



Participation in
one roundtable is
INCLUDED in your
MMAC dues

For CEOs,
CFOs & Senior
Executives

Advisory
board of
your peers

News, programs
and events
focused on small
business

Executive Roundtable Toolkit

A Guide of Best Practices
and Exercises

GROUP PURPOSE
MEETING FORMAT
GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY
GROUP CONNECTION
GESTALT LANGUAGE

GROUP PURPOSE

This exercise helps a group take pause, to reflect on the form and function of your roundtable – to ensure it is delivering what is needed and expected from all participants. It allows all members, regardless of tenure, to take part in defining what your roundtable should be.

It is an essential step for a group who is considering adding new members. A group will want to attract members who have similar goals and who understand the commitment involved.

It diminishes participant fall-out of both existing and new members.

It defines your meeting format to achieve highest efficiency.

STEPS FOR THIS EXERCISE:

Distribute AHEAD of roundtable discussion.

Block time at an upcoming roundtable meeting to discuss.

Amend your Group Purpose statement. *Make it your group's signature purpose – What you decide collectively is the reason you want to dedicate time and energy to this roundtable process.*

Amend any of the “Members will...” section to suit your group's needs.

Amend any of the “Format we will follow:” section to suit your preferred meeting flow.

Once complete, forward a copy to your Roundtable Manager, Chauntele Kreutz, to keep on file.

Review as needed.

GROUP PURPOSE

Example Group Purpose & "I Will" Document

GROUP PURPOSE: Meetings will focus on professional issues over personal, leaning towards an environment that combines learning and sharing best practices. Members hope to be held accountable by their peers; to make progress towards strategic goals.

Members will...

- Make commitment to attend 80% of annual roundtables.
- Will actively listen, as well as thoughtfully share experience (not advice).
- Hold all information shared confidential.
- Virtual attendance is allowed for occasional circumstances when in-person cannot be achieved.
- Refrain from "selling" members. Discussion about other's service/product outside of roundtable meetings only.

Communication -

As a courtesy, all members will RSVP all, to meeting notices; stating brief reason for any absence.

Group Cohesion & Satisfaction -

Group, through guidance of group leader, will plan out yearly calendar in December.

Our Roundtable will participate in at least one social outing each year (one summer, one winter).

Members should all take a turn as volunteer leader, rotating every 12-18 months.

New Members -

The group must be unanimous in decision when adding new members.

New members will be interviewed by two group members. Their recommendation will be presented to the entire group before invitation is given.

or

New members will be invited to meet our group members at a scheduled roundtable meeting.

The group will strive to maintain a roster of close to 10 participants.

Member Dismissal -

Grounds for group dismissal include:

Failure to be an 80% attendee

Participant no longer with an MMAC member company

Participant in role that no longer matches CEO roundtable requirements
Participant switches to firm that is in competition with a more senior member’s company

*Participants recognize that dismissals are not personal – but are to help sustain the best direction for the group.

MEETING FORMAT

The ideal meeting time is 120 minutes – no less than 90 minutes. As a best practice, allow for 15 minutes before the meeting starts for socialization. The meeting start time is for official Roundtable discussion.

ONE WORD OPENER

CONFIDENTIALITY REMINDER

3-5 MINUTE UPDATES

- Everyone provides best/worst issues professionally; and if they care to – personally. This should include at least one ‘hot issue’ on your plate for the next 30 days.
- To help in parking lot placement; indicate those issues with a tight deadline and/or of significant importance.
- Include brief update to any resolutions our outcomes to past issues that were shared.

*Updates do not involve ANY discussion. These are uninterrupted moments for each member to “update” the entire group. Please come prepared to present efficiently during your 3-5 minutes.

1. Urgent - Important	2. Important - Not Urgent
3. Urgent - Not Important	4. Not Urgent - Not Important

*During the 3-5-minute updates, leader should use parking lot to identify and prioritize issues for discussion. **Urgent/Important** issues come first.*

SELECTING ISSUES

Group leader facilitates process of prioritizing issues utilizing the Parking Lot. A typical meeting will address 1-3 issues in depth. Group leader can also ask group to vote if there are multiple issues on the table.

PRESENTING ISSUES

Group member of the first selected issue gives additional brief details on the issue. This is also uninterrupted time.



Q&A

Members can ask the presenter clarifying questions, to better understand the issue.

BEST PRACTICE SHARING

Members share experiences related to this issue following Gestalt language protocol. No directive given.

Empathize and share positive or negative experience. Example: "Here is what I did in a similar situation..."

HOUSEKEEPING

- Review Parking Lot
 - Any items members could assist others with before next meeting? (via email, phone call, etc.)
 - Any popular or recurrent issues group would like to plan for defined discussion at a future meeting? Example ideas:
 - How do I continue to grow my business?
 - Finding, building and retaining talent.
 - Operations
 - Cash Flow
 - Accounting
 - Customer Diversity
 - Key Performance Measures
 - Organizational Structure
 - Customer Satisfaction
 - Business Model
- Discuss upcoming schedule changes. Ensure at least next 6 meetings have been defined.
- Chance to address any other group issues (new members, attendance, time for new volunteer leader)
- Leader or other member care to remind group of an MMAC event or program? (Upcoming or past)

RATE THE MEETING

Best practice is to have everyone rate the meeting experience (1-5 scale). This is a good way to measure (at least over the next year) as your group looks to establish value for all participants.

GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic Profile Exercise

Early in the year (January/February meeting), each member will be asked to present their plan to achieve success in the coming year. If you are on a different fiscal year, please use your current year and provide an update. Feel free to use hand-outs or power point. 10 minutes for the presentation (with no interruptions) followed by 5 minutes for questions.

In order to provide consistent presentations, please use the format below:

Upcoming Year Budget or Profit Plan which will consist of:

- projected revenue from all sources
- pre-tax earnings
- net change from previous year
- net change in employment
- other key measures, if any, such as backlog, bookings, deliveries etc.

High level corporate goals and or objectives

- strategic initiatives
- threats to current business
- acquisitions or sales in process

High level operational or tactical plans to accomplish the goals and objectives

- bullet points of plans or steps to accomplish the goals

Personal goals and objectives

- family, personal, etc.

Extra

- sales and marketing plan and or marketing/sales material

GROUP CONNECTION – Roundtable Icebreakers

Origin of Your Last Name

- Time required: 10-15 minutes (1-2 minutes each)
- Ask each person to the best of their ability to describe the origin of their last name

Origin of Your Company Name

- Time required: 10-15 minutes (about 1-2 minutes each)
- Ask each person to briefly describe the genesis of their company name

Bucket List

- Time required: 10 minutes (about 1 minutes each)
- Ask each person to describe 2 of their life's bucket list "to dos" not yet achieved

A Little-Known Fact

- Time required: 10 minutes (about 1 minute each)
- Ask each person to offer something about themselves that group members might not guess

First or Worst Job

- Time required: 10 minutes (about 1 minute each)
- Ask each person to share a few details about their first or worst job

On a Map

- Time required: 10 minutes (about 1 minute each)
- Ask each person to share a city/location that inspires them the most

GROUP CONNECTION – The Timeline Exercise

Think of your life from the day you were born until today. Think of the high points and of the low points and plot them on the graph below. Take 5 minutes to complete the graph. You will have 10 minutes to share your story with the group.

<i>Life Was Awful</i>					<i>Life Was Awesome</i>
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GESTALT LANGUAGE PROTOCOL

The Gestalt Language Protocol comes from Gestalt psychology. Practicing this protocol is a discipline that has far reaching effects on the quality, operation and value derived from a peer Roundtable. The protocol can be difficult to absorb and practice for new Roundtables. It is, however, a key component in creating a safe environment where members will feel comfortable sharing openly.

Speak from your own experience rather than give advice or directive.

- A tip to ensure that you are speaking from experience – use the past tense.
- Giving advice or telling someone what to do is a matter of opinion.
- By sharing experiences, we end up with data. Better data allows for better decision making.
- “I would” is synonymous with “you should.” Both are a form of advice or directive.
- Speaking from experience allows for sharing which leads to bonding and the building of cohesion amongst a group.
- Ask questions that prevent defensiveness. Try to explain the purpose of the question before asking it. Don’t treat the presenter like a defendant.