

# Accelerate your business growth, even in a down economy.

## Join a peer group and grow your business.

*Peer groups are a rising phenomenon. With business becoming more competitive and more difficult than ever to make a solid profit, it helps to have a group of like-minded peers who will support you in the development of your business.*



### A Short History on Peer Groups

A peer group is a collection of businesspeople that meet on a regular basis to deal with each other's burning issues, and support each other to improve their business practices and business performance.

A forerunner to peers groups is the "Mastermind" concept. It was made famous in the book *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. He spoke of individuals and professionals getting together to foster each other's thinking and planning, whether they owned a business or worked in one.

Jeffrey Scott, of The Leader's Edge Peer Group said, *"This is a book I read early on in my career, and it influenced me as I set up my peer group coaching program."*

After WWII, the idea of a "structured" peer group became part of our mainstream – for example, among automobile dealers. Their groups were called "Dealer 20." They helped the auto industry for years.

Other groups also formed. In the 50's, professionals in the swimming pool industry came together to create purchasing power and help each other with their business. "One such group was Paddock of California," said Jeffrey Scott, whose grandfather built a successful pool business based on the help he received from peer group members across the United States.

### Trade Associations vs. Peer Groups

Your local associations, such as Lawn, Nursery and Landscape Associations, are a forum for sharing information. However, they lack a critical element: the opportunity for completely unguarded and candid exchange of information. In such groups, your competitors may be in the room, and sharing can be counterproductive.

For this reason, structured peer groups have recently become a proven method for accelerated learning and business growth.

### Two Kinds of Peer Groups

There are generally two types of groups:

- Those where companies come from the same local territory, but from different industries. These groups tend to be limited to general support and accountability.
- Those made up of companies from the same industry, but from different geographic territories, so as not to compete. These group members find it easy to help each other with finances, specific business issues and sharing of best practices.



### Peer groups take on differing structures

Different groups have different structures. Some meet monthly; some meet quarterly; some meet annually. Some groups meet in person; some meet on the phone; and some do a combination of the two. Groups tend to have five to twenty members, though (up to) 10 is the norm.



MANY SMALL BUSINESSES  
STRUGGLE WITH SIMILAR ISSUES.

### Successful Groups Require Two Key Ingredients

1. A good facilitator can make or break the peer group. His or her job is to create an environment where people can be open, honest, and comfortable sharing. The facilitator's job is to create momentum, where each successive meeting creates more openness and a knitting together of the group.

His/her job is to make sure the right topics are covered, and that members bring relevant and specific issues to the group. The better the issues, the better the meeting...and the better the group performs for each other.

2. The quality of the members is paramount to the success of the group. You need members who are willing to participate and deal with their issues in a private setting; you need members who are committed to the group and the process.



Matt Kulp, President of Showcase Group.  
*"Most meeting facilitators tend to wander or never drill down deep enough to get at the real issues – in Jeffrey (Scott's) meetings, I always come away with time very well spent, and an action plan on what I need to do."*

### Your Best Board of Advisors

A good group will help you think through topical issues you are facing. They will give you honest, valuable feedback, and act as a Board of Advisors.

More important, members will remember your issues and will hold you accountable to the execution of your plans. You will find yourself talking to members between meetings, as they come up with ideas to help you in your business.

In some cases, you will establish relationships that will outlast your participation in the group itself.

As the famous Charlie "tremendous" Jones once said: *"You will be the same person in five years as you are today, except for the people you meet (and the books you read)."*

### Better and Best Practices

In a peer group meeting, you will come away with techniques to improve your own performance, copy best practices you see from others, and get feedback from the group to make your own practices better.

After a good meeting, you should come away refreshed and invigorated; and with a renewed perspective and an action plan.

The side benefit of participating in a peer group is that it raises each member's leadership abilities—following the advice of Tom Peters, who states that "Leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders."



John Newman, President, Classic Landscapes.  
*"At my local association meetings we...learn good information related to our local issues, but it is a drop in the bucket to what I get out of The Leader's Edge Peer Group."*

### Is A Peer Group Right For You?

If you answer "yes" to some of these questions:

- Do I ever feel isolated and alone in the day-to-day development of my business?
- Is there more I want to get from my business?
- Do I ever feel like I am piecing together the business (inventing the wheel) on the fly as I go?
- Would I like to find ways to earn more money, while reducing the headaches and stress?
- Am I looking for proven ways to get my business to the next level?
- Would I benefit from having a board of advisors supporting me in the growth of my business?

*"Take a chance! All life is a chance. The man who goes furthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare."* Dale Carnegie

### How to Get Started

In the green industry, look to Jeffrey Scott's *Leaders Edge Peer Group*. Visit [www.GetTheLeadersEdge.com](http://www.GetTheLeadersEdge.com) or e-mail [Jeff@JeffreyScott.biz](mailto:Jeff@JeffreyScott.biz) for more information.