



Member Guidelines

Michigan PeerSpectives Network: Peer-to-Peer Learning for Entrepreneurs targets growth-oriented Second-Stage companies to create peer-to-peer learning groups according to the requirements and conditions described below.

COMPANY REQUIREMENTS

Companies interested in participating in the Michigan PeerSpectives Network must meet minimum qualifications in order to join. The careful selection of group members according to the following criteria is critical to the formation, composition, and ongoing success of each group. It is important that group members share common issues around the challenges of growing a company. These issues typically fall into the areas of management, organization and leadership and have more to do with the size and growth stage of a company than the industry or type of business in which the member is involved.

Members should bring sufficient experience in order to allow for a balanced contribution among group members. Priority will be given to placing candidates who both meet the criteria and are a good fit for the group as a whole. Given the complex nature of putting together a successful group, there is no guarantee that an applicant who meets the minimum criteria will be selected to participate in a Michigan PeerSpectives Network roundtable.

An applicant who meets the minimum requirements but is not initially selected for participation may be reconsidered as new groups are formed. In addition, openings within the groups may be filled with new members in January and July of each program year. The existing group members must approve new member additions.

Participating companies must meet the following criteria:

1. Be privately held.
2. Be past the start-up stage.
3. Must be facing issues of growth, not survival. Must have a strong intent and capacity to grow (see following explanation).
4. Must employ six to 99 full-time equivalent employees, including the owner, and have between \$750,000 and \$50 million in annual revenue or working capital in place from investors or grants.

Intent and Ability to Grow

A key distinguishing feature of a pro-growth company is the alignment of the owner(s)/CEO's intentions and that of the company's board of directors (if one is active) to grow the company, the capabilities of the business, and the opportunities in the environment. Intention to grow is typically outlined in a business and/or financing plan, with higher growth businesses targeting annual revenue increases in the double-digit percentage range. Companies considering substantial growth are often looking for regional, national, and international expansion opportunities.

Examples of rapid growth companies are those forming strategic alliances with franchisees, technology licensees, distributors and/or sales, manufacturing and marketing partners. Companies with the most opportunity to grow may be addressing multi-million dollar market segments with unique products and services. Intention to grow is also reflected in the plan to hire additional employees to provide support in functional areas such as customer service, sales, manufacturing, inventory, shipping, and receiving.

Priority in the selection process will be given to companies with the capacity and intent to grow substantially in a manner that will contribute to the economic base for Michigan.

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS

The makeup of each PeerSpectives roundtable group is an important indicator of the quality of information and experiences shared between individual Participants. The protocol and operating standards of the roundtable process require that Participants meet the following key conditions:

1. The Participant must be a chief executive, operating officer or owner of a qualifying company.
2. The Participant must agree to be grouped with non-competing companies.
3. The Participant must agree that only one individual from his/her company will participate in any one PeerSpectives roundtable group.
4. The Participant must agree to refrain from key business dealings with members of the same PeerSpectives roundtable group.
5. The Participant must sign a non-disclosure agreement to maintain the confidentiality of the issues discussed in each PeerSpectives roundtable group.
6. The Participant must agree to commit to active membership in the group, which means, in part, attending at least 80 percent of the scheduled group meetings and following agreed-upon roundtable protocol.
7. The Participant must agree that tuition costs of \$1,500 will be paid prior to the start of the membership year.

A representative of the PeerSpectives/MI-SBTDC will contact you within 5 business days of receiving your application. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center Headquarters at 616-331-7480, or send an email to sbtdchq@gvsu.edu

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ROUNDTABLE SYSTEM
AN EDWARD LOWE FOUNDATION PEER-LEARNING
INITIATIVE FOR SECOND-STAGE ENTREPRENEURS

