



**Welcome to
The Catapult Program
Overview & Calendar**

Program Goals:

- To encourage innovation and sustainability for entrepreneurs through training and investment.
- To assist entrepreneurs in developing and accessing growth opportunities to take their business to the next level of success.
- To provide the information and skillsets to survive and thrive in the evolving marketing and economic environment.

Program Components:

- Dynamic and interactive **training sessions** – consisting of expert interviews and presentations, group mastermind problem-solving, accountability support on progress towards goals.
- Each session will include **actionable steps** to improve business performance. **“Homework”**, opportunities for the scholars to practice application of newly-learned tips/resources/strategies and to go deeper with those that are particularly relevant, will be provided and participants will be encouraged to share their experiences working through the supplemental activities and material.
- The group’s communication/resource-sharing/meeting recording archival portal will be a **private Facebook Group** that the Program Coordinator will create, administer, and moderate. All Catapult organizers are invited to also join and participate. This group “clubhouse” serves as an invaluable focal point where all participants can contribute, learn, and share at their convenience. And, can be a critical source of reference for all previously-covered course materials and valuable supplemental information. It is typically the highlight of the experience.
- Each participant will be matched with a highly-experienced **business advisor/mentor** from the Louisiana Small Business Development Center network. They will provide additional guidance, assistance, and encouragement during and beyond the program at no charge.
- Participants will create a short (3-5 page) **Growth Plan** for their business and prepare a **Funding Pitch** that they will deliver to a panel of business/financing guests.

Program Delivery:

- The weekly sessions will be held **virtually, via Zoom, on Tuesdays from 9:30 am to noon.**
- All participants will be expected to be ON CAMERA.
- Myra Corrello, program coordinator, will handle all registration, invitations, hosting, and recording.
- All Catapult Program Leadership Team Members will receive invitations to attend as well.

Program Topics:

6/20/23: Understanding Today to Prepare for Tomorrow. In this session, participants will analyze their current situation by completing a business assessment and SWOT analysis. They will learn the importance of creating a strategic growth plan and its component parts. They will learn practical tips for goal setting – including the importance of milestones, monitoring, routine re-evaluation, and refining, when needed.

6/27/23: Accessing and Utilizing Expertise and Resources. Participants will gain valuable information on how to get the most benefit from their business advisor. They will also learn about the array of specialized resources that are available to them from the LSBDC network as well as other local, state and federal resources.

7/4/23: July 4th break. No class.

7/11/23: Nail Your Niche. The session helps participants through the essential process of clearly identifying their most attractive and profitable customers and business opportunities. It also covers how to begin to identify ways to best attract those targeted market segments. This is the foundational session that all marketing activities are built upon.

7/18/23: Marketing and Selling Basics. This session covers various aspects of consumer psychology, branding, and how buyers buy – including the sales funnel, buying decisions, buyer behavior, effects of various pricing strategies, and other influences including branding.

7/25/23: Online Marketing Techniques Part 1. The overall goal of this session is helping participants understand how to maximize all channels in order to get found by targeted buyers. These include website attraction and conversion best practices, basic SEO and free/affordable resources for DIY, & assessing one's overall online presence.

8/1/23: Online Marketing Techniques Part 2. This session will focus on best practices for utilizing social media & product placement.

8/8/23: Strategic Networking & Relationship Building. Participants will learn how to inventory all their existing networks – especially those they are currently overlooking. They will learn the various roles their network plays and how to begin to better nurture those existing relationships. They will also be able to identify the key people who need to be added to their network and given strategies for how to begin to cultivate those relationships.

8/15/23: Managing the Numbers for Success. This session will cover essentials for record keeping, taxes, financial management – with a particular emphasis on areas that are of specific interest and impact for beauty-product-producing related businesses.

8/22/23: Getting Funding for Growth. In this session, participants will learn best practices for how to access capital to grow the business. They will learn what financial institutions look for in determining fundability as well as how the LSBDC can help them package their information to be most attractive to lenders. Participants will also learn how to effectively pitch their funding request to lenders.

8/29/23: Keeping Your Data and Technology Safe. In this session, participants will learn the most important practices to ensure data integrity for their own company as well as the data handled with

their customers. IT experts will also share best practices for running a secure and productive IT network regardless of the size of the business.

9/5/23: Finding Talent & Support. Participants will gain a host of ideas for finding people who can support their business growth – from vendors to unpaid personal network options to hiring best practices.

9/12/23: Building a Strong, Resilient Organization. This session will cover best practices for resiliency, sustainability, and scalability. It will focus on building a strong foundation through effective risk management, systems, automation, and redundancies to insure it will be poised to endure the inevitable challenges that the future holds.

9/19/23: Pitch Contest and Graduation Ceremony – New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Center, 1205 N Rampart St, New Orleans, LA 70116.

Program Coordination:

Myra Corrello, PhD, will coordinate the program in collaboration with LSBDC GNOR-BR Center Director **Carmen Sunda**. Myra has led many successful CEO masterminds and business accelerators through her own company as well as through Louisiana Economic Development, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, and others. She is a certified Perspectives CEO Mastermind Facilitator. For more information, connect with her here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/myracorrello/> or visit her website here: <https://myracorrello.com/>.

