

Entrepreneur Team Checklist & Attributes

Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities

Background and Introduction

Development in your community does not just happen. Ensuring your community has a more prosperous future demands that community leaders and builders take on this critical responsibility. America is unique with respect to other developed nations; the primary responsibility for community economic development in the U.S. is a community responsibility. This guide can help you identify the right community leaders and builders to engage in your “E Team”.

E Team Checklist

- Local Government Leaders
- Representatives from Education (e.g., K-12 schools, community colleges & regional universities)
- Chamber of Commerce (business leaders)
- Development Corporations
- Regional Development Organization or Planning Districts
- Cooperative Extension Service
- Major Employers (e.g., hospitals, manufacturing plants, trucking companies)
- Non-Profit Development Groups
- Visitor and Convention Bureaus
- Faith Community
- Entrepreneurs (your customers should be at the planning table)

Use the Desired E Team Attributes below to help you round out your list of potential E Team members.

Desired E Team Attributes

Respected. You need folks who are respected in the community and have the capacity to empower the community to action.

Visionary. You need some abstract and visionary thinkers on your team. They will stretch you and help your community create a more far-reaching and impactful strategy.

A Note on Influential Leaders

In most communities, there are leaders who, because of their past work or position, can empower and enable community actions, or put a stop to progress. Be sure to identify and reach out to these leaders to get their input, blessing and support – or at least an agreement not to oppose – your initiative. Often these leaders will not actively participate in regular E Team meetings and that is okay. Be sure to keep them in the loop privately, seek their advice and ensure their continued support.

Doers. You need people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work. Ensure you have folks who are willing to make commitments, do work and hold up their end of the partnership.

Generational Diversity. Be sure to have generational diversity at the table if possible, including youth, younger adults, middle generations and elders.

Community Diversity. Look at your Census profile (we can provide you one at an affordable price) and make sure your E Team reflects the diversity of your community.

Civically Engaged. Look for folks who want to give back or have a commitment to civic engagement. They are looking to get involved and make a difference. Sometimes they do not volunteer but need to be asked.

Care About the Economy. We want E Team members who understand and care about the importance of a strong economy and the role that entrepreneurs play in increasing economic opportunity and prosperity.

Confidentiality. Chances are good that your E Team will be talking about specific people and their ventures. You want folks who understand that confidentiality in these cases is paramount.

Job Description for a Community E Team

Every community must create their own job description for their E Team. But here are some suggestions:

Engage. Show up and engage regularly and consistently in monthly or periodic E Team Meetings. Action and progress are organized around these meetings.

Take Your Turn at Leading. Take your turn at saying yes and providing leadership. Progress is realized by many small actions by many players.

Involve. A key role of E Team Members is to reach into their network and involve more of the community. Becoming an entrepreneurial community requires evolving a culture of awareness and support.

Make Decisions. The E Team is working on behalf of the community. A key role is to make decisions around opportunities, strategies, tactics, making investments and the like.

No Life Sentence. Saying yes to being an E Team Member is not another life sentence with no exit option. Be sure that your E Team adopts by-laws or procedures that ensure new members are engaged over time and that you can move on to other roles based on your preferences.

In our new book, *Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities – A Pathway to Prosperity*, we provide a comprehensive framework and process for growing an entrepreneurial community and realizing greater community prosperity.

Questions & More Information

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The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship's mission is to help community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. With our roots and hearts in rural America, we help communities of all sizes and interests by bringing empowering research, community engagement and strategy development to you through our many Solution Areas. Our **Solution Area Teams** empower communities to discover their own answers to the challenges and opportunities they face:

- **Community Development Philanthropy:** Providing research and community engagement strategies that help communities build philanthropic capacity and create development resources now and in the future.
- **Youth Engagement:** Providing tools and a framework for communities to engage young people now and to bring them home in the future.
- **Measurement Research Policy:** Providing the tools to help communities define development goals, measure success and improve outcomes.
- **Entrepreneurial Communities:** Providing a roadmap for communities to design and deliver entrepreneur-focused economic development strategies that work.

To learn more about us, go to www.energizingentrepreneurs.org.

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