THE COO COLLECTIVE

A SHORT GUIDE FOR SENIOR OPERATORS

The Operator's Seat

7 Pressures Every Senior Operator Carries and How Peers Help

A confidential, in-person peer advisory community for the people who carry the weight of operations.

The people who run the company often have no room of their own.

YPO, Vistage, and EO are built for the founder, the owner, and the chief executive. The COO, the Integrator, and the vice president of operations still have to carry the work of making the business run, often without a confidential peer who knows that seat.

This short guide names seven pressures that come with the operator's seat. It then describes how a peer forum can help, based on how The COO Collective actually works: a confidential, in-person room, professionally facilitated, where members share experience, offer direct advice, solve problems together, and work at the whiteboard. The person who brought the issue decides what to take back.

This is not a curriculum. It is not a consulting offer. It is not a sales networking group. It is a way to see the seat more clearly, and to understand what a real peer room is for.

The Collective is a national community for senior operators. The founding chapter in Lubbock, Texas is already meeting. New chapters open by market as demand builds. Membership is by application.

Seven pressures of the operator's seat

01 You carry the middle of the company

The CEO is above you. The team is below you. You are the person who has to make the work actually happen, and you feel both sides of that pressure. When direction from above and capacity below do not line up, you are the one who has to close the gap.

02 The usual peer groups were not built for your seat

Sitting in a room of owners is not the same as sitting with other operators. The questions you live with (hiring and firing, operating cadence, execution risk, and the politics of leading from the second chair) are different from the questions a founder brings.

03 You make real decisions you cannot safely unpack down the hall

You have authority, and you still may not have a trusted peer inside the company who can talk through a hard call without politics, confusion, or risk to the team. Isolation is not a personality problem. It is the nature of the seat.

04 Everything can be urgent, and someone has to choose

The operator is often the person who sequences the work, protects focus, and lives with what has to wait. Those tradeoffs are easier to see with people who have made the same kind of call, and harder to test with people who only see one slice of the business.

05 The work is operational, and the weight is also personal

Business, personal, and emotional leadership travel together in this seat. Sanitized conversations produce sanitized results. A useful room has to be able to hold the whole picture, not only the polished version of the problem.

06 You are expected to be the steady one

People look to you for calm, clarity, and follow-through. That does not leave much room to think out loud. A confidential forum gives you a place to do that work without performing certainty you do not yet have.

07 Insight is cheap if nothing changes when you leave

A useful room does not end at advice. It helps you name what landed, decide what you will do, and return to people who will ask you about it. Follow-through is part of the work, not an afterthought.

How a peer room helps

A COO Collective forum is a closed, in-person room. It is confidential and professionally facilitated. Members share experience, offer direct advice, solve problems together, and work at the whiteboard. First-person experience is valuable. This is still not a place to sell, to lecture, or to take the decision out of the member's hands.

A session has a simple shape:

Arrival.

Members come into the same closed room. Phones go away. The moderator opens the session, sets the tone, and reminds the group that what is said in the room stays in the room.

Updates.

Each person shares what is happening in the work and in life, including how they did on the commitment they made last time. This is how the group stays current, and how the real issues start to surface.

A deep dive on one member's issue.

The group chooses an issue that needs more than an update. The presenting member lays it out in full. The others ask clarifying questions first, without jumping to answers.

The whiteboard.

Then the room goes to work. Members share what they have seen, offer direct advice, challenge assumptions, and map options together, including at the whiteboard. The presenting member keeps the authority to decide which ideas to take back.

Commitments.

The presenting member names what landed and, if they are ready, what they will do. The group carries those commitments forward so they can be asked about the next time the room meets. The session closes. Confidentiality stands.

Nothing said in a forum leaves the room. Confidentiality is a condition of being in the room.

If this is your seat

The COO Collective is reserved for operational leaders at companies generating $10M or more in annual revenue, with three or more people under their operational influence. Portfolio operators are welcome. Fractional and part-time roles are not.

The founding chapter in Lubbock, Texas is already meeting. New chapters open by market as demand builds. Membership is by application. John Claborn reviews every request personally.

If you want to understand the room first, you can request more information. If you already know this is the kind of room you need, you can request an introduction. Both paths are at coocollective.org.

The COO Collective

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