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How to Use This Guidebook

The Exchange Accountability Workbook will help you track your progress and document your leadership and business accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities. As well, it is a guide on the essentials of The Exchange program so that we all know how to best work together. We will always strive to maximize our time together to help you achieve success in your business.

What is accountability?

As an entrepreneur, you are the leader and decision maker of your business. To address the myriad of business activities needed to operate, plan, and strategize your business, you need strategies and tools to hold yourself accountable. Accountability ensures that you deliver on the priorities and goals you set out.

What accountability strategies work for you?

We are all unique in our motivations and how we manage our many roles and responsibilities as entrepreneurs, leaders, mothers, spouses, daughters, and friends. Therefore, you will find that certain strategies for accountability will work better for you than others.

The Exchange is designed with accountability strategies already in place! Here is what will happen during your time in The Exchange. By using this guidebook, you will commit and participate in these strategies and perhaps, develop some new ones.

The Exchange's Accountability Strategies

- You will share your accountabilities in the monthly roundtable sessions with your Growth Coach and Board Members. Saying what you will accomplish out loud to your peers can be motivating!
- You will write down your priorities, goals, accomplishments, and improvements to reinforce your commitment and to remind you of what needs to get done. This guidebook encourages you to write down and track your progress throughout the year.
- You will review your performance and celebrate your accomplishments. Think of this guidebook as your personal journal.

Ready to dive in?

Welcome to The Exchange

The Exchange is the catalyst for women entrepreneurs ready to harness their true potential and take their businesses to the next level of growth and profitability. Offered over a three-year term, the heart of the experience begins with a tailor-made “Board” designed to nourish your courageous spirit and bring out your very best. Boards will consist of 6-12 women entrepreneurs also known as “Board Members” who have been carefully selected to exchange knowledge and lessons learned along their business journey. Finally, your Board will have a “Chair” appointed (or “Growth Coach” for Year 3); her wealth of experience as a successful businesswoman combined with a passion for entrepreneurship sets the stage for 7 months of enriched learning.

Through dynamic peer learning, retreats, presentations from inspiring and well-seasoned experts, and networking opportunities, each part of this program is crafted to hone your business acumen and entrepreneurial nerve. While you are investing in your own personal growth and supporting other women owned businesses in your Board, you will also positively impact the gender gap that currently exists in the Canadian entrepreneurship ecosystem.

<https://wesk.ca/programs/the-exchange/>

The Exchange Community

The success of The Exchange program relies upon information sharing amongst the Board Members and contributors including:

- Peer to peer learning that the Board Members gain from one another;
- Information sharing between the Growth Coaches and Board Members; and
- Information sharing between the WESK Program Team, the Growth Coaches and Board Members.

The Exchange’s Agreement of Intent

The purpose of this agreement is to maintain the integrity and privacy of The Exchange board so that all board members feel comfortable in hearing and sharing personal information during the meetings and other program gatherings.

Confidentiality and Safety

Within this board, I will honour each member by keeping discussion shared within the board confidential. I will commit to contributing positively towards a safe space to share in each and every board meeting. I will maintain confidentiality, meaning that I will not disclose any details of my fellow board member's business and personal sharing, unless they've explicitly provided consent to do so (for example, if their business opens a new location and they want the board to help spread the word). I will also leave blame, judgment, comparison, and competition outside of our safe space.

Commitment and Respect

I will commit to attending all meetings and to being on time for each board meeting. Should circumstances arise beyond my control and I am unable to attend, or I will be late, I will contact my Growth Coach to advise her. I understand that if I miss more than two (2) Board meetings in one program year, I will be required to meet with the WESK Program Staff and the Growth Coach to determine if I will continue with the board.

Growth and Feedback

I will be open in giving and receiving constructive, positive comments to/from my board members. I will actively participate by presenting relevant issues and will be open to the comments and suggestions made to me.

Community and Belonging

I will be invited and encouraged to share, but I will not be pushed if I am not ready to do so. I will honour and make everyone feel welcomed and a part of the group. I will commit to doing the pre-work required for the meetings, which may include reading material or filling out tools provided to enhance our board learning and implementation.

If it becomes apparent that a member of the group is discussing a person or business with whom I am acquainted, I agree to acknowledge this relationship immediately. If I feel uncomfortable or feel there is a conflict of interest, I will request the conversation cease or alternately, I may remove myself from the room until the conversation is complete.

Unless I anticipate an emergency telephone call, I will turn off my phone during meetings.

Issues with a Board Member

If I have an issue with a Board Member's behavior, it is expected that I will discuss the concern solely with my Growth Coach, and not with other board members. The Growth Coach will work with WESK to review the concern and determine a course of action. If the concern is in relation to non-compliance with the Code of Conduct, the Growth Coach and WESK will bring this up with the Board Member immediately and attempt to resolve the non-compliance. If the non-compliance continues after the first warning, the Growth Coach and WESK will book a meeting

with the Board Member to further review the non-compliance. The need for a third warning will result in the Board Member being asked to step down from the board.

Replacement of Board Members

If a Board Member must exit the program for personal or business reasons or is asked to step down from their spot in the program, a new Board Member will not be selected as a replacement.

Roles and Responsibilities

To understand the function of The Exchange, the roles and responsibilities of the Growth Coach and Board Member are outlined below.

The Exchange Growth Coach Role

Each Growth Coach will lead their assigned board, a cohort of 6 – 12 women entrepreneurs, grouped by revenue range, as they navigate through the program. The Growth Coach will provide insight and guidance to each Board Member by facilitating monthly sessions.

The Exchange Growth Coach Responsibilities

- Attend all meetings
- Keep meetings on-track by ensuring that the meeting format is followed
- Provide information and insight from their own knowledge and experience
- Provide opportunities for Board Members to take risks within the group; and guide Board Members in taking risks that could assist in scaling their businesses
- Encourage all Board Members to participate actively in the cohort and facilitate balanced sharing in the group
- Acknowledge and celebrate successes
- Build and maintain a feeling of confidence and comfort between Board Members
- Build and maintain a cohesive cohort with equality and respect between Board Members
- Keep what is shared within the group absolutely confidential

The Board Member Role

Without the dedication of each and every Board Member, a group cannot function. Board Members are expected to be committed to The Exchange cohort and the discussion process. They are expected to honor the Agreement of Intent and to adhere to the confidentiality agreement.

Board Members must be open to sharing their experiences, challenges, issues, ideas and solutions with the other Board Members of their cohort. They must also be open to change and

to receiving both creative and critical comments. A Board Member may be asked to go beyond their comfort level in discussing possible solutions to a difficult situation. A Board Member needs to take new ideas and be proactive in working on action plans to meet goals. Board Members will also be required to provide feedback to guide The Exchange process.

The Board Member Responsibilities

- Attend all meetings and retreats
- Identify specific goals they would like The Exchange cohort to help them achieve
- Take an action-oriented approach to problem solving
- Provide networking leads that may be helpful to other Board Members
- Help other Board Members with their development
- Be open to the suggestions and creative comments offered to them by fellow Board Members and the Growth Coach
- Keep what is shared within the group confidential
- Complete surveys

Calendar of Events

Throughout the year, we will facilitate working sessions for you to work through your Strategic Growth Plan. You can explore what your business will strive for and plan for the future.

Month	Topic
September 2022	Year 3 Opening Retreat
October 2022	Working Session: Growth Plan Template
November 2022	Working Session: Growth Plan Template
December 2022	Working Session: Growth Plan Template
January 2023	Pitch Growth Plan to Panel of Established Entrepreneurs
February 2023	Working Session: Use Feedback to Finalize Growth Plan
March 2023	Closing Retreat & Celebration Gala

The Exchange Monthly Meeting Sessions

Each month, The Exchange will hold a session for each cohort, focused on working through your Growth Plan template. During the monthly session, you will have a chance to discuss the sections the Growth Plan template you are working through with your fellow board members and seek advice and guidance from your Growth Coach. This is followed by the roundtable and accountability session with the chair and board members. Experts may be brought in as needed to share guidance and advice, as well as answer any burning questions you may have.

The Exchange Board Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Lead
9:00 am – 9:10 am	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updates from WESK	WESK/Growth Coach
9:10 am – 9:30 am	Previous Section Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key takeaways?• What went well?• Any challenges?	Growth Coach
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Next Section Walkthrough <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the next section of the Growth Plan Template• Begin working on this section	Growth Coach
10:30 am – 10:55 am	Accountability Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Last month I said I would do...• This is what I did...• Today I learned...• By next month, I will...	Growth Coach
10:55 am – 11:00 am	Wrap up	Growth Coach

The Exchange Workspace

Each cohort will have a webpage providing The Exchange’s resources. You will find:

- Your Growth Coach’s contact information
- Board Member Directory
- Growth Plan Template and other resources
- Evaluation forms

Business Strategy

Let’s get started.

Now let’s strategize your business!

We have provided a template for you to work on throughout the year. If you have your business strategy completed, good for you! Now you can execute on your strategy. If you haven’t completed your strategy, it is time to get started.

Here’s how to complete the business strategy template. Questions are provided below to guide you.

1. Purpose
 - What did you create this business?
 - What is the dream?
 - What gets you out of bed in the morning?
2. Vision
 - What are you aiming to achieve?
3. Mission
 - Why are we building this business?
 - How will you achieve your vision and purpose?
4. Focus
 - What direction are you taking your business this year?
5. Key Objectives
 - What will you work on this year?
 - Does it align with your vision, mission and purpose?
6. Initiatives
 - What are the priorities?
 - Does it align with your vision, mission, and purpose?
 - How will you execute on these priorities?
7. Key Performance Indicators
 - How will you measure it?
 - Are you measuring the right things?

Business Strategic Plan Template

2022 – 2023 Strategic Plan				
Purpose				
Vision				
Mission				
2022 – 2023 Focus				
KEY OBJECTIVES				
Leadership	Finance	Operations	Human Resources	Sales and Marketing
INITIATIVES				
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS				