



Canton

Business Owners Forum

Mission: To create an environment in which Business owners or the individual responsible for the daily operation of a small business, can collaborate in a confidential and trusted setting, sharing ideas and concerns of mutual interest, aimed at developing a better understanding of what each member can do to lead themselves and their companies on a path to greater success.

Members will be required to sign an annual statement asking them to commit to the following:

- Attend all quarterly Forum meetings,
- Participate as an active Forum contributor and good listener,
- Demonstrate a sincere interest in the success of the Forum and each of its members,
- Maintain the confidentiality of all Forum discussions,
- Support the Forum's guidelines for effective meetings.

Requirements for membership Applicants must meet 3 of the five requirements. Applicants will be asked to make an initial commitment for one year.

- In business a min. of 2 years.
- At least 3 non-family employees.
- Sales of at least \$500,000 per year.
- Business facility that is not a home office.
- The member should be either the owner of the business or the person responsible for the daily operation of the business.
- The CEO Forum Committee can approve exceptions if appropriate.

We will start with two forum groups;

- One open to anyone who meets the requirements.
- One devoted to the female entrepreneurs who meet the requirements.
- Additional Forum Groups can be added based on demand.

Forum meetings will follow The Forum Process that is designed to identify issues to discuss and foster group discussion. The facilitators will facilitate and manage the process. The Forum Process can be summarized as follows;

- The member presents the background, the specific issue and what the member is expecting from the forum members.
- The Forum members ask clarifying questions. This is not the time for answers, ideas, suggestions or solutions.
- Going around the table forum members make suggestions, present ideas and offer solutions. The member with the issue listens without commenting.
- The member with the issue then summarizes the most important, relevant or practical ideas that he/she will plan to use.

Each forum will be made up of 6 to 8 members and two facilitators who will be SCORE volunteers. Competing businesses **will not** be assigned to the same forum.

- The members will be treated as SCORE clients.
- After each forum meeting the facilitators will be responsible for recording minutes of forum discussions.
- The two facilitators for the forum will be assigned as co-counsel.
- As appropriate, the members can request individual counseling and additional SCORE volunteers can be involved as needed based on expertise required.

Our target for starting forum meetings will be November of 2017.

- Forum meetings;
 - Forums will meet in the Community Room at the Canton Regional Chamber office.
 - Note: Members do not have to be Chamber members to participate in a forum.
 - Will charge dues of \$50 per quarterly meeting (\$200 per year). The fees for the first two meetings will be waived.