

Mastermind Process

MASTERMINDING – Problem Solving, Inspiration & Motivation

Sharing thoughts, ideas, opinions, information and connections. Seeing things from a combined intellect of different perspectives and greater possibilities.

Foundation – Commitment, Confidentiality, Trust, Harmony & Focus

Purpose of the Group Mastermind Process

To identify and share in an objective manner challenges or issues that confront members/business owners on a day to day basis. This is a forum for individuals to receive clarity through a structured questioning process and, if so desired, receive feedback and advice in a non-threatening way for the improvement of the business and edification of all involved. Due to the nature of these meetings and the information shared, and the high level of trust that is needed to participate, all discussions are confidential and are not to be shared at any point with anyone other than those in the group. The group is very beneficial as each individual brings different thought processes, insights, and strengths to the table.

Typically this meeting takes place once a month, scheduled at a consistent regular date and time. Participants are asked to make a commitment to attend each meeting. If there is not regular attendance, the purpose of the group is moot.

Example Schedule (about 2 hours)

15 minutes	10:00 – 10:15	Gather, housekeeping, Updates (each person 2 minutes)
15 minutes	10:15 – 10:30	Opening meditation
10 minutes	10:30 – 10:40	Define expectations for this mastermind (review this outline)
5 minutes	10:40 – 10:45	Seat of Support topic description
90 minutes	10:45 – 12:15	Seat of Support in depth focus using questioning and advice model
		Questioning model
		Objective questions (Just the facts)
		Reflective questions (Filters and feelings)
		Interpretive questions (Meaning and What If's)
		Decisional questions (What are you going to do)
		Advice & Commitment to action items
60 minutes	12:15 – 1:15	Lunch
15 minutes	1:15 – 1:30	Closing meditation

Moderator Guide

Moderating the meeting is rotated through the participants. Moderators are responsible for keeping the meeting moving, on time and to the schedule.

- **Moderating the Questions**

The moderator has the final say with regard to the questioning model. In the model, questions are asked in a specific order to facilitate structure and ensure participants don't jump immediately to advice giving. The Moderator needs to be aware of the different types of questions and pay attention to the questions being asked by the participants. If a question is asked out of order (for example an interpretive question is asked during the fact section), it is the moderator's job to politely tell the participant to write down the question and save it for later (i.e. "That's a fabulous interpretive question! Please write that down and save it for when we get to that section.") The moderator moves the questioning model from one type of questions to the next by "reading the room" and "feeling" when it's time to move on, all the time keeping track of the overall time allotted.

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- Writing down the Advice/Action Points

As the advice is given, the person on the Seat of Support writes down ALL of the advice points. After consideration, the person on the Seat of Support then shares with the group which action items she will be pursuing (no more than 5 to 8 action items) in the next 30 days (or until the group meets again). The Moderator is responsible for capturing the action items the person on the Seat of Support will be taking and sharing them with the group (emailing or posting them to a private group Facebook page).

Group Questioning Guide

Good questions are a critical element in a successful group like this. Of course, good questions are open-ended. They are questions that help surface feelings, surface assumptions provoke new ways of seeing things, help draw out the wisdom of the person on the Seat of Support, and help them see their choices.

Tips and reminders:

- Hold comments and keep to asking questions
- Resist the urge to couch advice in a question
- Check your ego at the door
- Make your advice actionable
- Start your questions with who, what, when, where, why, which and how.
- Don't ask questions which can be answered with a yes or no.
- Pay attention to what isn't being said or asked, maybe there is a question in there.
- Watch for the speaker's non-verbals (e.g. looking down, voice raised in volume), is there a question there?

Here are some sample questions that may help you get started. Borrow from this list if you are stuck.

Start with: Please give us some general background on your topic. The person on the Seat of Support has 5 minutes to share their topic, issue or challenge.

Objective Questions: Just the Facts

Who is involved?
Who did what to whom?
What do you mean by...
How does...work?
What was your role?
What is the history of this project/situation?

What have you done so far?
How did you get to this point?
When does this happen?
What are the objectives for this?
How will you know you are successful?

Reflective Questions: What is your filter?

How are you feeling?
What is triggering your feelings?
How do you react when you feel that way?
Does this remind you of any past experiences?
What does this project remind you of?
What images come to mind?

What do you like about what is happening?
What is your biggest concern?
What is this project like (e.g. movie title, fairy tale animal...), why?
What are you most afraid of happening?

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Interpretative Questions: So what is the meaning of this? (The “What ifs....”)

What would happen if you didn't do anything?
What creative things could you do?
What is the relationship between this and...?
Which is most important A, B or C?
What would happen if...?
How could you change the question on this project? What new options does this present?
Is it possible to...?
How would (insert your favorite character or hero/heroine) deal with this?
What are some of your options?
How would you like to be perceived?
Why do you think this happened?
Who could help?
How could we improve...?
What is your leverage?
What mistakes might you make?
What story would you tell about this?
What would “going with the flow” look like in this project?
What are your biggest learnings to date?
How would this look if it wasn't working?
What are three options for dealing with this issue?
What is the worst and the best that could happen?

Decisional Questions: What are you going to do about this?

What do you need to do?
Whose support or what support do you need?
What has to happen first?
What are your next steps?
By when will you have done...?
What would you title this?
What is your timeline?
What are you willing to commit to doing?

Advice Here, If Requested (Take turns around the table)

Ask the person on the Seat of Support if they want advice.
Any advice they decline will not hurt the feelings of the giver.

Advice givers start with a brief validation of the person on the Seat of Support
Make advice action points and, if appropriate, indicate why it is important. Advice can also include connections.

The person on the Seat of Support takes notes of the advice, then selects which items they commit to acting on in the next 30 days (no more than 5 – 8 items)

Moderator records the action items the person on the Seat of Support has committed to and shares them with the group (emails or posts them to a private group Facebook page).

*Adapted from the book **The Art of Focused Conversation: 100 ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace***

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