

## **Mastermind Groups: Why Your Business Needs Them**

*By Ruth Schwartz*



*The concept of mastermind groups, also known as peer advisory groups, has been around for a long time. The opposite of the traditional model of training managers from the top down, mastermind groups bring people together to work as equals to meet difficult challenges or set goals for the future. Run by a professional facilitator, mastermind groups are based on diversity, real dialogue, and establishing an environment of trust.*

Every business is faced with difficult decisions, but how to best make them is often problematic. Relying exclusively on input from inside your own business isn't always the answer. Hiring an outside consultant can be just as limiting. A solution that is working for many businesses is participation in a mastermind group. Whether the group consists of CEOs from different businesses, colleagues from different areas of a large company, or individuals from a cross-section of small businesses from your area, a mastermind group can be the ideal way to address issues that are beyond the scope and expertise of your businesses personnel.

In today's business environment, where employees are often required to work longer hours and are therefore stretched to capacity, mastermind groups provide a way to brainstorm and problem solve to meet specific objectives. Members of the group collaborate by asking difficult questions with the intention of arriving at viable solutions. In the process of working together, members get to know one another's strengths and abilities and also learn to build trust.

Because of technology, business is expansive and it is next to impossible to understand every facet of a company. This is where bringing mastermind members in from a variety of fields can be an enormous benefit. Think of how simple it could be to solve a particular warehouse problem when the views of a shipping clerk, a customer service representative, and an IT manager are all considered.

The days of working from the top down are no longer as productive as they once were. Just because someone within a company has taken classes to become a better manager, there is no guarantee that the knowledge they have gleaned will be passed down. Mastermind groups, on the other hand, can bring an array of specialization and expertise to the table so that peers can exchange ideas and experience the joy of an effective, results-based collaboration effort.

In today's business environment, when it comes to making important decisions—especially those that involve layoffs and downsizing—there is no reason to feel isolated or alone. Running today's fast-paced, technological, international workplace, needs leadership that works. Experienced, results-oriented leaders are making mastermind groups an integral and ongoing part of their business.

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Ruth Schwartz started Mordam Records in 1983. By the time Nirvana hit the pop charts and Green Day went platinum, Schwartz was running a ten million-dollar company. In 2012 Schwartz chronicles her success in *The Key to the Golden Handcuffs – Stop Being a Slave to Your Business*. Published by Outskirts Press, and based on Schwartz' business experience, the book gives entrepreneurs and business executives insight into shifts that can be made to create a transparent, open-book company. Today, Schwartz is an internationally certified business coach, motivational speaker, and the facilitator of business peer advisory boards. She owns High Performance Advocates, a management development and marketing company. Contact Ruth through [www.highperformanceadvocates.com](http://www.highperformanceadvocates.com) or by calling 530-288-0180.