Peer Advisory Groups in Agriculture:
A Resource Guide

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“Having a group that helps you deal with and think about what to do, who to fire, when to change, what to do differently, brainstorm about new ventures to try to get into, all of those things—is an extremely valuable thing... Just the idea that in difficult times, having somebody to talk to who will have ideas and thoughts is so valuable.”

David Boyett (2011)
Vistage
Peer group facilitator

“The deal is if you bring together five to ten intelligent, successful producers who are facing these issues... exposed to the environment, they are not going to escape this meeting without challenging their thoughts, without adding to what they know and without figuring out some new angle on that problem.”

Bob Aukes
Peer Group facilitator

Introduction

Agricultural producers gather knowledge from various sources, such as personal experiences, agricultural publications (magazines, newspapers, web blogs, etc.), conferences, development programs, university extension, professional consultants, and classroom learning. However, one source of human learning seems underutilized by agricultural producers: learning from the experiences of peers. This type of learning frequently occurs amongst farmers informally, such as in “coffee shop talk” or at various industry association meetings. However, the knowledge shared during these brief encounters seldom delves into the precise and personal details necessary to make a deep impact on the business.

As defined by SunWolf (2008) “peer groups are composed of members who consider one another to be equals... Not all group members agree about the equality of all other members at all times, but there is overt consensus that members of the group are primarily equal.” Furthermore, SunWolf explains that the member sameness which is the primary cohesiveness of a peer group must be particularly important to the members of the group.

This publication intends to provide resources for agricultural producers about “peer advisory groups.” Such agricultural-based groups consist of primary owners or managers of farms and seek to provide members with a more formalized outlet for learning from experiences of peers. SunWolf’s definition above includes that members think of themselves as “equals.” This does not imply that the individuals’ farms must be of comparable sizes or even commodities. It does, however, require in this situation that members view one another as equal in the ability to manage a farm and respect one another’s ideas, opinions, and suggestions.

The English language uses numerous collective nouns which refer to specific types of groups: a circle of friends, a crowd of onlookers, a brigade of soldiers, a cast of actors, etc. Similarly, there are many different names used
to describe these ‘peer advisory groups,’ such as boards, forums, councils, networks, or roundtables. These differences in terminology can cause confusion and frustration when searching for information on such groups. A lot of the variability in descriptors stems from the fact that businesses which provide facilitation services tend to coin a term for the specific group structure their organization provides. No matter what the group calls itself, all of the peer groups described in this publication meet for the purpose of acting as informal business advisors for fellow members. To avoid confusion, the remainder of this publication uses the generic term ‘peer advisory group’ to describe the same basic premise.

✓ A peer advisory group is in essence an information exchange established for the sake of mutual self-improvement—all members give, as well as take.
✓ Peer advisory groups are custom-built to meet the needs and wants of the members
✓ Members respect one another’s ideas, opinions, and suggestions
✓ **Everyone actively participates** in a peer advisory group—these are not the type of meetings where individuals sit in an audience and listen to others speak the entire time
✓ Members establish the group on a foundation of confidentiality and trust
✓ Most are relatively small in order to allow all members to actively participate and to maintain this intimate and confidential relationship among group members
✓ Many groups share very in-depth, personal, and guarded information. Although this might at times cause wariness, all the intricacies of a certain problem must be on the table for the issue to be fully understood.
✓ Typically, groups strive to keep membership fairly constant. Without a revolving door of membership, trust will develop more quickly.
✓ The group as a whole can evolve over time. For example, the group might begin to focus on different discussion topics as members’ needs change.

“I have a hunger for some of this kind of information and the perspective that peers can share on the group.”

Pat Duncanson (2011)
Duncanson Growers
Peer group member

“The only truly sustainable competitive advantage is the ability to learn and adapt faster than your competition.”

Jack Welch
Former CEO of General Electric
(as quoted by Klinefelter 2011)

“Don’t go it alone. If you’re running a business, don’t try to do it by yourself. Peers can provide perspective and insight you can’t get on your own.”

David Boyett (2011)
Vistage
Peer group facilitator
As described by Texas AgriLife extension economist Danny Klinefelter (2011), four states of knowledge exist:

- What you know
- What you know you don’t know
- What you don’t know you don’t know
- What you think you know that isn’t so

A peer advisory group gathers together the “what you know” from five to ten different farm managers. The group taps into this accumulation of knowledge and experiences to develop the three “don’t know” states of each individual.

“\textit{The best managers I know recognize the importance of networking and the need for continual exposure to different perspectives and new ideas. They realize that however well their business is doing, there will always be a better idea or way of doing things.}”

–Danny Klinefelter (2009b)

Mutual self-improvement through the use of a small group of peers is not a new concept. Sociology utilizes self-help peer groups as support systems for individuals struggling with similar problems. For example, members of Alcoholics Anonymous find they are not alone in their struggles. Their pragmatic approach underscores the sharing of experiential knowledge—specific methods that other struggling individuals use to produce concrete results (Borkman 1976).

In fact, the use of small peer groups specifically consisting of farmers is not a new concept, either. CREA (in English, Regional Consortiums for Agricultural Experimentation) groups have been used by Argentinean producers for over fifty years (Hughes 2011). New Zealand dairy farmers have been utilizing peer groups for over fifty years, as well (Barrett 2008). The peer advisory group concept is fairly straightforward and offers tremendous benefits to those who are willing to fully dedicate themselves to the concept. However, U.S. agricultural producers mostly underutilize this self-improvement tool. Texas A&M’s Danny Klinefelter has been a large advocate of increasing the use of peer advisory groups in agriculture:

“\textit{It’s been needed for 20 years. I just believe the pressure to get better, faster has been ramped up over the past decade and will continue to accelerate... The top managers operate in a continuous improvement mode. They’re never satisfied because they know there is, or soon will be, a way to do better... The real issue is, are you moving forward as fast as your major competitors—the top 10%?}” (quoted in Zarley Taylor 2011).

The remainder of this guide seeks to provide a compilation of resources for use by persons considering joining, forming, or facilitating a peer advisory group. Although this is geared towards agricultural producers, the same ideas easily apply to groups in other industries, as well. Also, since agricultural groups are somewhat few and far between, many of the quotations and examples provided are from individuals who are involved in peer advisory groups in industries other than agriculture.
Is This For Me?

A peer advisory group is not appropriate for every farm manager. An individual needs to have the strong desire to get a certain value out of the group. To be effective, a group needs to have a certain indefinable ‘chemistry’ among members. Part of this chemistry derives from the personalities and business goals of each individual member. This chapter should help readers determine whether or not participating in a peer advisory group might be an effective use of their precious time. It first describes some of the potential benefits of participation and then gives readers a general idea of the characteristics of an individual who is well-suited to the peer advisory group environment.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

**Open and objective observations**

One key benefit of peer advisory groups is the opportunity to openly communicate with individuals who are completely disconnected from your organization. These people are not intertwined in your family tree or business hierarchy; therefore, the possibilities of emotions, ulterior motives, and preconceived biases or opinions are removed from the equation. Family-run businesses face a unique set of challenges. As described by Wayne Rivers (2011):

“The nature of family business problems is much deeper and more emotionally arresting than just being frustrated with a guy at work who’s not your cousin or your brother or your sister... In families, communication can be dangerous because there’s risk. There’s emotional risk in a family business that doesn’t exist in corporate America. And so things do go unsaid... To keep harmony, we don’t say the things that we’re thinking.”

Whether or not a farm is family-run, employees usually struggle to provide the executive with completely honest opinions and feedback. Reservations inevitably creep in: “How will this affect me as an employee?”

Teachers give report cards to students. Managers give employees performance evaluations. Unfortunately for farm managers, seldom does anyone provide them with objective feedback on what needs improved upon. Completely independent and sincere criticisms may not always be what an executive wants to hear, but they do need to hear it—and without a peer advisory group to consult, they rarely do.

“They can challenge me in ways my own family can’t get away with. That’s good for business.” –Jim Perkins (as quoted by Clark 2011)

“Who can I turn to for confidential advice? When you’re running a business... somebody wants a piece of your hide all day long... we really believe that we create a safe place where people can come into that room and when we close the door, they can talk about whatever they want.” –David Boyett (2011), Vistage facilitator
“One thing I always heard when I was working (as a consultant) with pretty large operators... ‘I feel like I’m on an island. I’ve got nobody to talk to. Nobody knows our problems. We’re the big bad guys.’”

Terry Jones (2011) Executive Ag Network

“(The group provides opportunity for) me to talk about things that are bothering me, situations that are coming up. Often times just saying the words, I’m hearing myself talking about different issues I’m dealing with, and just the fact that I’m saying those words and hearing myself say that makes me come to a better realization, a better understanding of what it is I’m dealing with.”

Gene C. Daley (2011) J-W Operating Company Peer group member

**Exposure to diversity**

Many different management and leadership styles work effectively. Involvement in a peer advisory group exposes a member to styles different from his or her own. As a member, you will be forced to “challenge your beliefs.” This is a great opportunity to listen to the experiences and observations of others and better assess and evolve your own management and decision-making style (Kilgore 2005). In some cases, the answer to a manager’s dilemma may lie so far outside of his traditional paradigm that it will never cross his path without exposure to different perspectives. As described by Keith McFarland (2008), too many people “constantly ‘reinvent the wheel’ unnecessarily, wasting precious time and resources in the process when a perfectly good solution to the problem was available ‘off-the-shelf.’”

**Support structure**

When faced with a difficult issue or decision, the farm executive can feel very isolated. Seeking advice from family members or employees many times proves fruitless. Although these individuals mean well, most have never held a similar position of authority—the person at the top of a business hierarchy faces a very complex set of challenges difficult for others to fully grasp. This becomes even more complicated when the producer manages a very large operation. Jealousy or contempt often arises from the managers of smaller-sized farms in the area. Although many large-scale farms are not singled out in this manner, managers of much smaller farms may have never dealt with business issues of comparable complexity.

Even if a producer has plenty of individuals within his personal network who manage similarly-sized farms, it does not necessarily mean that he feels comfortable enough to give them full disclosure on problems he struggles with. Part of this stems from the close-knit rural setting where the vast majority of agricultural production takes place. The fear of private information leaking to potential competitors (for land, for employees, for marketing contracts, etc.) or into the small-town rumor mill hinders a lot of in-depth discussions among fellow
Identify blind spots and prioritize issues

Many managers suffer from tunnel vision while working diligently towards a certain goal. Not only do CEOs sometimes have difficulty identifying the proper priorities, but they may also end up with blind spots—pressing issues that need attention but are ultimately ignored because management does not even realize the problems exist until it is often too late. To further complicate this, in family-run businesses, members of management may tend to have the same point of view on issues (Rivers 2007). This lack of diversity of thought may hinder a management team from making optimal decisions since limited alternatives are considered. By utilizing a peer advisory group, a farm executive has a unique opportunity to listen to the advice and opinions of peers who might see something the executive misses.

There are multiple ways that peer advisory groups might help in setting priorities and identifying blind spots. First of all, just thoroughly discussing all of the intricate details of a problem may allow opportunity for peers to assist you in pinpointing what the real issues are. A manager may not be comfortable thoroughly discussing all details of an issue with family members who are involved in the business, due to emotional risks. In such instances, just vocalizing all the details in front of outsiders can help the manager. Some groups choose to meet on the farms of members. This creates an opportunity for fellow group members to witness first-hand the problems that the manager may not recognize him/herself.
Another method that groups might use to identify blind spots is benchmarking. This could mean benchmarking production figures or key financial ratios and could be benchmarking against other members in the group or against industry averages. The following example from K.R. Averhoff (2011) of Dairy Services, LLC illustrates how a peer advisory group made up of dairies in the Texas panhandle uses benchmarking against industry averages to motivate and set priorities in the members’ businesses:

“Probably one of the biggest things is you compare metrics and you look for the areas of opportunity... It’s not ever one big silver bullet, it’s a lot of the small things combined that make the better producer out there. So as we look through the metrics and you go through an expansion and you see... ‘We’re getting 70 pounds of milk. We’re probably better than average, you know?’ But then you compare to some of the other guys in the area and they’re getting 73 pounds of milk... we’re not doing so hot... Any of us are competitive by nature. And so you wanted to get better, and most of the time it was going to make money. It was going to be the profitable thing to do... you were able to focus on something and everybody comes to that same level.”

“Someone has to hold you accountable to the plan you put in place. You stick it in the drawer and it doesn’t do you any good at all. Someone needs to raise that level, and I think these peer groups are intended to do that. And so we are holding ourselves accountable that... we’re going to go home and we’re going to start to draft the operating agreement or the strategic plan for my farm to grow. And then next time they come in, someone’s going to ask them, ‘Did you do that?’ And if not, ‘Why not?’ And hopefully, that will create action and help them make their farms better operations. –Joe Kluender (2011), Farm Family Dynamics LLC, peer group facilitator

Accountability

Members of peer advisory groups can also use the “peer pressure” from fellow members as a unique form of motivation and accountability. If a member decides during a meeting that he or she plans to take a certain action, then the member can expect that at the next meeting fellow members will check if the individual actually did what he said he would do. Some groups even have a formalized structure for accountability, which could include removal from the group if a member continually fails to follow through on stated intentions.

It is easy to walk away from a conference or industry association meeting with ambitious ideas of new practices to implement on the farm. Unfortunately, many of these fall to the wayside without the pressure of having to answer to someone on the actual progress of implementation. As described by Roger Staubach, former NFL quarterback and CEO of a commercial real estate company, “The camaraderie keeps you going. Part of the drive to be successful is because you know you will be reporting back to your forum” (as quoted in McFarland 2008).
Sounding board

Many producers utilize their peer advisory group in the same manner as a large corporation utilizes its formal Board of Advisors. Take for example a producer considering starting a new enterprise, purchasing a new facility, or implementing a new conservation practice. By running the idea past the peer advisory group, the producer gathers a large amount of feedback from knowledgeable individuals. Is this idea worth pursuing? What precautions should be taken? What items need further investigation? Do alternatives exist which have not yet been considered? The following testimony from Pat Duncanson (2011) illustrates the concept of a ‘sounding board’ quite well:

“One of the members brought forth a very detailed presentation of a business change that he was contemplating doing and spent a couple hours presenting. (He) had a couple of employees, a couple of managers within his farm business, that came to our group and presented a dilemma that their farm was facing and kind of threw it out to the group with ‘what do you think we should do?’ They had some alternatives that they were thinking of. It was incredibly powerful... the process that was gone through and the feedback. I think that afternoon we all became somewhat vested owners in his farm. And to this day, every time I see this gentleman I ask him... how things are going, how is the plan working. We keep talking about it. It feels like I have an interest in seeing him succeed in that business. So if I’m ever in that situation where I have to present to a group and say ‘I’ve got this dilemma, what should I do?’ I’ve got the trust that I know that the system... can work if you get surrounded by the right people.”

Using a peer advisory group in this manner provides the opportunity to also get additional ideas on the table. These new perspectives from other very knowledgeable people might reveal the missing link that pulls everything together, perhaps better than previously imagined.

“Good ideas are not conjured out of thin air; they are built out of a collection of existing parts, the composition of which expands over time... The trick to having good ideas is not to sit around in glorious isolation and try to think big thoughts. The trick is to get more parts on the table... Protecting ideas from copycats and competitors also protects them from other ideas that might improve them, might transform them from hints and hunches to true innovations.”

—Steven Johnson, from Where Good Ideas Comes From (2010)
“Individuals who think they have all the answers, lack the patience to listen, or judge too quickly will derive less value from their peers’ comments.”


“It’s critical to seek other winners. Successful people challenge you and force you to think differently; they cause you to consider alternatives, and they inspire. Flying with the eagles and not scratching with the turkeys is an issue in any business. Losers do not provide stimulation, motivation or personal growth. They tend to be victims and tradition-bound and may drag you down to their level.”

Danny Klinefelter (2009a)

**CHARACTERISTICS OF A PEER GROUP MEMBER**

As previously mentioned, a peer advisory group experience is not for everyone. In order for a peer advisory group to be effective, all members must be eager to learn and completely committed to the concept of sharing. Several different articles listed in the “Additional Resources” chapter offer their own suggestions for characteristics of effective peer advisory group members. Although these lists all differ slightly, some common themes exist. The following list of traits should not be considered an all-inclusive list of requirements for peer advisory group membership. Instead, it should aid interested individuals in developing a better idea of the type of people to which membership is well-suited. This should assist in deciding whether or not to further pursue joining a peer advisory group.

- Ready to share *all* necessary details of the business, even the most difficult issues and challenges – a group will suffer if members are not prepared to give as well as take
- Progressive & forward thinking – constantly seeking to grow and improve
- Humble, patient, respectful, and trustworthy
- Able to have your ideas challenged, able to listen to criticism without giving excuses
- Capacity to listen objectively and communicate skillfully
- Ready to challenge others and give bluntly honest criticism when necessary
- Decision-making authority within his or her business: it would be aggravating to fellow members to continually give suggestions to a person who can never implement the new ideas because somebody higher up the business hierarchy wouldn’t allow it.
- Part of a business with a history of success
- Open to changes: a person who tends to push back change and is satisfied with keeping things the way they are will not get benefit from the group, nor will they add value to the group
Focuses

Possibilities of specific topics that a peer advisory group might discuss are only limited to the imagination of the group members. The majority of these topics fall into at least one of four general categories: education & skills development, production issues, financial issues, and organizational management. A lot of groups tend to concentrate their discussions on only one or two of these general focuses. This chapter outlines these four general categories and gives examples for each.

A group should form on the basis of a common goal of what members seek to discuss—without this, the group as a whole will suffer. For instance, if a group contains some individuals who really want to focus on financial issues and other members who do not want to take part in financial-based discussions, conflicts may arise.

Keep in mind that a group can evolve. As members become more comfortable around one another, they may over time decide that they would like to begin discussing different, possibly more sensitive issues. For example, the Southern Minnesota Ag Innovators group began by focusing on precision tools learning. Over time, though, the group began sharing more detailed production information among members (Duncanson 2011).

Education and Skills Development

To an extent, this category overlaps all of the subsequent categories. For example, if a group brings in a consultant to help fine-tune capital budgeting skills for members, it could be considered skills development and financial. However, education and skills development is worthy of its own category for the reason that some groups choose to focus on in-depth learning without conferring intimate details of members’ operations. Those discussions in which members do delve into more personal issues and experiences fall within the other three categories.

Many groups hire consultants or experts who come present to the group on a specific topic. These groups find several advantages to receiving training in this manner:

- Direct: Since the group is very small, members have the chance to receive a very intimate and hands-on experience relating to a specific topic relevant to them.
- Targeted: Many producers choose not to attend certain workshops or conferences because of the “one size fits all” nature. Here, the presenter can target the presentation to the skill-level of the participants.
- Timely: Groups have the ability to hire an expert on a relevant topic when the topic is most relevant, rather than waiting for the next industry association meeting.
- Quality: Since the group spreads the cost out over five to ten individuals, members have access to a higher quality presenter than they would have been able to hire alone.
- Interactive: Having other individuals participating can bring up questions that one individual may not have considered had he or she hired the consultant alone.
Groups might also utilize education and skills development through hands-on research, such as field trials or on-site demonstrations. A group may, for example, decide to share the cost of conducting their own field trial comparing alternative seeding rates. Or perhaps a member recently purchased a new variable-rate application system; he might give a demonstration for fellow members to show them how to use it and describe what he feels are the pros and cons of the new system.

“**The best meeting of that group is the roundtable that we have where everybody is encouraged and required to present what they saw on their farms that year. And it’s the best, most pure information... we make decisions on populations, planting speed, planting depth, some things that are very basic, yet we review them every year... what worked and what didn’t work?”** –Pat Duncanson (2011)

“**It goes back to keeping everybody at that higher level and challenging everybody. I think the sharing of ideas is another (benefit) and probably those things range from animal welfare topics that come up to the drug residue things... It’s about already having a network established that whenever those issues come along that you can talk to people about those things.”** –K.R. Averhoff (2011)

**Production Issues**

There are countless specific production topics a peer advisory group might choose to discuss. As can be seen by the examples given, it might be irrational to discuss production issues in a group that is made up of producers from very different sectors of agriculture. A cotton farmer will not find much benefit from a discussion about drug residue in cattle.

Some peer advisory groups choose to participate in production/performance benchmarking on key production numbers, such as average litter size for swine farrowing or pounds of milk per dairy cow per day. In some cases, however, it may not be rational for a group to participate in production benchmarking—a group made up of corn farmers who live in Missouri, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Georgia might have plenty of useful production discussions but will probably not find much value in comparing production metrics since the individual farms have very different weather patterns and soil types. Just a few examples of specific topics include:

**Crop Production**

- Alternative tillage practices
- Seeding rates/depths, new hybrid comparisons
- New technologies—which ones do you see the most benefit from?
- Cost-benefit analysis of fungicides
- Assist each other in putting together yearly production plans
- Yearly post-harvest meeting to discuss **everything** – Which fields or hybrids performed extremely well or extremely poorly and why do you think that is? What can be improved for these fields next year?
Livestock Production

- Disease prevention, drug residue issues
- Rotational grazing practices
- Nutrition: feed efficiencies, cost effective alternative feedstuffs
- Impact of government policies (EPA, animal ID, etc.)
- Waste management procedures

Financial Issues

Although many farmers may find it difficult to discuss financial issues in-depth with individuals outside the business, several of those who feel comfortable enough to do so find it very beneficial in improving business decision-making. Discussions of financial issues do not necessitate members to print off balance sheets or income statements for fellow members to read. Instead, it might include benchmarking of selected values on per acre or per head basis or benchmarking of selected key ratios. It may also be more comfortable for individuals to only share cost information and not share income information. For example, how does the price paid for granular urea fertilizer compare to what others are paying? Group members only share the amount and type of actual raw data everyone is comfortable with.

In addition to sharing actual financial information, this category also includes sharing how members manage their financial information. This might be things such as enterprise budgeting, cost/accrual accounting methods, marketing strategies, capital budgeting, and tax planning.

Organizational Management

The umbrella of organizational management encompasses many vital components of farm management including items relating to business structure, business planning and goal setting, managerial leadership, and human capital. One agricultural peer advisory group facilitator suggests utilizing Dick Wittman’s Farm Management Proficiency Test\(^1\) to pinpoint management areas in which members need improvement. Members could then use these areas to determine more specific topics for discussion (Kluender 2011). Organizational management in family farms inevitably involves problems among family members. As previously discussed in the “Is This For Me?” chapter, accessing the unbiased outside perspectives of fellow group members (some who may have already gone through similar struggles) gives a farm manager the opportunity to talk over these touchy subjects with less damage to relationships among family members. A few specific examples of organizational management topics include:

- Succession planning
- Human resources: Motivating employees, termination decisions, employee compensation
- Conflict resolution
- Incorporating a farm or setting up an LLC or partnership
- New venture analysis

\(^1\) A link for this the test can be found in the “Additional Resources” chapter
Structures

Every peer advisory group develops its own unique chemistry and own set of goals. Because of this, there is no generic structure which can accommodate all peer advisory groups. The “structure” of the group as described in this chapter includes the following pieces:

- Number of members
- Degree of similarity among members: Are members of similar or diverse ages, personalities, management styles, etc.? Do members manage farms of similar or diverse commodities, sizes, etc.?
- Geographic dispersion of members: Are members’ farms spread very far apart or somewhat close together?
- Frequency and length of meetings
- Format of meetings

Remember that a “peer group” consists of members who consider one another to be equals and have a common thread that binds them together. Members do not necessarily need to have “equal” farms, but they should consider one another equal in the ability to manage a farm. In the case of a peer advisory group, at least part of the common thread among members should be a certain goal for the entire group—what does the group intend on learning from one another? As previously described, a group that contains some members who only wish to discuss organizational management and others who want to focus on financial issues will be counter-productive for everyone. An effective group will have diversity of opinions among members, but members should have similar goals.

Since it is impossible to design a single “template” for a peer advisory group structure, this chapter simply lays out several examples of ways that others have structured their groups. Family Business Institute and Vistage, established businesses which provide facilitation services to peer advisory groups mostly outside of agriculture, show an interesting comparison of both sides of the spectrum for group structures. Do not think a new group must choose one of the following structures. Instead, think about what you seek to learn and determine what structure best accommodates this.

### Family Business Institute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>7 – 10 businesses, each can bring two representatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of similarity among</td>
<td>Extremely homogenous as far as the industry members are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members</td>
<td>involved in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic dispersion of</td>
<td>At least 150 miles apart (prevent having competitors in the group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and length of</td>
<td>Twice a year for two-and-a-half days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meetings</td>
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The Family Business Institute’s “performance roundtables” thoroughly examine a different member’s business (the host) at each meeting, as described by Family Business Institute’s CEO Wayne Rivers:

“So if Brett is going to host the meeting, then all the other producers are focused on him for two-and-a-half days... examine his financials, talk to his employees, look at his
operations, look at his equipment... The purpose of that would be to leave him with a high-impact list of recommendations that he is required by the group to act on. Then six months later when the group next convenes at somebody else’s host site... the first thing that happens is that (the previous host) has to report on his progress over the last six months” (2011).

Under this format, the opportunity to host the meeting and have all attention directed towards your business only comes only once every few years. Even though this seems as though each member receives limited opportunities to benefit from the group, Rivers actually noted that many members feel they benefit equally (and sometime more) from the meetings which focus on other members. Since all members are in the same industry, many things discussed about another person’s business easily relate back to their own operation (Rivers 2011).

Vistage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>12 – 16</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of similarity among members</td>
<td>Very diverse industries, non-competing businesses. Somewhat similar business sizes (must have over 25 employees and $5 million in revenue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic dispersion of members</td>
<td>All members are located within a very local region (for example, Dallas-Fort Worth metro area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and length of meetings</td>
<td>Monthly for one full day</td>
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Vistage’s meeting formats are quite different from Family Business Institute. The group usually brings in a speaker to present for about half of a day. The host member presents a current problem being faced by his business which is then discussed among the group (Boyett, 2011). Finally the group “processes issues” for all members, which is further described by David Boyett, a Vistage “chair” (group facilitator):

“(Issue processing) is where members bring a problem to the group and the group helps them solve the problem... or evaluate an opportunity. It might not be a problem necessarily. So we ask members to write these up and they’ll present the issue in three minutes... We ask them why is it important, to get some background information about it. The group will ask clarifying questions on it... During the clarifying questions part, nobody can propose a solution. Wisdom is found in the questions, not in the answers. So we try and get people to ask good clarifying questions... At the end of clarifying questions we re-state the issue, and sometimes the issue has changed... The group helps determine what the real issue is and then the group can offer solutions or ideas... After we’ve proposed the solutions, we ask the member ‘What sounded good to you? What sounds like something you want to implement and do?’ And then we’ll ask them to commit to what they’re going to do and when they’re going to do it by and we keep track of that, so we can hold them accountable”(2011).
Examples of agricultural peer advisory group structures

Since peer advisory groups are not currently utilized as much in agriculture as in other industries, there are not yet any established businesses which offer facilitation services to a large number of groups the way Family Business Institute and Vistage do. Therefore, this section simply offers several testimonies from members and facilitators of a wide variety of different groups. The reader can easily see that members customize their group to accommodate their needs.

Joe Kluender, president of Farm Family Dynamics, LLC, currently facilitates two peer advisory groups which mainly focus on organizational management issues and are primarily made up of members in Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas. These groups meet for one day, twice per year and are structured in the following manner:

“I based the decision on who to invite to each group based on geographic differences, similar business management styles, and aptitude... I have farms that are single-owners, that are 2,300 acres and farms that are farming 25,000 acres. The issues that I deal with—the family dynamic and organizational issues—apply across the board. Geographic differences... The closest ones that I have are a cattle feedlot and a grain producer and they are probably 55 miles apart... but they’re in different types of industries so I don’t feel that they are in competition.” (Kluender, 2011)

Bob Aukes, a financial consultant for agricultural producers, facilitates a peer advisory group self-described as “The Brain Trust.” This group tends to focus on production issues of members and does not meet on a routine basis, as described by Aukes: “We meet whenever the group members can no longer tolerate not meeting” (2011). Each meeting focuses on one specific topic that a majority of the members have a strong interest in. The meeting begins with a “pre-meeting” period, where hot topics and current events are briefly discussed before delving into the day’s main issue. The group usually brings in an expert to give a technical presentation on the issue. Members use this not only as an information source, but also as an idea generator. Following this, members dig in and discuss their own experiences and ideas for some time and begin to develop alternative solutions, recommendations, or action plans (Aukes 2011).

Lance Woodbury, a family conflict consultant, facilitates three different agricultural peer advisory groups, each of which is structured in its own unique way, fitting to the purpose of what the group is seeking to achieve. Two of the different structures are described below.

“(One) group is six family operations that are spread out over the country. They come together for sort of three purposes. One is continued education, another is to look at investment opportunities, and the third is to do some benchmarking. And it’s not just one person in the operation—the whole family comes together, several people from each operation. Probably two to three times a year, we don’t have a set meeting schedule per year... and then we have monthly conference calls, and on those conference calls we’ll sort of be focused on the action items that came out of the different activities either in the education arena or the benchmarking arena or the investment opportunity arena... Another one that I’m involved in is more of a regional peer group: regional to
western Kansas and eastern Colorado. And that is a group that meets about every other month. They meet for supper and they bring in an outside speaker to that meeting... about every third or fourth time we don’t bring in an outside speaker and just talk about each operation... It has a core group of... five members, and then they each invite one other person. So it’s not the same group every time so that gets some diversity in the conversation. It doesn’t go nearly as deep in terms of each person’s operation, because of some of the competition factors at play and just the proximity to one another, but it goes surprisingly deeper than what you think it might” (Woodbury 2011).

K.R. Averhoff of Dairy Services LLC currently participates in a production-focused peer group for dairies. This group is made up of 7 dairies, all located within a fairly small geographic area (mainly the Texas panhandle). Although the group is homogenous as far as industry and geographic region, there are several different facility types among the members’ farms (i.e. open lot, free stall, etc.). The group currently meets for 3-4 hours about four to six times per year to discuss current issues being faced by the dairies and to compare production metrics (Averhoff 2011).

Once again, no single ‘correct’ structure for a peer advisory group exists. As can be seen in the preceding examples, it is beneficial to first determine your ultimate goal for peer advisory group membership and attempt to structure a group accommodating to that goal.

“It comes back to a key question that I’d encourage all of you to think about and that is: What are you looking for in a peer group?... You’ve heard lots of different ways to ‘skin the peer group cat’ and ultimately it gets back to what are you looking for in that process? Are you looking for benchmarking to see where you stand among other producers? ... Are you looking to be challenged in terms of (the Family Business Institute) model? You know they go pretty deep and look at your business and sort of pulling up the covers and looking under every rug and saying ‘What’s going on here?’ Are you looking for that kind of challenge? Are you looking for more personal and family help? ... Are you looking for education? Are you looking to just stay on the leading edge and get educated about things? Or are you looking for just industry discussion? And my point is that you really need to sort out, I think, what is important to you from a peer group perspective what your goals are and that will inform you what kind of group to join.” –Lance Woodbury (2011), peer group facilitator
Practices

Just as there is no “template” for group structure, there is no single set of ground rules which a peer advisory group should adhere to. This chapter lays out a few general “rules of thumb” that multiple groups have noted as being important parts of how their group functions. A new group does not need to implement all of the suggestions covered here. Each unique peer advisory group should decide what is best for itself and add, delete, or alter where so desired.

Goals

Although some may perceive social interaction with like-minded people as an important benefit of their peer advisory group, a group needs to have a specific purpose aside from just social interaction. The intent of peer advisory groups is not for people to become members just for the sake of getting away from the farm for a day to rub elbows. A new group might find value in composing specific written goals describing the purpose of the group. If at any time it seems that conversation strays off-point, a member or facilitator can bring everyone back to center by reminding them what they seek to accomplish. These explicit goals or objectives will be unique to the group and should be based on the value that the members seek to gain from group participation. The following example of a stated group objective illustrates how the goals of a peer advisory group tie to the substance members wish to derive from the group.

“The stated goal of our peer groups are: To discuss business management issues in order that our farms can make better business management decisions and enhance their business results. To share business knowledge with producers from outside our immediate geographic region... To act as a sounding board for new ideas so that we share new ideas and bounce them off others... To leverage experience from other successful farm operations... To hold each other accountable for the continued improvement of our farm management systems” (Kluender 2011).

Confidentiality

For a peer advisory group to be truly effective, it must be built on a foundation of trust among members. In order to initially establish this groundwork, members should somehow convey to one another their commitment to confidentiality. Some groups require all members to sign some form of a written confidentiality, non-disclosure, and/or non-compete agreement. Others groups choose to verbally agree to confidentiality. In the Argentinian CREA groups, members feel that a verbal “Gentleman’s
“A lot of these other support groups lack confidentiality and there’s personalities involved, so I think there’s really no replacement for a peer group.” –Gene Daley (2011), J-W Operating Company, peer group member

agreement” has more value than a written document: these groups base themselves on a culture of honor where “my word is my bond” (Hughes 2011). Furthermore, some may see benefit in setting “levels” of confidentiality, described as follows:

“If you’re in a forum and you’re in a room discussing anything with those people that you’re trying to build that trust and vulnerability with... to build that success takes years... As you get more and more comfortable with that group that you’re with you can maybe pick a couple different levels of confidentiality. If it’s something that I’m very, very sensitive about and I want to share it behind closed doors, I’ll tell them that this is level 1. I don’t ever want to hear about it again. We can talk about it in this room. After that, it never happened. To level 2 or level 3 where this isn’t that personal. It isn’t that confidential. Talk to me about it anywhere, anytime. But err on the side of caution as you guys are getting your forums developed and don’t stub your toe in the first year” (MacNeil 2011).

A new group may also consider creating formal protocols for swiftly removing from the group any member who violates confidentiality. Without the basis of trust among members, a peer advisory group loses effectiveness, to an extent. Confidentiality differentiates a peer advisory group from the average industry association group. It helps members feel slightly more at ease to be completely vulnerable and open with one another—something necessary for the group to have a deep and meaningful impact.

The confidentiality agreements of many groups prohibit members from discussing things with family members or key employees who are not members of the group. However, certain times doing so might be beneficial. For instance, if a group determines that a member should implement a certain practice on his farm, it might be difficult to convince other key employees that this implementation is a good idea since they were not a part of the discussion. The following advice may be appropriate for that type of situation:

“I would ask permission from the forum group to share, to release the confidentiality on those particular issues... If in fact some of the advice, some of the information they’ve given to you could be beneficial to you, I think you say: ‘Guys I think this is so important to me, would it be permissible for me to take and share it with XYZ people?’ That’s the way I would handle it” (Edwards 2011).
Facilitation

Although some groups choose to “self-facilitate” (members act as discussion moderators), many feel that it is a good idea to hire an outside facilitator, even if only on a temporary basis until the group begins to gain footing. In fact, 79% of participants at a recent conference on peer advisory groups felt that it is at least somewhat important for a new group to hire an outside facilitator (Doerr 2011). A facilitator does not typically contribute to discussion. Instead, a facilitator moderates discussion—keeping members on-task, pulling out more reserved individuals, preventing dominant personalities from dictating discussion. Furthermore, a professional facilitator typically takes care of meeting arrangements: gathering discussion ideas from members, setting and distributing an agenda, setting the meeting date, arranging a facility for the meeting, finding high-caliber speakers, etc. Groups that choose to participate in benchmarking might consider allowing the facilitator to do the “number crunching.” This eliminates the problem of different farms using different methods to calculate the key numbers.

“I don’t believe anybody values anything they get for free. You know, my wife gets unglued by how many farm magazines I get for free. And she has to subscribe to every single one. And I’ll guarantee you she reads every single one of hers and I’m lucky if I stick one in a briefcase... I think there’s value in paying our annual fee... here’s some things you’ve asked for, so now we’re going to provide you the value.” –Terry Jones (2011), Executive Ag Network

Even if a group chooses to self-facilitate, it is important that somebody fills a role as a discussion moderator. This person should not actively participate in discussion, so the position might rotate to allow each member share in the duties at some point. Without the leadership of a member-moderator or a professional facilitator, a group can struggle, as witnessed by the following account:

“We started out as a precision tools learning focus group that was supported by the University of Minnesota Precision Ag Center and as the Precision Ag Center fell on hard times, our support changed. We became independent and survived on our own... and so I’ve seen a group that started as very heavily organized and moderated that lost its moderator function and actually became totally self-sustaining by the farmer members themselves. We floundered during those interim years and the last couple years have kind of been reenergized now that we’ve got a professional moderator who’s able to take the time” (Duncanson 2011).
Meeting conduct

Although some groups prefer to confront problems as they arise, a new group should consider adopting some sort of “rules of conduct.” This might include simple things such as attendance policies or cell phone use. Some groups might choose to have a “time-keeping” policy to keep meetings rolling. This policy will lend itself to more organized and focused discussions; however, a balance needs to be maintained between overly structured and organized discussion and the “give-and-take” interactions (Beebe & Masterson 2000).

Certain groups may also go as far as explicitly stating the acceptable basis for removing an uncooperative or unproductive member from the group. Another important policy that the group might want to adopt up front is the method for group decision-making. For example, perhaps a member knows of a fellow producer who would like to become a part of the group but another member does not want the group to be any larger than the current size. Does the group need to reach a unanimous decision? Or does a majority vote suffice?

Many agree that it is a good idea to set some sort of agenda prior to each meeting. A group with no organization of discussion tends to be less effective (Beebe and Masterson 2000). By distributing the agenda beforehand, members have time to think of questions or points which they would like to bring before the others. The issue here involves how the meeting agenda is set. Who makes the final decision as to what will be discussed? There is not a “correct” way to go about setting the agenda, but the agenda must have value for members. Discussion topics should somehow be suggested or voted upon by members—if topics are imposed upon the group by a facilitator or domineering member, some members may not find value in discussions.

By defining some of these policies at inception, a new group might avoid future heated debates.

“The agenda: depends upon the objective of the group. Depends upon the group members, the sector, the production environment, the markets, and the relevant issues. The topic, the issue, the problem to be addressed at that meeting... must come from the group members... It’s the interest of the group members that makes or breaks that show. The key is to have one... an agenda that everybody is aware of and prepares for.” –Bob Aukes (2011)
Obstacles

Although the majority of the preceding pages depict a very positive image of peer advisory groups, participation in one may not be rosy at all times. Putting five to ten very successful, independent thinkers into the same room might not always work out as hoped for. This chapter describes a few of the hurdles that a peer advisory group might face at some point in its lifecycle. By anticipating some of these obstacles, a group can hopefully avoid an unnecessary dissolution. A group will have better chances of survival when led by a professional facilitator or member-moderator knowledgeable in small group communication and prepared with ideas of how to overcome obstacles.

Getting Started

Perhaps the biggest roadblock for people interested in peer group participation lies in finding fellow members. Pinpointing other individuals who fit with the type of group you would like to be a part of can be frustrating, especially when looking for individuals who live quite a distance away. This key step can determine the effectiveness of the group, so do not let the difficulty of the task detract from seeking out quality individuals interested in sharing the same type of information as you. In order to overcome this obstacle, try reaching out to an industry person with an expansive list of acquaintances who are farmers. Useful contacts might include consultants, agricultural lenders, sales representatives, or university extension. These persons might be able to put you in contact with a few individuals who meet your criteria.

“The people that you want to have involved in your forum are the busiest people in the world. And the reason you want them there is that the busiest people in the world get the most done because they have to. Those are the people that you want to learn from...Don’t take ‘no’ for an answer from the guys that say they’re too busy to do this. That’s the guys you want.”
—Brett MacNeil (2011), Scythe & Spade Company, peer group member

Once you know who you would like to invite into your group, the next obstacle might involve getting these people to accept the invitation and really buy into the concept. Wayne Rivers, president of the Family Business Institute, hears three common objections to joining a peer advisory group: time, money and fear of releasing information (2011). Preparing for these objections before attempting to recruit potential members will be advantageous.

Several individuals involved in peer advisory groups recognize the need for some sort of clearinghouse for peer advisory groups in agriculture (Doerr 2011). Such an organization could provide the opportunity for groups to find new members, professional facilitators, expert presenters, or to determine if any other group has dealt with a particular issue.
Getting Rolling

After a new group forms, a few speed bumps may arise as individuals become acquainted with one another. Group chemistry may not always develop well and can potentially lead to an ineffective group. If one certain individual clearly does not fit with the rest of the group, removal of the member from the group may be necessary, no matter how uncomfortable the situation. Other times, the member realizes the poor fit on their own and leaves voluntarily, as described by Gene Daley (2011), a current Vistage group member:

“You’re dealing with a group of people here that are very busy, have limited time, want maximum results, not afraid to speak their mind. And that comes from both sides. If you don’t fit in, the person that’s not fitting in is not getting what they want out of the organization, either. So I think that tends to kind of work itself out. People tend to just voluntarily leave.”

Some individuals need a short adjustment period to get used to the peer advisory group dynamic. Such open and honest sharing does not come easily for all. Furthermore, differences of opinions inevitability occur in discussions—these should be embraced, as they are part of what makes the experience unique and effective. However, some people find that dealing with conflict in a respectful manner takes some getting used to. Prior awareness of this adaptation period may help avoid a high turnover of members.

In addition to simply being aware of this adjustment period, members might also find it useful to discuss the differences in everyone’s personalities. Completing a personality test and sharing results might reveal differences in communication styles among members which is not only informative to the members, but to the facilitator as well. Other groups might prefer to discuss individual strengths and/or weaknesses. Knowing that one person excels at a trait that a different person lacks could provide meaningful value. A facilitator might also want to consider spending a short period informing members about best practices for communicating in small groups.

“I think groups need to start off with a clear basis for removing members if it turns out there isn’t a good fit. Otherwise the group will fall apart. There is a lot of truth in the old saying that one bad apple can spoil the whole batch.” –Danny Klinefelter (quoted in Zarley Taylor 2011)

“To get into a forum where you’re really getting a lot out, you’ve got to put a lot in. You’ve got to be 100% checked in. You’ve got to be 100% vulnerable. You’ve got to be 100% honest. And for me, it took a couple of years. Just being an old country boy... I wasn’t comfortable sharing a lot of my personal stuff, my business stuff with guys that I didn’t know very well. It took me two years to get to that comfort level.” –Brett MacNeil (2011), Scythe & Spade Company, peer group member

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2 Information on personality tests can be found in “Additional Resources.”
3 Information on communicating in small groups can be found in “Additional Resources.”
Getting Useful

Once members move past initial anxiety, they begin to receive meaningful value from the group. In order for meetings to be significant and useful, this value cannot be insisted from the top down. A moderator or facilitator should not forcefully impose on the group what he or she believes are relevant discussion topics. Members will find the value they are seeking when discussion topics arise organically from the members themselves.

After several years, some groups may begin to plateau, a challenge described by David Boyett, a Vistage chair:

“I always feel that it’s incumbent upon the facilitator to make sure that the group is fresh. I’m trying to throw out new ideas, new things. We try to check in and try to decide if what we’re doing is providing the most value. We’re constantly trying to re-invent the group to a certain extent, and I have to be really careful that we’re not getting complacent, that we’re not just kind of leveling off, that we’re still trying to keep growing and do better... That’s one advantage, in my opinion, of a facilitated group... I really believe that there needs to be an independent person that’s kind of watching how the group is performing and can be objective about it to see if there needs to be adjustments or changes because, yeah, it can get stale” (2011).

The majority of peer groups do not meet perpetually: a time comes when members outgrow the purpose of a group. Therefore, when a group does begin to plateau, it may signal for the group to consider dissolution. However, agriculture constantly changes and new problems always arise—many times the group simply needs to evolve and reenergize itself. How to accomplish this really depends on what members think causes the lull in effectiveness. Perhaps the group should seek out a new facilitator or member(s) or try finding more challenging topics to discuss.

Closing Thoughts

As evidenced in the preceding pages, no two peer advisory groups are exactly identical—each develops its own unique chemistry, structure, and discussion topics. By determining beforehand what you most want to get from the group, you can find or develop a group accommodating to this. Some individuals indicate that taking part in more than one group can fill different needs (Doerr 2011). For example, it might make sense to find a more regional-based group for production issues and find a group with members more dispersed for discussing organizational management or financial issues—things not so easily shared with neighbors. Farmers are very independent and self-reliant in nature. The concept of sharing private information might scare away many individuals. However, improving your farm management skills is nearly impossible without the willingness to seek out information from outside your own business.

“Human Beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so.” –Douglas Adams (as quoted in McFarland 2008)
Although few farmers in the United States utilize peer advisory groups, Argentina has a very well-structured network of groups for farmers. These “CREA” groups (Consorcio Regional de Experimentación Agrícola, or in English, Regional Consortiums for Agricultural Experimentation) originated in 1957 by Pablo Hary and the entire network now supports over 200 CREA groups. From the AACREA website (translated from Spanish):

“The Movement is made up of 1,932 agribusinesses who think they can improve the performance of their organizations through the exchange of ideas and experiences. Members work together to improve the work process of the company and meet the technical, economic, and human.”

The entire organization, AACREA (Asociación Argentina de Consorcios Regionales de Experimentación Agrícola, or in English, Argentinian Association of Regional Consortiums for Agricultural Experimentation) provides for joint action between groups and pooling of resources and educational materials. This large association is broken into “Regiones” (Regions), which are constituted by the individual CREA groups. After more than 45 years of experience, the CREA movement has a fairly streamlined format for group structure and rules. However, this does not prevent each group from still having its own unique chemistry between members. Although AACREA’s organization is quite sophisticated, it remains a grassroots organization governed by the members.

For more information on AACREA, visit the association’s website
http://www.aacrea.org.ar

The website is written in Spanish, but an in-depth summary of AACREA written in English can be found by visiting the homepage and selecting “Institucional,” then “Qué es CREA en idiomas,” then “AACREA-inglés” or by using the following web address:


For an outsider’s point-of-view on CREA groups, Dr. Chad Lee of the University of Kentucky wrote a blog while living in Argentina for four months, mostly observing CREA groups. The blog can be found at:

http://argentinaupdate.blogspot.com/

Cornell University ProDairy Program, in conjunction with the New York Center for Dairy Excellence, began a program for “Dairy Profit Discussion Groups” in 2008. The network currently boasts approximately 35 small groups. Kathy Barrett, program director, wrote a facilitator’s guide for these groups, which can be found at:

As described in the “Obstacles” chapter, some groups might find value in having members complete personality or strengths tests to see the differences in individual members. A few such tests include:

- Myers Briggs  http://www.mbticomplete.com
- Predictive Index  http://www.piworldwide.com/Products/Predictive-Index-System.aspx
- Keirsey Temperment  http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/inventor.asp
- StrengthsFinder  http://www.strengthsfinder.com

The Myers-Briggs and Predictive Index both have a nominal cost associated with them. The StrengthsFinder test can only be taken with an access code from the purchase of one of the associated Gallup books.

In addition to a personality test, it may also be a good idea to take Dick Wittman’s Farm Management Proficiency test, as described under Organizational Management in the “Focuses” chapter. The test can be found at:


For an individual who wishes to begin his or her own peer advisory group without the assistance of a professional facilitator, it may be useful to research a little bit about creating small groups and proper small group communication techniques. Countless textbooks on small group communication exist. A few good resources that were used in the writing of this publication are:

- Creating effective groups: the art of small group communication, Fujishin
- Peer groups: expanding our study of small group communication, Sunwolf
- Communicating in small groups: principles and practices, Beebe & Masterson
- Creating groups, Bertcher & Maple

Groups interested in production or financial benchmarking need to make sure that everyone uses similar methods to arrive at their calculations. The AAPEX website contains resources from Dick Wittman about benchmarking and also links for benchmarking information in specific commodities.

http://www.associationofagriculturalproductionexecutives.org/Financial%20Benchmarks.html

A few other insightful articles about peer advisory groups include:

- “Performance roundtables – a peer approach to helping your members work on their business”
  Wayne Rivers, The Family Business Institute

- “Peer Advisory Groups: Providing an Outside Perspective”
  Danny Klinefelter, Texas A&M University
“Enhancing sustainable agriculture through farmer groups: the experience of the Kansas Heartland Sustainable Agriculture Network.”
Jerry Jost, David Norman, and Stan Freyenberger; Kansas State University
http://www.kansassustainableag.org/Library/ksas4.htm

“The Power of Peer Networks”
Edward Lowe Foundation, Entrepreneur’s Resource Center
http://edwardlowe.org/index.elf?page=sserc&storyid=5401&function=story

“Benchmarking Without Baring Your Business Soul”
Mick Lane, National Hog Farmer
http://nationalhogfarmer.com/mag/farming_benchmarking_without_baring/

“Erecting Scaffolding”
Keith R. McFarland
Chapter 7 in the book The Breakthrough Company

“Peering Into Better Business”
Allison Mclean, American Printer

“How to find a CEO peer group that’s worth your time—and money”
Donna Fenn, Inc.
http://www.inc.com/magazine/19980301/893.html

References


