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# Business Clinics How to Guide



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## **Business Clinics Guide for Trainer and Consultants**

Guidance on design of an effective workshop and productive one-on-one consultations at the iLAB Business Clinics

### **What are the Business Clinics?**

The Business Clinics platform is a collaborative space created for entrepreneurs and professional service provider consisting of a one-hour workshop on a business topic, followed by 1.5 hours of one-on-one consultations between business development services (BDS) providers and owners of small and growing businesses (SGB). Each edition of the business clinics is centered around a different business topic – ranging from human resources, to public relations, financial management, social media, and others. A different BDS provider offering services related to the selected business topic is invited to deliver practical training to a group of 25-35 business owners. The BDS provider presents a tailored offer to the participants at the end of the workshop to promote their SME services. The second part of the Business Clinics consists of 15-20 minute private consultations between the BDS provider and business owners. Other BDS providers that offer similar services are also invited to participate in these sessions. There are normally 2 to 3 consultants available for one-on-one conversations.

Timing	4 weeks before	3 weeks before	2 weeks before	1 week before	3 days before	1 day before	At the event	After event
Select trainer & consultants								
Prepare trainer								
Marketing of event								
Registration of attendees								
Confirmation/reminder to attendees								
Facilitation								
Follow-up with trainer								

## How do I setup a Business Clinic?

### Business Clinics Timeline and Tasks

#### *At the event*

##### **Before start**

- Export latest version of RSVPs from SMS platform. SMS is a helpful platform to for general communication and for managing RSVPs.
- Sign up attendees at event, add missing information such as company/email etc.
- Update one-on-one schedule if needed
- Call vendors for delivery and pick up snacks on your way or have it delivered where possible
- Open venue and set up chairs, tables + projector
- Test run of electronics and connections
- Prepare refreshments & snacks

##### **Start**

- Introduce the Business Clinics: objective, schedule, other relevant activities
- Introduce trainer and consultants
- Timekeeping: 50 minutes for workshop + 10 minutes for Q&A
- Take photos of trainer, attendees, and presentation
- Post 1 photo on social media
- Coordinate one-to-ones after the workshop: 15-20 minutes for each session

##### **End**

- Hand cheque to trainer and sign receipt
- Clean venue, store electronics, and return borrowed items

## ***After the event***

### **1 day after**

- Create feedback form and send out to attendees
- Send list of attendees to trainer and encourage the trainer to follow up with attendees, reiterating the SME offer (with you in copy)
- Post photo on facebook with quote from the workshop

### **1 week after**

- Follow up with trainer on number of follow up meetings
- Export feedback from attendees and share with trainer

### **1 month after**

- Follow up with trainer on number of follow up meetings and closed deals

## **Marketing of event**

1. Create leaflet based on template in Canva (canva.com)
2. Develop & execute marketing plan: facebook, SMS, email, whatsapp
  - Post on iLAB facebook page
  - Post on relevant Whatsapp groups
  - Send email to Freetown SMEs from excel database
  - SMS “iLAB entrepreneurs” on SMS platform (do this last)

## **Guidelines for consultants/trainers**

### **Why should I participant in a business clinic?**

Participating in a Business Clinic as a trainer or consultant offers a variety of benefits to your business. It is an opportunity to meet and engage with Business Owners of small and growing businesses (SGB).

This will allow you to:

1. Understand the needs of SGB market segment better: Business Clinics allow you to find out what the needs of SGB clients are and how you could tweak your offer to become more attractive for these clients.
2. Test new services tailored to the SGB market segment: You can trial new tailored services and measure impact and collect feedback at the Business Clinics.
3. Raise awareness of your company: The Clinics allow you to promote your services and build your brand for free.
4. Build client relationships: the Business Clinics could be the start of a long-term engagement with new clients

The graph below shows the benefits for Business Owners (attendees) as well as Professional Service Providers (trainer and consultants).

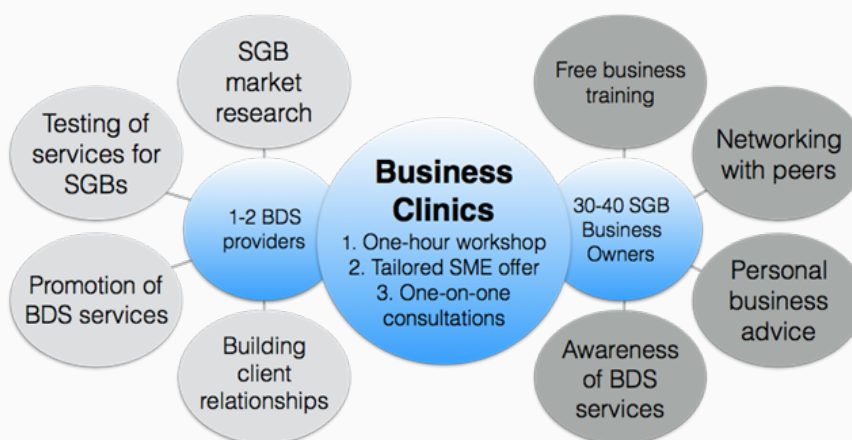


Figure 1: Overview of Business Clinics

## What should the workshop I deliver look like?

The Business Clinics include a one-hour long workshop delivered by a professional service provider – you! This workshop covers a practical business topic that is relevant for SGB entrepreneurs and is related to the services you offer. Examples of past workshops include:

- A HR firm: “Understanding Human Resources – the Sierra Leone context”
- A Marketing firm offering strategic branding services: “Decoding the value of Brand Development”
- A Marketing firm that offers PR services: “How to use Public Relations to tell your brand story”
- A Financial Services firm that offers financial data tracking: “Using data to grow your business”

### Tips for designing your workshop:

- Always keep the audience of the workshop in mind: Owners of small and growing enterprises in Sierra Leone
- Choose the topic of your workshop based on your field of expertise and services that you offer
- Keep the workshop practical, you want to teach entrepreneurs hands-on skills and knowledge rather than abstract ideas and theory
- Design a workshop of 45-50 min with room for 10 minutes Q&A
- Try and limit the number of slides you use – maximum 25
- Limit text on your slides, try and avoid full sentences as the audience will try and read the slides instead of focusing on you. You want the slides to be a visual aid. If you have a lot of text that you

want to share with the audience, you can send a reading deck to attendees after the session.

- Find the right balance between promoting your business and delivering a training. It is fine, and even encouraged, to introduce your business and its services, but make sure you are still delivering value to the audience.
- Build in interaction points with the audience throughout the session. You can engage participants by asking for their personal experience on a specific issue/topic, you can ask them to fill out worksheet, you can ask them to work on short assignments in groups. Be creative!

## What should my tailored offer be?

At the end of the workshop, the trainer will present an introductory offer to the attendees of the workshop. This offer is attractive to the audience (small & medium size business owners) and encourages them to take up services with the firm, reducing the initial barrier to engagement. Starting the business relationship with a small contract is a good way for clients to test your services before jumping into a larger or longer-term engagement! Examples of past offers include:

- A Digital Marketing firm: 25% discount on design of a landing page: now only \$100!
- A Financial Services firm: Exclusive access to a free simple bookkeeping app and outsourcing of bookkeeping starting at 400k/month

### Tips for developing your offer:

- Develop your offer around an existing service or a new service you want to test. If you choose an existing service, make sure you tailor the offer to entrepreneurs.
- Check whether your offer is attractive to the audience by asking yourself “Do SGBs need this service?” and “Can SGBs afford this service?”
- o Our experience and research shows that SGBs are willing to pay as long as they see the value. They want to grow their business and are looking for providers that can help.
- Make sure your offer reduces the barrier to taking up your services. Start with something small, eg. Design of a logo or recruitment support for one position instead of a full rebrand or full outsourcing of your HR management.
- Be transparent with your price. Offers that say 10% discount but do not tell the audience what the original price is are a barrier to engagement. You don’t have to give away prices for all your services, just be transparent on what this offer is and what it costs.
- You don’t have to give away anything for free. If you have something you want to share with the audience free of charge, that is great, but your main offer should be based on a paid service. You have already given away an hour of your time & training for free!

## How are the one-on-one consultations structured?

When entrepreneurs register for the Business Clinics, they have the option to sign up for a one-on-one

consultation with a consultant. If you have one or two colleagues that can join the event, you will be the ones delivering these. If you are the only one representing your company, a consultant from another firm offering similar services will be invited to participate in the one-on-ones. One-on-ones normally last between 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the interest.

**Tips for productive on one-on-one consultations:**

- If you need specific information from businesses to guide your discussion, you can request the facilitator of the Business Clinics to collect this information from attendees upfront.
- Start by asking the entrepreneur to introduce him/herself and give a quick overview of the business (2 minutes).
- Ask the entrepreneur to outline what issue the company is facing in relation to the topic you delivered training on (2 minutes).
- Summarise the issue/problem back to the entrepreneur to show that you have understood it
- Offer potential strategies/steps to address this issue, linking back to your own expertise and services on offer. You could give examples of previous work you did for other client that faced a similar challenge (5 minutes).
- Outline next steps: do you want to book a follow up meeting to discuss further, or can you already offer a clear service to this entrepreneur? Exchange contact details. (3 minutes)

## What happens after the Clinics?

It is up to the professional service provider (you!) to follow up with attendees after the event. The facilitator of the Clinics that week will email you the list of attendees with their contact information. Send them the slides used in your workshop (if you want to!) and reiterate the offer made to them.

Keep track of engagement with attendees and any business leads that come out of the Clinics, as the facilitator will reach out to you a week and a month after the event to measure the outcome.

## What does success look like?

- You form new relationships with potential clients
- Attendees of the Business Clinics start taking up services from your business
- You develop a new service tailored to SGBs based on engagement with this customer segment
- Entrepreneurs have a better understanding of your offers and will recommend you to peers
- Traffic to your website increases since participating in the Clinics