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Delivering Executive Trainings

With a collection of data about the needs of the Executive Training applicants, it is now time to develop Executive Training sessions tailored to those needs. For our pilot, this meant some spreadsheets to organize responses from the Benchmark Assessments and Applications, some lists of topics, and also referring to some business basics that could benefit the cohort.

An example of some of the content of our first Executive Training session that was based on building general skills was the application the Clifton StrengthsFinder test and discussion of the implications for small business owners. In this case, the test was assigned in advance of the first meeting. Descriptions of the rest of the first session’s content can be seen on the Sample Agenda 1 (file M4-2).

For the second session, homework included writing a value proposition and setting short- and long-term goals (see Handout 1, file M4-3). Then during the session, branding, marketing, and goal-setting were discussed, and a guest speaker presented about financing strategies (see Sample Agenda 2, file M4-4 and Handout 2, file M4-5).

Besides tailoring content to the Executive Training participants, it was important to establish dates that worked for all of our applicants to attend, since participation in the Executive Trainings was a requirement for continuing on to phase three, with the peer network groups and one-on-one coaching. In addition, an effort was made to hold the trainings in a central location.

A natural benefit of the Executive Trainings was also the narrowing of the group size from the conference, which hosted 30 businesses, to the tighter group of 15 businesses. Designing the agenda to accommodate plenty of time for discussion also helps to allow for relationships to develop among the cohort.