

**Critical Things Advisor Team Leads Must Do**

- Plug the team into the needs of the company
- Business Model Canvas
- Thoroughly background yourself in this business
- Meet with entrepreneur 1:1 before meeting with entire team
  - Align on needs
  - Align on expectations
  - Set very clearly defined goals
- Share notes from the initial full SAGE team flipchart
- Communications
- Manage team dynamics & keep things moving in 1 direction
- Understand the contribution of each team member
- To me it's really important to have a team with all the important skills.
- Availability.
- It's really important to have clear scheduling, following ups. Having a general agenda and notes.
- A voice for each part of the team. Balance the comments while moving forward.
- Prioritize what your current needs are and always have momentum going forward.
- I think when clients come to us, the biggest thing they have going on is trying to have the best strategy. The critical thing for the lead is to understand their strategy and Lead is responsible for the alignment.
- Time management is extremely important. The lead in the meeting needs to bring things back in. Try to accomplish the things you need to do first.
- As advisors, take the temperature and see how they are feeling.
- Check in individually and check in with the team.
- Make sure concerns are voiced.
- Check with the company.
- Have an endpoint in mind and keep moving towards it.
- We can put advisors on the team but are we putting the right advisors on the team? We need to have focused conversations.
- Setting outcomes upfront, this is a limited project. What is it we are going to accomplish over the 200 hours of consulting.
- Prioritizing
- Metrics are extremely important
- Meetings, communications
- Keep them from getting bogged down (zooming)
- Know when to fold, lead needs to determine this.

**What Has Worked for You**

- Let entrepreneur meet with each team member 1-on-1
- Spreadsheet to track progress

- Spin out sub-teams to focus on specific tasks
- Do some active hand-holding
  - Teach the entrepreneur how to do thing (ex. market research)
- Act as a Board of Directors to pull the entrepreneur up to a higher level
- Develop a high-level project plan
  - Teach entrepreneur how to execute
  - Assign accountability and due dates
- Set goals
- Define key metrics
- Team lead meets separately with the head of the company/client and seeks out what the client's strategy is and what is flawed, what's good, what needs help. Use that information to lead the meetings and tracking side assignments. (work on the side and come back) (i.e. marketing, finance) But continually bring it back to strategy and accomplishing it.
- Continually checking up on clients, sending emails for new dates
- Know who else others are working with
- One on one upfront
- Kick off meetings with bringing the rest of the team in once the lead and client are on the same page.
- Assigning homework for entrepreneurs to test commitment and make sure they do their homework.
- Break into sub-teams (finance, marketing, etc.) and come back together again. Divide tasks.
- There are little layers of an onion and you find new information as you get deeper.
- Fantastic team members feel there is a bigger prize ahead, and that's what keeps us motivated.

### **What is the Line Between Telling and Doing?**

- It's a balancing act – depends upon entrepreneur's competencies
- Teach them to fish for themselves
- Learn what other resources they have available to tap
- Danger – if staying at too high a level, nothing actually gets done
- Don't let perfection get in the way of good (enough)
- Surface misalignment among founders
- Be clear and emphatic about "Don't Dos"
- Keep track of the teams meetings and hours – it's too hard to reconstruct later

### **Biggest Challenges**

- Focus – work on the right things vs. the interesting things
- Alignment – especially with other advisory services they may have
- Holding entrepreneur accountable
- Keeping the momentum moving forward

- Meeting scheduling – hard to get everybody together at once
- Guard against investing too much time
- Knowing when to “Pull the Plug”

**What do team leads get out of this process?**

- I’ll say, when I joined SAGE, for me the networking and meeting people that are in the room is really interesting, but it’s even better when you’re in the team. The social aspect is very interesting and fun (most of the time).
- Secondly, I’ve been able to see these small companies accomplish their first goals.
- You mentioned Doug Johnson, who had started the first SAGE groups. One of the comments he made, he said it’s really about giving back to the community. We’ve gone down the path, we’ve made it mostly, so it’s about giving back. It’s about helping other people.
- Sage is not a place to become rich and famous, but it is a place to make friends and help out.
- I really enjoy the connection, the hug when you come in for the meeting.
- All of the projects I’ve been involved in have been extremely altruistic. It thrills me to see all these new ideas and inventions.
- For me it’s really about learning, lifelong learning. Every day is a new day, It’s just a big learning thing.