

# BOS-UP takes Enterprise Corps to the next level

**"Structure first, people second."**

These are the words of Scott Abbott on day three of his BOS-UP Builder Program at 16 Tech, a hub for innovation in Indianapolis. BOS stands for Business Operating Systems. Abbott, the Founder and CEO of BOS-UP, specializes in helping leaders learn, implement and benefit from tailored business operating systems.

The room is filled with small business owners who are willing to be coached.

Also active in the room are Indiana University Kelley School of Business faculty and leaders from Cummins Inc. and the Indy Chamber who have become certified coaches through the BOS-UP Coaching Solution & Academy. Abbott speaks to all of them with such vibrancy that it is difficult to be distracted.



Abbott's appeal is not because he tells the audience what they want to hear. He says things like, "Get comfortable being uncomfortable. A mistake made more than once is a decision. Stop selling to companies that aren't ideal clients. Trust but verify. You can practice family values, but you're not a family."

Blunt, maybe, but the leaders are there to be coached and challenged.

"If you were to walk away from your business tomorrow, would it still run?" he asks.

Most people in the room cannot answer yes right now.

Abbott uses acronyms and catchy phrases that resonate with the participants. For instance, he emphasizes

the importance of being CLEAR – which prioritizes the need for clarity, but also stands for collaborative, logical, empathetic, authentic and resilient.

“Progress over perfection” sticks with Rosemily Geyer of Geyer Fire Protection, LLC.

“I thought things had to be perfect,” she says.

She admits she was hesitant to enter the social media world without a perfect plan. Now she is digging in.

The three-day, in-person BOS-UP sessions are made possible with support from Cummins. Caetano Souza, Director – Global Sales Channels and Enablement, of Cummins, coaches two business owners using Spanish. Being able to offer coaching and BOS-UP materials in Spanish makes this program more inclusive.

“This is so rich,” says Souza. “Everything we are receiving here is a privilege.”

Another coach is Shannon Threlkeld from IU Bloomington. Threlkeld says he wants to give back because he was raised by two entrepreneurs in a small Indiana town called Ligonier.

“The entrepreneurs know what their business does,” he observes. “They now need better systems and strategy to grow a great company.”

Strategy is a topic that is central to Enterprise Corps, the small business accelerator of the Indiana University Kelley School of Business. It is one of four executive education courses taught by Kelley School faculty for business owners. Business Strategy, Financial Management, Marketing & Sales and Organizational Management are executive education courses offered to entrepreneurs who can scale their businesses with guidance from Kelley faculty. So far, more than 200 business owners have taken advantage of the classes since 2022.

Many of the business owners involved in the BOS-UP program have taken the courses, but not all. The courses are not required to be paired with a coach, but participants are encouraged to take them, as the coursework and coaching work hand in hand to reinforce learning.

Phil Powell, Executive Director of the Indiana Business Research Center and a faculty member within Enterprise Corps, says, “A teacher imparts knowledge while a coach directs implementation of knowledge. Teachers change mindsets while a coach develops skills.”

Abbott adds, “A business coach creates performance, stepping into the work with you to turn that understanding into consistent insights, action, and results.”



Great coaching is personally insightful, immersive and intensive."

"The coaching component of Enterprise Corps provides strong value by offering personalized guidance, consistent support and practical strategies that help business owners work on their business instead of in it, focusing less on daily operations and more on strategic growth," says Romina Mulatero, Bilingual Program Coordinator from the Indy Chamber.

Abbott preaches the stewardship and application of real-time leadership, management, teamwork and accountability. Showing up and doing the work required is an important aspect of all four attributes. BOS-UP calls on participants to spend three days away from their staff and enterprises. It's a commitment that is not easy for them to make.

Mulatero and her colleague, Marcela Montero, value the exercises and the accountability that go along with the BOS-UP coaching.

"The classes present theory and leave it up to the businesses to apply," observes Montero.

Montero is looking forward to seeing which businesses are willing to put in the work that BOS-UP requires.

Ricardo Boscan Aguirre runs a construction company specializing in electrical work. When Abbott asks the class to close their eyes and picture where they would like to see their businesses in three years, Boscan Aguirre describes a warehouse with offices and training rooms.



Nancy Guzman owns Indy Hoods, which specializes in the installation and maintenance of commercial kitchen ventilation systems. Guzman envisions being the number one company of its kind in the Midwest.

Getting there, Abbott says, requires the essential concepts, tools and discipline that it takes to build, run and scale great companies. One of those essential tools is the software that Ninety provides. Ninety is a cloud-based platform that supports thousands of companies worldwide. Ninety is a

strategic partner in the BOS-UP Coaching Solution & Academy and this cohort.

Marcos Perera, owner of Che Chori restaurant, says he has started holding weekly leadership meetings because of the coaching he is receiving. Abbott suggests not crossing the 90-minute line.

It goes back to “structure first, people second.”

BOS-UP believes those 90 minutes allow enough time to cover the agenda and tackle problem-solving. Perera admits he has yet to adhere to the 90-minute suggestion, but he is working on it.

Having a mindset to work on structure first will not come easily to all in the room, but again the business owners are being encouraged to embrace discomfort, and they seem ready for the challenge. The room is filled with participants rating the BOS-UP experience a resounding 10 out of 10.



At the end of the three days, as part of the graduation ceremony, Abbott hands out certificates of achievement, T-shirts and letters of congratulation. In addition, each participating company is assigned either a coach from IU, Cummins or the Indy Chamber to work with them one-on-one through the end of the year.

“Say goodbye to your former selves,” says Abbott, and with that the first cohort dedicated specifically to coaching, wraps up at 16 Tech, all thanks to philanthropic support from Cummins and the business owners eager to elevate their place in the Indianapolis market. ■

With your help, Enterprise Corps can provide full scholarships for other deserving entrepreneurs.

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