



Eight Steps to Starting a PASS Local Group

Interested in becoming a PASS Local Group? We recommend reading this 10-step guide to get a sense of the tasks involved in setting up a new Group.

1. Ask yourself the following questions

- Is there already a Local Group in your area? [Click here to locate Groups near you.](#)
- How many attendees will it take to make a new Local Group worthwhile? PASS Groups range from small study groups to groups with more than 100 attendees per meeting.
- Will I be able to get some help from other local SQL data professionals? You will need ongoing help, for sure.

2. Meeting venue considerations

- Inexpensive (or free!) - The lower the cost, the less fundraising you will have to do.
- How easily and frequently can you utilize the space.
- Internet connection availability and quality.
- Central location, ease of access.
- Access to Audio/Visual equipment.

3. Selecting meeting date and time

- Try and meet at the same time on the same day every month (i.e. 1st Thursday, 2nd Tuesday).
- Check your local meeting schedule to avoid conflicts with other meetings (i.e., SharePoint, Data Warehousing, .NET). Avoid the same evening, but also the same week if at all possible.
- Avoid competing cultural or sports events.

4. Create a web presence

- Free website hosting is available through PASS.

5. Find speakers

- Line up your first few speakers and topics. As you start to publicize the group, you will want your prospective attendees, sponsors, and future speakers to see that your new group is in it for the long haul.

6. Find sponsors

- If you have to pay for meeting space, or if you want to serve free refreshments, you will need one or more sponsors. There are various models. Some groups have ongoing sponsors (i.e., annual payments from sponsors), while others get sponsors on a meeting-by-meeting basis. Here are some options:

- Contact local consulting organizations.
- Reach out to vendors that sell SQL Server-related tools.

7. Get the word out

- Social Media and web presence is essential.
- Utilize PASS provided tools (event page etc.).
- Assemble your email list. Use tools such as Vertical Response or Constant Contact to monitor open and forward rates. Vertical Response provides free mailing for non-profits.
- Ask your speakers and sponsors to get the word out.
- Ask similar groups to mail their members.
- Capture names and emails of everyone who attends a meeting or expresses interest. This list is vital to the success and sustainability of your new Local Group.
- Use the email list you develop responsibly, and make sure people can opt out.

8. Engage via Social Media

- Set up Group accounts for Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook

PASS wants you to be successful. You are our direct connection to the local community. We will share your enthusiasm, and provide help wherever possible.

Please take some time to consider these 8 Steps before reaching out to PASS HQ at communityteam@pass.org to set up a meeting time to discuss your options.