

Executive Sounding Board

CEO/Owners Roundtable

Operating Guidelines

The Executive Sounding Board provides a structured and confidential environment for CEO/Owners to share best practices and resolve their business challenges and issues. Participants can expect to make better decisions, improve communication skills and build valuable relationships.

Each roundtable consists of 8-12 peers with at least one employee in non-competing businesses. Meetings are held monthly, usually over breakfast, at a participant's business, private club, restaurant or other designated location decided by the member host of the meeting. Each facilitated roundtable prioritizes issues to be discussed and develops its own agenda. A typical meeting could include discussion on managing growth, finding and retaining top talent, enhancing compensation programs, health care costs or retirement plans.

To further enhance the results of the group and leverage relationships, all participants of the TwinWest Executive Sounding Boards will join together for an event planned by the TwinWest Chamber each quarter. Admission into the quarterly events is included in your payment.

➤ Requirements

- Must be a CEO or Owner
- Must have at least one employee
- Must attend 10 out of the 12 meetings per year
- Must be in non-competing industries
- Must agree to "host" 1x/year
- Must sign the commitment statement, confidentiality forms & payment contract

➤ Details

- Groups will meet 1x/month on a pre-determined day for approximately 3 hours
- Groups will be facilitated/co-facilitated by non-group participants(s)
- Each group participant will "host" a meeting approximately 1x/year at the location of their choice (all associated costs to be covered by host)
- Ad hoc meetings may occur as needed
- Proposed structure can be changed by group with a majority vote
- TwinWest will host quarterly events for all members of the roundtables & lead generation groups

➤ Cost

- 2018 pilot members will receive a discount: \$650/annual or \$60/month
- TwinWest Members: \$700/annual or \$70/month
- Non-TwinWest Members: \$1200/annual or \$110/month

➤ Roundtable Facilitator

- A designated non-group participant will serve as the facilitator and liaison between the roundtable and the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce.
- Facilitators will share monthly communication to the roundtable from TwinWest

- Facilitators are expected to participate in Roundtable/Lead Generation quarterly events and encourage participation by other participants
- He or she will facilitate meetings; ensure agreed-upon roles such as timekeeper, process observer and parking lot attendant are filled; and prepare the agenda for each meeting.
- Facilitators meet quarterly as a group at the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce
- Suggested term for leadership is 12-18 months:
 - Regular rotation provides other group members an opportunity to learn by leading other leaders.
 - Group members share the role.
 - It provides a graceful exit for a group leader. This is useful if no one speaks up when a leadership change is needed.
 - Each leader brings his/her own style, changing the group's dynamic.

➤ Discussion Protocol

- Members speak from experience rather than give advice. Giving advice or telling someone what to do is a matter of opinion. By sharing experiences, members end up with information that allows for better decision making. Adapted from Gestalt psychology, the use of the discussion protocol is a key component in creating a safe environment where members will feel comfortable sharing knowledge and expertise.
 - **Use the past tense**
 - **Empathize**
 - **Ask questions that prevent defensiveness**
 - **Share positive and negative experiences**
 - **Listen well**

➤ The Parking Lot

- After the Business/Personal Update (see sample meeting format), the Parking Lot is the next step to identify and prioritize issues for discussion. It provides the leader and the group with a fair system and a mechanism to stay focused by reserving time to devote to other issues.
- When a member raises the possibility of discussing a particular issue (via the Business/Personal Update), it can be deferred to the Parking Lot. During the housekeeping section of the meeting, the Parking Lot can be re-visited to determine the next presentation.
- Issues in Quadrant 4 come first, followed by Quadrant 3, 2 and 1. Over time, a group will hopefully spend most of its time on the Quadrant 3 issues because the “crisis” issues that fall into Quadrant 4 will be less frequent.

Important – Not Urgent Quadrant III	Urgent & Important Quadrant IV
Not Urgent – Not Important Quadrant I	Urgent – Not important Quadrant II

➤ Sample Meeting Format

- One-Word Opener
 - Members say one word that describes his or her feelings

- Confidentiality Reminder
 - Facilitator reminds members that everything discussed is confidential
 - TwinWest Update
 - Facilitator shares timely news from TwinWest Chamber of Commerce and encourages attendance at upcoming quarterly events.
 - Host opens meeting: Hot seat
 - Brief Business/Personal Update
 - Members update each other on best and worst professionally and personally without interruption - no questions are to be asked.
 - This update provides a structured format for revealing vital issues that justify group discussion.
 - Updates may also include successes to report from past presentations and actions taken since last discussion.
 - The facilitator or host should take notes on issues being shared.
 - Use a timer to enforce 3-5 minute time limits and to keep the meeting on schedule. This also respects the time and preparation of other members.
 - Select Issue(s) for the Day
 - Facilitator facilitates the process of prioritizing issues utilizing the Parking Lot and identifies the topic for discussion (one or two issues are selected)
 - Issue(s) of the Day Presentation
 - Presenter briefly states his/her expectations. Why is the presentation being made? What decision is the presenter struggling with?
 - Presenter presents topic, devoting 25% of the time to history/background and 75% to the issue. Remind the group not to interrupt under any circumstances. Questions should be written down during the presentation.
 - Q&A
 - Members ask presenter two questions.
 - Enforce the question-only rule (that is, no advice or recommendations).
 - Experience Sharing
 - Members share experiences related to presenter's issue. Again, no advice. Members say, "Here's what I did in a similar situation..." rather than "Here's what you should do..."
 - Response
 - Presenter responds to members by highlighting what was helpful and expressing thanks.
 - Housekeeping
 - Schedule or location changes and other group matters to be discussed.
 - One-Word Close
 - Starting with presenter, each member chooses one word to capture his/her feelings about the meeting.
- The Roundtable Experience
- Each Roundtable member is responsible for his/her own experience and must take equal responsibility in ensuring the group's success.
 - Be proactive - Take the lead in risking and sharing deep personal experiences. Trust is contagious and soon everyone else will follow.

- Share your concerns immediately - If anything in the Roundtable bothers you and you do not discuss it, you do yourself and the group a disservice. Raising concerns before they become too serious can prevent their escalation.
 - Share open and honestly. To enable this level of communication, members are required to maintain complete confidentiality. Nothing discussed in a Roundtable ever leaves the room.
 - This includes sharing information with partners, co-owners, spouses or significant others. A breach of confidentiality will result in removal from the group and adversely affect future eligibility for the Roundtable program.
- Developing a Group Constitution
- Each Roundtable group is given a recommended structure but the group will agree on a structure and level of formality that best meets the needs of all members. TwinWest suggests each Roundtable develop and document its own constitution detailing how their group will operate and resolve issues. The constitution may include the following:
 - **Group Mission Statement**
 - **Attendance Policy**
 - **Discussion Protocol**
 - **Non-Compete**
 - **Majority Rule**
 - The process of drafting a constitution and gaining agreement from members to abide by can bring the group closer together.
- Chamber Role
- TwinWest Chamber staff contact(s) do not attend roundtable meetings
 - Chamber will assist with:
 - Matchmaking
 - Administration
 - Agenda creation, if desired
 - Marketing
 - Planning/executive of quarterly events