

The 12-Question Mastermind Evaluation Checklist

Ask these before you wire the check — any room, any operator, including mine.

Brad Hart · Make More Marbles

July 2026

Before you wire anything

There are two versions of “joining a mastermind.”

One changes your business permanently. The other costs you \$10K–\$50K and twelve months of your life for a few Zoom calls and a Slack channel that goes cold in November.

The gap between them is not talent, not price, and not marketing. It’s whether the operator has actually **built the thing they’re selling access to** — and whether the room is designed to deliver three outcomes at once:

- **Results** — members visibly moving the metrics they came in to move. Miss this and the room has a churn problem you can see six months in.
- **Relationships** — members trust each other with the real numbers, the real fears, the real deals. Miss this and members extract what they need and leave.
- **Recreation** — members recharge inside the room. Miss this and the room delivers burnout on a schedule.

3 out of 3 is a compounding asset. 2 out of 3 is a leaky bucket. 1 out of 3 is a subscription you should cancel this quarter.

Here’s the tell: a great mastermind works like a **vortex** — the value pulls the right people in, and the pull gets stronger the longer they stay. A bad one works like a funnel — you’re poured in the top, squeezed, and dropped out the bottom.

The twelve questions below test for all of it. Ask them out loud, to the operator, before you pay. Score every answer: **Pass**, **Flag**, or **Fail**.

The 12 questions

1 • Track record

Ask: “How many masterminds have you personally run? How many have you been a member of? What did you learn from each one that changed the design of this one?”

Why it matters: Anyone can hang a shingle — the market does not police this. An operator who has run rooms before already made the expensive mistakes, and the design in front of you carries the scar tissue. If the model has never been stress-tested, you’re the test.

A good answer: Real numbers — ran X, member of Y — plus at least one specific design change that came out of a past room. Vague “years of experience” is a Flag.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

2 • Alumni

Ask: “Can I speak to three current members and one alum who left? Specific names, this week.”

Why it matters: A confident operator connects you with three members inside a week. And the alum who left will tell you more than any testimonial page ever will. If the operator resists, that IS the answer.

A good answer: Intros on the calendar within a week — including the alum, offered without flinching.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

3 · Case studies

Ask: “Show me three members whose businesses materially changed inside the room — with numbers.”

Why it matters: Numbers are religion. “Life-changing” with no figure attached is marketing copy, not evidence. Real rooms produce receipts: revenue moved, hires made, deals closed.

A good answer: Specific outcomes tied to real members — the same members you can cross-check against question 2.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

4 · Delivery cadence

Ask: “How many in-person events per year? How long? How often are the calls? What’s the median attendance?”

Why it matters: Median attendance is the tell nobody thinks to ask for. A room people quietly stop showing up to is already dead — whatever the sales page says. Delivery beyond a Slack channel is what you’re actually buying.

A good answer: A concrete calendar, and a median attendance number they know off the top of their head.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

5 · Room composition

Ask: “Who are the median 10 members? Revenue, stage, industry, temperament. Not the top 3.”

Why it matters: Every room sells you its top three members. You will spend the year with the median ten. If the operator can’t describe the middle of their own room, they either don’t know it or don’t want you to.

A good answer: A specific picture of the middle — and honesty about who’s NOT a fit for the room.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

6 · Membership cap

Ask: “How large will this room ever get?”

Why it matters: If the answer is “unlimited,” you have your answer. The operator’s attention is the constant and the members are the variable — quality flattens or degrades as headcount grows, and you’re the one subsidizing it.

A good answer: A hard number, and a reason for that number.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

7 · Pricing trajectory

Ask: “Are you raising or lowering the fee over time? Why?”

Why it matters: Most rooms raise your renewal once you’re invested, because switching costs make you sticky. That’s tenure taxed, not rewarded. Where the price is headed tells you exactly who the model is designed to serve.

A good answer: A direct answer they’re not embarrassed by — and any structure that rewards staying instead of punishing it.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

8 · Operator time allocation

Ask: “How much of your working year goes into this? What are you building the other months?”

Why it matters: An operator whose entire income depends on your renewal has an incentive problem. You want someone with a real business beyond the room — but enough of their year committed that delivery isn’t an afterthought.

A good answer: A straight percentage, and a straight answer about what the rest of the year builds.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

9 · Team

Ask: “Who supports the room besides you? Are there CSMs, developers, coordinators?”

Why it matters: One person can run calls. One person cannot run calls, events, member success, and build alongside members. If the answer is “just me and a VA,” delivery is capped at one human’s calendar — and you already know how that ends.

A good answer: Named roles doing named work. Not “my team” — WHO, doing WHAT.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

10 • Exit criteria

Ask: “When and why do members leave? What’s the healthy graduation path?”

Why it matters: A room designed only for retention is a trap with good catering. Healthy rooms know what “done” looks like. An operator who has never thought about this is optimizing for your renewal, not your outcome.

A good answer: An actual graduation story, told without defensiveness.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

11 • Refund policy

Ask: “If I show up and it’s not what you sold, what happens?”

Why it matters: The refund policy is the operator’s confidence, in writing. Vague terms mean all the risk is yours. This is a five-figure decision — you’re allowed to ask what happens if it’s not as advertised.

A good answer: Plain terms, stated before you pay. Not discovered after.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

12 • Their own coach

Ask: “Which room are you in right now?”

Why it matters: Every serious operator is in a room. If they’re not, you are their room. This single question flushes out more pretenders than the other eleven combined.

A good answer: A specific room, a specific operator, paid for with their own money — this year.

Verdict: ☐ Pass ☐ Flag ☐ Fail

The scorecard

Count your twelve verdicts.

- **12 Pass** — wire the check.
- **A Flag or two, zero Fails** — dig on the flags first. Flags are questions, not answers.
- **Any Fail — or the operator got defensive anywhere** — you’re looking at a marketing funnel, not a mastermind. Walk.

This checklist protects you either way. If another operator’s answers are cleaner than mine, join theirs. That’s the whole point.

For the record — how I answer these

You should get to score me too.

I've been part of 100+ masterminds — free and invite-only all the way up to \$100K a year — and started 25 of my own. Bali, Italy, Greece, Hong Kong, Phoenix, San Diego. We ran a weekly group with 530 members for years. I wrote two books on the model: *The 8-Minute Mastermind* and *Million Dollar Masterminds*, and I publish the methodology openly at buildamastermind.com.

My room: hard cap at 50 seats. Three in-person events a year, weekly calls, and a full team — CSMs and developers building alongside members. The price is \$25K for the year paid in full — which includes a 1:1 VIP session with me — or \$30K total on a payment plan. And your renewal drops 10% every year you stay. Tenure gets rewarded, not taxed.

Ask me all twelve. Ask everyone all twelve.

This checklist is free on purpose. The methodology behind it lives at buildamastermind.com, with live proof at 8minutemastermind.com and milliondollarmasterminds.com.