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Questions 13-18 1 Read the article below about managing a small business and the questions on the opposite page. 2 For each question 13-18 , mark one letter on your Answer Sheet , for the answer you choose. The Difficulties Of Managing A Small Business Ronald Meers asks who chief executives of entrepreneurial or small businesses can turn to for advice. “ The organisational weaknesses that entrepreneurs have to deal with every day would cause the managers of a mature company to panic , ” Andrew Bidden wrote recently in Boston Business Review. This seems to suggest that the leaders of entrepreneurial or small businesses must be unlike other managers , or the problems faced by such leaders must be the subject of a specialised body of wisdom , or possibly both. Unfortunately , neither is true. Not much worth reading about managing the entrepreneurial or small business has been written , and the leaders of such businesses are made of flesh and blood , like the rest of us. Furthermore , little has been done to address the aspects of entrepreneurial or small businesses that are so difficult to deal with and so different from the challenges faced by management in big business. In part this is because those involved in gathering expertise about business and in selling advice to businesses have historically been more interested in the needs of big business. In part , in the UK at least , it is also because small businesses have always

preferred to adapt to changing circumstances. The organisational problems of entrepreneurial or small businesses are thus forced upon the individuals who lead them. Even more so than for bigger businesses , the old saying is true that people , particularly those who make the important decisions , are a business ' s most important asset. The research that does exist shows that neither money nor the ability to access more of it is the major factor determining growth. The main reason an entrepreneurial business stops growing is the lack of management and leadership resource available to the business when it matters. Give an entrepreneur an experienced , skilled team and he or she will find the funds every time. Getting the team , though , is the difficult bit. Part of the problem for entrepreneurs is the speed of change that affects their businesses. They have to cope with continuous change yet have always been suspicious about the latest “ management solution ” . They regard the many offerings from business schools as out of date even before they leave the planning board and have little faith in the recommendations of consultants when they arrive in the hands of young. , inexperienced graduates. But such impatience with “ management solutions ” does not mean that problems can be left to solve themselves. However , the leaders of growing businesses are still left with the problem of who to turn to for advice. The answer is horribly simple : leaders of small businesses can ask each other. The collective knowledge of a group of leaders can prove enormously helpful in solving the specific problems of individuals. One leader ' s problems have certainly been solved already by someone else. There

is an organisation called KITE which enables those responsible for small businesses to meet. Its members , all of whom are chief executives , go through a demanding selection process , and then join a small group of other chief executives. They come from a range of business sectors and each offers a different corporate history. Each group is led by a “ moderator ” , an independently selected businessman or woman who has been specially trained to head the group. Each member takes it in turn to host a meeting at his or her business premises and , most important of all , group discussions are kept strictly confidential. This encourages a free sharing of problems and increase the possibility of solutions being discovered.

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