START A *Virtual* BOOK CLUB

If you've got a hot list of books that you know will help you reach your goals, achieve success and live the good life— fire up your laptop, tablet or phone and start a virtual book club! **Hot Tip:** If you start it, you're automatically invited!

1. Decide what kind of book club you want to have. Create a book club goal to frame your invitation, define your reading list and to guide group conversations. We recommend that you start with Brian Buffini's Book List, (brianbuffini.com/book-club.aspx) and select a few books from each category. Check to see if they include a bonus section of book club questions (most do) and then draft your invitation.

2. Draft your invitation. You'll want to get your invitation out so that your first book and meeting are on the books. To have meaningful dialog within an hour, you'll want to limit the number of participants and just like a live club, you'll want to invite more than you want to host. To help you with your intro, start here and edit as you like. "I'm starting a virtual book club to stay motivated and improve my business, financial and life skills. My goal is to write a year's worth of business in 9 months and I would love to find ten people to join me who share this goal and want to support each other. I think we can read the first book (INSERT YOUR SUGGESTION) in two weeks and meet for one hour to discuss the publisher's questions. If you'd like to join me, please reply and we will collaborate on meeting day, time and platform."

3. Invite inspirational colleagues. Your virtual book club isn't limited by geography. Go deep into your contact list (don't forget to look in LinkedIn) and find the like-minded people that will help you grow. Start by sending them the invitation that includes your book club goal and suggested books. Once you learn if they are interested, you can collaborate to determine a meeting cadence, meeting time and platform.

4. Follow-up to plan your first meeting. You'll want to follow-up with a survey that answers the following questions: How often would you like to meet (this will also determine how long people need to read each book). What day and time works best for you to meet (don't forget about time zones!). What kind of technology do you have access to (there are several free platforms and some are restricted by brand)?

5. Choose a platform. There are several free and paid platforms that are perfect for hosting an online book club. Each has similar features and unique restrictions. The least-limiting is Google Hangouts since it can be accessed on any device and can support up to 250 people! Other options include Group FaceTime (for up to 32 iPhone users), Skype (for up to 50 people with the app). Zoom's free plan (for up to 100 people and limited to 40-minutes).

6. Host your first meeting! First things first, you'll need to send your confirmed attendees a calendar invite that includes "how-to" access the meeting, the book (with a link to buy) along with the topics you will discuss (peek online to find suggestions). Be sure you're prepared (read the book, review the questions) and log into the platform at least 10-minutes early. Be sure you give your guests a few minutes to introduce themselves and their goals and then let the learning begin!

These are certainly uncertain times. However, we can stay connected and we can support our future when we work together. We will continue to bring you new ideas. Until then, stay safe and healthy.