

The Center for Innovation

E-Coaching Program

Metropolitan State College of Denver



Entrepreneur Handbook



METROPOLITAN STATE
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Start-Up E-Coaching Program Entrepreneur Handbook

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Start-Up E-Coaching

The Center for Innovation E-Coach Program
Metropolitan State College of Denver

Welcome

Start-Up E-Coaching is a collaboration between the Metropolitan State College of Denver's Center for Innovation and members of the Denver Metropolitan Area entrepreneurial community. The Center for Innovation E-Coaching program offers advisement, support, expertise, resources, and start-up business ownership support for students. Historically, coaching was done face-to-face. Today, technology provides a tool for coaching —the Internet. Because of this, the Center for Innovation is able to meet the needs of these participants using today's technology.

The E-Coaching Process: Entrepreneurs

1. Application

The E-Coaching recipient is called an Entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs complete and submit an application, profile, and E-Coaching Contract on the E-Coaching home page on the Center for Innovation website.

Center for Innovation staff use the responses to match the Entrepreneur with an E-Coach. The E-Coach is a carefully selected member of the Denver/Boulder entrepreneurial community with many years of professional experience who can contribute to the Entrepreneurs professional growth.

2. Pairings of Entrepreneur with an E-Coach

Pairings of the Entrepreneur with the E-Coach take place once the Entrepreneur has submitted all Coaching forms. Pairings of Entrepreneur and E-Coach will be determined by Center for Innovation staff and mutual consent.. Considerations include:

- E-Coach availability and expertise;
- Grade level;
- Entrepreneurial interests and goals;
- Other interests.

Once all previous steps are completed, the Coaching Coordinator will advise the Entrepreneur of the E-Coach pairing, and your E-Coaching begins.

3. Initial Contact/Getting Acquainted

The Entrepreneur will initiate the first contact by e-mailing or calling the E-Coach and scheduling a meeting at the office of the E-Coach. If Entrepreneur is a high school student, the initial meeting can take place at the Denver Venture School or at a location within walking distance of it.

The initial contact is an opportunity to share backgrounds/common interests. Both the Entrepreneur and E-Coach should post their bios that reflect personal background and professional/accomplishments in the private discussion group. The participants communicate initial expectations and agree upon common goals and expectations for the initial phase of the relationship.

4. Set Goals

During the first weeks of the E-Coaching, Entrepreneurs should discuss their professional goals and interests with their E-Coach.

5. Define Expectations of the E-Coaching Relationship

The Entrepreneur and E-Coach clarify roles and expectations to ensure a successful E-Coaching relationship. The participants should understand the E-Coaching process and limits of the E-Coaching relationship.

An appropriate point to emphasize is that the E-Coach will not arbitrate conflicts that occur in the Entrepreneur's setting, including specific classroom problems, disagreements with administrative requirements, etc. The E-Coaching complements and supplements the supports that the Entrepreneur has in the school setting. Later, the Entrepreneur can dialogue with the E-Coach in their private discussion group on professional considerations inherent in the issue and how the issue was resolved.

6. Plan Communication

While the vehicle for communication is the asynchronous online discussion group, both the E-Coach and Entrepreneur should agree on best times for weekly communication. The E-Coach and Entrepreneur discuss personal schedules and availabilities that accommodate both participants. It is important to build in flexibility, but also ensure accountability. All communication should take place within the appropriate discussion group.

E-Coaching “Entrepreneur” Timeline

The following sequence illustrates the student selection and participation process in E-Coaching

Step 1: The individual applies to E-Coaching via the Center for Innovation’s online application form at www.MetroStateInnovate.org, completing:

- Application
- Profile
- Contract

Step 2: The recipient can download the E-Coaching Entrepreneur Handbook from the Center for Innovation website.

Step 3: The recipient is paired with an E-Coaching Coach.

Step: 4 The coaching begins with one face-to-face meeting between Coach and Entrepreneur.

There are no assigned tasks; however, weekly communication is expected. Entrepreneurs are also encouraged to archive professional activities and accomplishments in order to reflect on personal/professional growth over time.

Interactive communication between the Entrepreneur and E-Coach is protected and private. Newsgroup communication is asynchronous; the Entrepreneur and E-Coach can communicate at a time of their choosing.

During the E-Coaching, Entrepreneurs can:

- Ask question, share experiences, and feel supported.
- Discuss specific entrepreneurial and career-oriented activities and goals.
- Participate in topic-related newsgroups with other E-Coaching participants in order to share ideas or learn new skills.
- Network with other participants and entrepreneurial experts.
- Access entrepreneurial knowledge resources through the Center for Innovation website.
- Participate in E-Coaching professional development activities.

For the Entrepreneur, E-Coaching provides:

- A method of recognizing one's core values;
- A means to identify life goals;
- Personal support and coaching;
- Problem-solving assistance;
- Opportunities to identify and satisfy career needs, and;
- Opportunities to reflect on entrepreneurial practices and receive feedback.

E-Coaching Policies

By completing and signing the E-Coaching application, profile, and contract, the Entrepreneur agrees to the following E-Coaching policies:

1. To share personal/professional goals and interests with the E-Coach at the start of the E-Coaching

Rationale: Setting professional goals and sharing professional interests early in the E-Coaching gives direction and purpose to the Entrepreneur's professional growth. By sharing experiences, the E-Coach can best support the Entrepreneur and focus the coaching experience. The E-Coach will also receive a copy of the Entrepreneur's application and profile so that initial contacts are meaningful.

2. Develop a Professional Growth Plan with the assistance of the E-Coach.

Rationale: Writing goals down with pertinent timelines focuses the efforts of the Entrepreneur and provides concrete objectives by which one can gauge progress.

3. To share accomplishments and reflections with the E-Coach at least one time per week.

Rationale: The E-Coaching is a collaborative arrangement between the Entrepreneur, Center for Innovation at Metropolitan State College of Denver, and the Denver Venture School. The E-Coach represents the Center for Innovation in facilitating this collaboration.

Consistent communication leads to a productive Entrepreneur-Coach relationship and results in more opportunities for professional growth. The Entrepreneur can communicate successes and areas for refinement, classroom experiences, or just questions/comments with the E-Coach in a private discussion group. Entrepreneurs will also have the opportunity to network with other Entrepreneurs and E-Coachs by posting and discussing original professional materials or other topics of interest in one of the public discussion groups. Additionally, Entrepreneurs should consider archiving academic activities and accomplishments in a journal, portfolio, or other professional format in order to reflect on development over time.

4. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals.

Rationale: There are two types of discussion groups available to E-Coaching participants: public and private. Participants should avoid posting any private or confidential situations/information in any public discussion group. This information includes names, addresses, phone numbers, personal identification numbers, and personal information including student academic records and confidential reports. Matters of a personal or sensitive nature should be discussed only in the private discussion group and even then avoiding the use of specific names or other identifying criteria.

5. To maintain appropriate tone and netiquette in all communications.

Rationale: Just as in face-to-face communication, tone and etiquette are also important online. Consider your “tone” in all communications. It is very easy to seem harsh or sarcastic when that is not the intent. Experience shows that even an innocent remark can be misconstrued. Please re-read your communications before you post them to be sure that you have worded your message in a way that would not be seen as a personal attack. Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.

6. To protect the integrity of the Center for Innovation at the Metropolitan State College of Denver and the Denver Venture School.

Rationale: In the event a participant provides misleading or false information on an application or in any communication, whether public or private, the Center for Innovation will investigate and, if necessary, block the user from continued participation in the program.

During the E-Coaching, the Entrepreneur:

- Communicates with the E-Coach weekly, including sharing your academic and professional goals, describing your professional accomplishments/areas you would like to refine, and discussing areas of interest. Discussions might focus on your experiences, questions you might have, reflection on your courses, knowledge gained, etc.
- Shares information in the open discussion groups from which other Entrepreneurs could benefit.
- Completes E-Coaching surveys as requested.

Here are some ideas for discussion:

1. Share success/setbacks and ask for feedback

Students experience many daily successes and some setbacks. Communicate these privately with your E-Coach. This is an opportunity to receive validation for what works and make refinements for the future.

2. Share personal reflections and artifacts

Effective learners consistently reflect on their past learning experiences. One way to reflect is by archiving professional activities and accomplishments in a journal, portfolio, or other professional format. Include reflections on your goals, student interactions, projects, school activities, your business ideas and start-up issues.

Then you can send artifacts to your E-Coach and/or post them in pertinent public discussion groups. By archiving academic and entrepreneurial activities, reflections, and accomplishments, you will have artifacts that will demonstrate your personal and professional growth and reflections you will enjoy re-reading later in your career.

3. Share best practices

You can post any ideas or solutions into pertinent discussion groups (or create one of your own) that arise from conversations with your E-Coach (only with the permission of the E-Coach) that you feel other Entrepreneurs could benefit from learning about.

Reflection and Evaluation:

1. Personal Reflection

One of the best methods of learning is to reflect on day-to-day experiences. Your continued participation in the E-Coaching discussions will provide opportunities for you to engage in this reflection.

2. Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Entrepreneur and E-Coach Relationship

The E-Coaching evolves over time. Initial needs give way to insights and issues. Participants continue to address the changing status of the Entrepreneur/E-Coach relationship by evaluating the relationship and determine new goals, priorities, etc. throughout the E-Coaching year.

E-Coaching Goals and Objectives: Entrepreneur

Goal 1: To establish effective Entrepreneur communication

Objective 1: The Entrepreneur will demonstrate effective E-technology competencies.

Objective 2: The Entrepreneur will initiate contact with the E-Coach.

Objective 3: The Entrepreneur will share professional background/personal interests with the E-Coach.

Objective 4: The Entrepreneur will communicate with the E-Coach weekly.

Objective 5: The Entrepreneur will network with other Center for Innovation entrepreneurial experts.

Objective 6: The Entrepreneur will request guidance and support from the E-Coach.

Goal 2: To increase opportunities for entrepreneurial support and growth

Objective 1: The Entrepreneur will complete a profile indicating an area of interest in entrepreneurship.

Objective 2: The Entrepreneur will communicate areas of strength.

Objective 3: The Entrepreneur will communicate areas for refinement.

Objective 4: The Entrepreneur will communicate interest in entrepreneurial growth opportunities.

Objective 5: The Entrepreneur will participate in opportunities to share best practices and receive assistance in public discussion groups.

Objective 6: The Entrepreneur will access and use online resources to support classroom activities.

Goal 3: The Entrepreneur will demonstrate interest in the profession of entrepreneurship

Objective 1: The Entrepreneur will identify academic/entrepreneurial accomplishments during the coaching.

Objective 2: The Entrepreneur will archive academic/entrepreneurial artifacts that demonstrate professional competencies/accomplishments during the E-Coaching.

Objective 3: The Entrepreneur will formulate both long- and short-range goals at the end of each year of the coaching.