

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING FOR YOUR COUNSELING SESSION

As a client of SCORE, you have the expectation of receiving information and direction that will help you start or grow your business. To effectively do this, we suggest some simple steps to prepare for your meeting with your counselors.

### **Request for Counseling form**

Complete form **before** coming to counseling. This gives you more time to discuss your business opportunity.

### **Three major questions**

Individual businesses generate their own concerns and questions. Write down **three** questions which will define major factors in your business decisions. They may concern any subject: finances, cash flow, marketing, advertising, franchising, etc. You are more likely to meet your counseling objectives if your major concerns are presented at the beginning of the session. The “3 questions” strategy applies to first time counseling or a follow-on session.

### **www.svscore.org**

Look at our web site to get information that you might use to prepare for your counseling session and to see what services we offer our clients.

1. **Business Resources, Small Business Power Links**
2. **Free Counseling, Counseling Aids and Templates**
3. **Workshops/Seminars**
4. **Other agencies at the Entrepreneur Center**

### **Business Information Center (BIC)**

Visit our library at the Entrepreneur Center.

1. **Resources at the Business Library**, books, videos, specific business workbooks
2. **“Small Business Start-up Information for Northern California,”** publication available at the BIC
3. **Free use of a computer with some basic business software**

### **Keys to your discussion**

If you do not have a business plan or are unable to use our web site or BIC, we suggest:

1. write a few paragraphs describing your business idea, your capabilities in that field and your customers
2. list the costs of getting into business, the monthly costs of running your business and the monthly income you expect for the first year

Discussion of these points will lead to a description of your idea in terms of a business plan.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Is counseling free and am I limited to the number of sessions?** Counseling IS FREE and you are not limited to the number of sessions you can request.
2. **Do I have to utilize the same counselors for all sessions?** No. You can request counselors with various specialties such as Marketing, Cash Flow, Finances, etc.
3. **Why do you charge for your Workshops and Seminars?** We charge a nominal fee to cover paper, copying and printing costs. All speakers at SCORE-sponsored workshops and seminars are volunteers.
4. **I don't have a Business Plan; I have it all in my head. Why do I have to write one?** Our experience shows the probability of your success is far greater if you write down your ideas and numbers. Your counselors can understand and critique your business, and you can track your assumptions and your financial forecast as you proceed in business. No bank or SBA-connected loan agency will make money available without a written business document showing that you can repay the loan.