mentors can view it.

WHAT IS THE MENTORING PROCESS WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR/BUSINESS?

Every business is unique in its status, needs, trajectory and priorities. There is no single set process; each mentoring process is necessarily custom crafted.

There is an agenda to prepare for sessions and a flow of activity. There may be times with multiple intensive sessions over a short time span to help crystallize strategy and plans. And there will be times when meetings are less frequent as the business executes those plans.

Mentors should be on call to respond with advice in a crisis; available for consultation by phone, e-mail, or in person.

Sometimes the entrepreneur just needs a shoulder to cry on after something goes very wrong; or, more happily, someone to share a victory with.

Mentors should take an interest in their mentees and their success, and get to know their needs, including their personal situations. Strive to develop a personal and trusted relationship, such as exists between a student and a really devoted teacher.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM ME?

While we respect that you're a volunteer, we expect that you'll put in a minimum of 1 to 2 days of aggregated participation each month. You're also encouraged to attend the monthly mentor meetings (times to be determined).

The greatest challenge we face is in scheduling. With a dozen small businesses, it can become hectic trying to find dates and times that work for all the mentors and the small business. When you receive an email or call, please respond as soon as practical and be as flexible as possible. A "not available" response is as important as an "available" response – so please respond either way.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR RULES I'VE GOT TO KEEP IN MIND?

Every mentor has agreed to abide by a Statement of Principles that describes the Power Up Spartanburg - Mentoring operating rules. While they're all important, two core principles are vital - confidentiality and conflict of interest. We are entrusted with critical information that we must protect.

Mentors must notify Power Up Spartanburg - Mentoring of any financial involvement with any small business and recuse themselves from their mentor role with respect to that particular business if they are currently mentoring the business. If there is any doubt, play it safe and talk to the office staff.

CAN I GET A DIRECTORY OF ALL THE MENTORS?

Mentors participating in our pilot program will receive a mentor directory. It is important to remember that you may not disclose any small business information with a mentor who is not assigned to that team.

WHAT IF I HAVE PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS?

Feel free to talk to anyone on the staff.

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