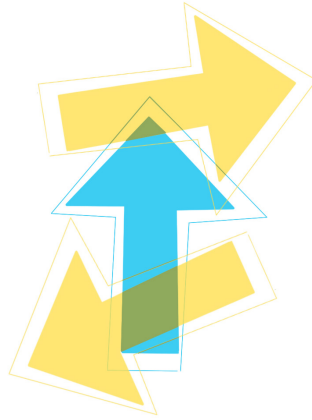




# WAYFINDING GUIDE



## WHAT IS WAYFINDING?

*The term “wayfinding” is often used in reference to directional signs. It essentially means figuring out where you are and then navigating from place to place. A Wayfinding Meeting is one in which you quickly assess where an entrepreneur is in their startup journey, point them in a direction, and make recommendations for next steps.*

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### WAIT. I ALREADY DO THIS. HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?

Talking with entrepreneurs and pointing them to where they can get the help they need is the very essence of our collective work. We know you’re likely already doing this. However, this guide can make your meetings more efficient and more effective. In addition it will help position your organization as a starting point for all entrepreneurs in your community.

## WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A WAYFINDING MEETING?

The goal of a Wayfinding Meeting is simple—you understand where the entrepreneur is at, and the entrepreneur feels helped and knows their next step.

## WHO IS THE IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR WAYFINDING?

ANYONE is a candidate for a Wayfinding Meeting. No matter what stage of business or how developed an idea, any entrepreneur (or potential entrepreneur) can benefit from Wayfinding.



## HOW DOES WAYFINDING HELP MY ORGANIZATION AND MY COMMUNITY?

Offering Wayfinding Meetings positions your organization as the starting point for every business in your community. It not only allows you to provide help to anyone, it also makes you a connector between the various supports in your entrepreneurial ecosystem. With the perspective of a connector, you'll be better able to identify where gaps exist and where new supports should be created. By connecting the dots, you ensure everyone gets the support they need and help your community thrive.



## HOW DO I SET UP A WAYFINDING PROGRAM?

First, let people know you're available to meet! Set up a page on your website announcing the service and providing a way for people to sign up. You can either create a form for people to make requests or streamline the experience by using an appointment scheduling app like [youcanbook.me](#) or [Calendly](#).

You may want to ask for some basic information as part of the signup process. We suggest the following:

- Name
- Email
- Mobile Number
- Demographic information (race, gender, age, etc.)
- Status of business (idea or already launched)
- Business name (optional)
- Business website (optional)
- Description of business or idea
- What would you like to discuss during your Wayfinding Meeting?



## HOW DO I PROMOTE MY WAYFINDING PROGRAM?

Once you've got a way to schedule meetings up, you'll need to promote your new offering to your community.

### *Consider:*

- Putting up fliers
- Promoting through social media
- Pushing out information through strategic partners

Many organizations overlook one of the most important sources for getting the word out: strategic partners. Determine what other groups already exist in your community and then reach out to a key influencer at that organization to help get the word out. For example, a local community college, library, or Rotary Club might be able to include a small announcement in an upcoming newsletter. By going through existing channels, you'll be able to reach much larger numbers with less effort. You'll also be helping to build your entrepreneurial ecosystem!

## WHAT ADDITIONAL TOOLS DO I NEED TO PURCHASE?

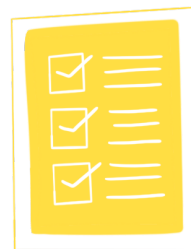
Two additional tools available from CO.STARTERS will help you conduct Wayfinding Meetings with ease:

### **CO.STARTERS Canvas Pad:**

Although the CO.STARTERS Canvas itself is free for anyone, this tear-off pad saves the hassle of printing and provides consistently great quality.

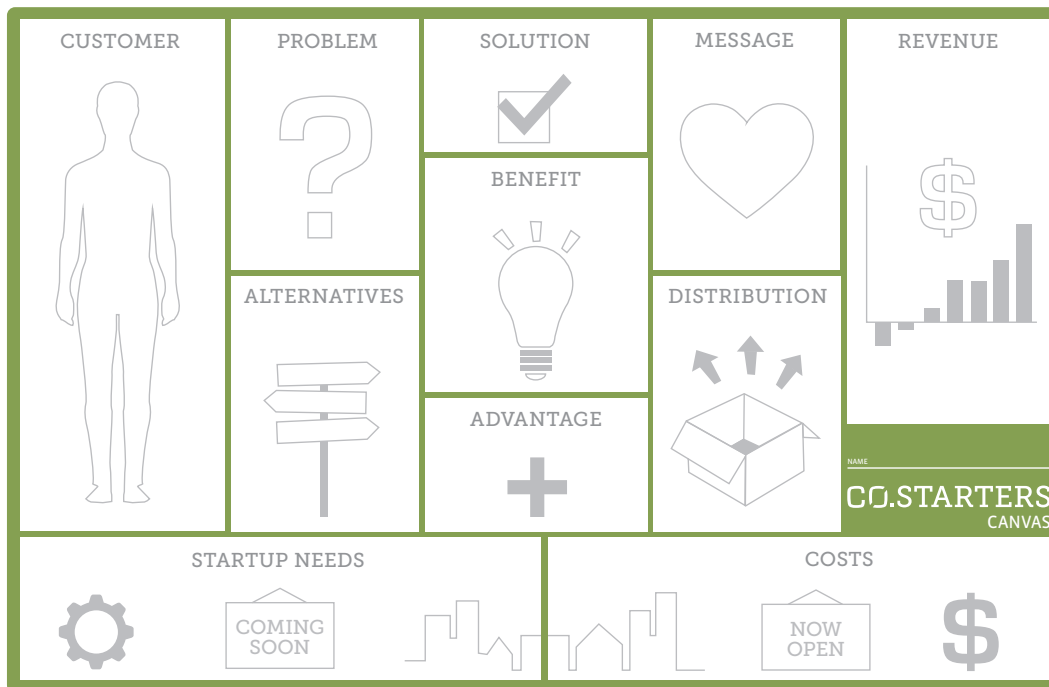
### **Wayfinding Checklist:**

This handy form, available as printable download or a tear-off pad, provides a great way... to take notes and document to-dos following a Wayfinding Meeting



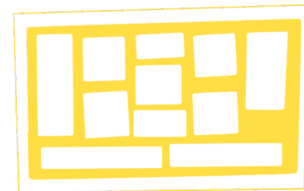
# WHAT IS THE CO.STARTERS CANVAS?

*CO.STARTERS uses a version of the “Business Model Canvas” developed by Alexander Osterwalder (Strategyzer.com). Just like an artist paints a picture by layering paint on a canvas, the CO.STARTERS Canvas helps participants create a realistic picture of an entrepreneur’s business.*



## HOW SHOULD I USE THE CO.STARTERS CANVAS?

During a Wayfinding Meeting, the CO.STARTERS Canvas provides a quick way for you to understand what the business is and where the entrepreneur needs the most help.



Each box of the Canvas asks the entrepreneur to identify an important aspect of his or her business:

**Customer:** Who do you serve?

**Problem:** What is the problem your customer has?

**Alternatives:** How is your customer currently solving the problem? What are the alternative solutions to the problem? What's the competition?

**Solution:** What do you offer your customer? What does your customer get?

**Benefit:** Why does your customer want your product or service? How do you solve the problem?

**Advantage:** What gives you the edge over the alternatives? Why are you the best person to do this?

**Message:** What is your story? How does your customer hear it?

**Distribution:** How does your product or service get to the customer?

**Revenue:** How do you make money from your customer?

**Startup Needs:** What are your one-time needs to get started (money, people, things, technology, activities)?

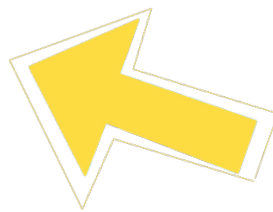
**Costs:** What ongoing needs are essential to keep you going (money, people, things, technology, activities)?

## HOW DO I FIGURE OUT WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN MY COMMUNITY?

Resource identification is an ongoing endeavor that requires you to keep your ear to the ground and develop strong relationships in your community. To get started, you may want to come up with a list of potential opportunities or sources.

### *Think about:*

- What your organization offers
- Your personal knowledge and connections with established entrepreneurs
- Your personal knowledge and connections with professional service providers (accountants, lawyers, designers, etc.)
- Other community organizations working with businesses (for example, chambers of commerce, business development centers, educational institutions, etc.)





## WHAT SORT OF SYSTEMS ARE OUT THERE TO CAPTURE AVAILABLE RESOURCES?

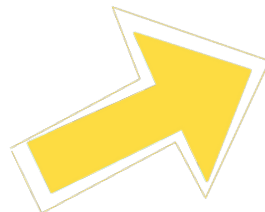
Identifying resources and opportunities is the first step, but capturing them in some sort of system helps ensure that all the knowledge and connections aren't trapped in one person's head. Depending on your organization and its needs, you may want to consider using one or more of the following:

**Spreadsheet:** Simple as it sounds, creating a spreadsheet that lists mentors, advisors, your organization's offerings, and partner offerings consolidates the information in one place and allows it to be shared across the ecosystem.

**CRM System:** CRM (Customer Relationship Management) Systems are ideal for capturing the connections and relationships that make up your startup community. There are many different systems on the market at a range of price points, so do a little research to find the one that is best for your organization.

**Shared Community Calendar:** Partner with other entrepreneurial support organizations in your community to create a shared calendar of programs and offerings.

**Community Resource Database:** Out-of-the-box technology solutions exist for creating a customized community database of resources. While they tend to cost a little more than the other options listed here, they might be the right fit for your organization. One example of this type of system is SourceLink's Resource Navigator.



## HOW DO I KEEP PEOPLE MOVING THROUGH THE WAYFINDING PROCESS QUICKLY?

An important part of doing Wayfinding is getting people to share how their business works as quickly as possible so you can move on to next steps. By framing up the conversation well, you should be able to get to the heart of the matter pretty efficiently.

### ***A few tips:***

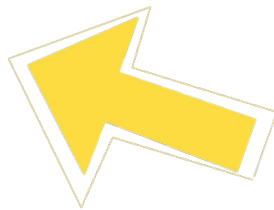
- Encourage rapid fire responses.
- Remind them that done is better than perfect.
- Tell them, *“If you don’t know, guess.”*
- Set a timer to keep things moving.



## WHAT DO I DO IF THEY WON'T SHARE THEIR IDEA?

Every once in a while, you'll have someone wanting help but unwilling to talk about their idea. There are a couple ways to deal with this (or use a hybrid approach), depending on the situation.

1. *"If you're not ready to share your idea, you can come back when you are."* Let them know that it's an organization policy that people receiving help must share their ideas and that when they are ready, you are there for them.
2. *"We can only help you to the extent you're willing to share. The value this process provides is connections. Do you have all the money, resources, and connections you need to be successful?"* If they do not already have everything they need to be successful, their only way forward is to get people to help them. In order to offer help, people need to know what they are working on and understand the business.
3. *"You don't have to share your recipe, but you do have to let us taste the sauce."* There are definitely some parts of a business that are important to keep secret or protect, but for a business to be successful, it must engage customers in the process. Help them identify what they can share without jeopardizing trade secrets or intellectual property (IP).
4. *"Execution is what really matters. Chances are someone else is already doing this. What matters is moving fast. Do you want to move?"* As the prophet wrote, *"There is nothing new under the sun."* While every once in a while a novel idea arises, most likely there are already competitors working on something similar. Help them understand that the faster they get to market, the greater the chance of success.

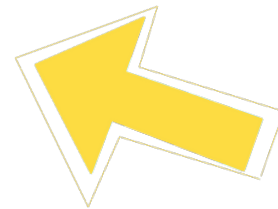


# WAYFINDING MEETING OVERVIEW

*Goal: By the end of this meeting, you should understand where the entrepreneur is at and the entrepreneur should know his or her next step. This process is not about relationship building (though we encourage that to happen elsewhere!). It's about as quickly as possible routing them to where they need to be.*

## MEETING OUTLINE (30 Minutes)

- Set Expectations (5 minutes)
- Explore the Idea (15 minutes)
- Dig Deeper (5 minutes)
- Take the Next Step (5 minutes)



## SET EXPECTATIONS (5 minutes)

Explain why you're here and how this meeting will work.

*"I'm here to as efficiently as possible come to an understanding of your biggest needs and identify what we can do to move you toward success. We'll use the Canvas as a rapid-fire process to help us figure out quickly where the issues are. As I ask rapid fire questions, I need your quickest response. If you don't know, guess."*

## EXPLORE THE IDEA (15 minutes)

Use the CO.STARTERS Canvas to understand the business or business idea. Look for gaps or potential areas where they need help or guidance.

**Customer:** Who do you serve?

**Problem:** What is the problem your customer has?

**Alternatives:** How is your customer currently solving the problem? What are the alternative solutions to the problem? What's the competition?

**Solution:** What do you offer your customer? What does your customer get?

**Benefit:** Why does your customer want your product or service? How do you solve the problem?

**Advantage:** What gives you the edge over the alternatives? Why are you the best person to do this?

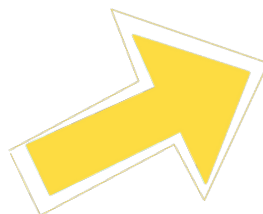
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**Costs:** What ongoing needs are essential to keep you going (money, people, things, technology, activities)?



## DIG DEEPER (5 minutes)

Based on the biggest issues that arose when going through the Canvas, ask clarifying questions to help identify the most critical need to focus on for their overall success. Chances are the problem the entrepreneur thought was the purpose of the meeting is not actually the most pressing issue.

### Ask:

- *“I understand \_\_\_\_\_ is what you feel as the most pressing need. However, to be successful in that (felt need), it may be helpful to first focus on \_\_\_\_\_ foundational activity. When we were talking, I wasn’t clear on aspect. Would you help me understand it?”*
- *“Have you talked with customers about this? What do they say?”*

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP (5 minutes)

Based on what you heard, help them define a next step and commit to an action.

### Consider:

- How do you encourage them to talk with customers to get the answers they need?
- What programs/workshops/tools would help this person move forward?
- Who do you know that might be able to help them? What organizations can help?

### Act:

Get a clear commitment for action.

- Example: By Friday, talk with 10 customers to get feedback on the revenue model we defined using the Canvas.

To make sure they get the help they need as quickly as possible, complete any needed follow-up while you are together. If you need to connect them to someone, send the email while you are sitting there. If they need to sign up for a program, help them fill out the application form. If you need meet again, schedule it now. Providing this help immediately not only saves you having to remember to do it later, it also helps ensure their follow-through on needed action items.

## **I HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO IMPROVE THIS GUIDE.**

Great! We love hearing feedback and work to incorporate it into our programs and tools on a regular basis. Either send your thoughts to [feedback@costarters.co](mailto:feedback@costarters.co) or submit them online at [resources.costarters.co](https://resources.costarters.co).

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW CO.STARTERS MIGHT SUPPORT MY COMMUNITY.**

At CO.STARTERS, we wake up each day looking for ways to help local leaders and starters navigate the intersection between community development and economic growth. We believe that by helping individuals find their way forward in the context of community, our neighborhoods, our cities, and our world will be better. Specifically, because each community is unique, we provide personalized resource matching and a community growth strategy tailored to your needs. Then, we connect you to our simple and relatable tools to ensure a path forward for every starter.

