

Basecamp: Ascent

Program Guidelines

Build the foundations of a great team

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Basecamp: Ascent is designed for Victorian founders and CEOs approaching a period of team growth. People leaders or senior operators may also participate where they hold meaningful responsibility for workforce planning, hiring or building a team.

Delivered as a short cohort-based program, Ascent combines a Kick Off, three live online sessions with practical tools, peer learning and an in-person closing event. It is designed to help participants apply the learning immediately to a live workforce or hiring decision in their own company.

Participants will learn how to:

- Identify when to hire and what capability is needed
- Design roles around business outcomes rather than job titles
- Use AI to rethink workflows, capability and role design before recruiting
- Prioritise and sequence hires against business goals, runway and growth milestones
- Build the foundations for effective onboarding, delegation and team performance

The program is fully subsidised by Innovation Victoria. Innovation Victoria does not take any equity in return for an eligible company's participation in Basecamp: Ascent.

To participate, eligible companies must have a current profile on Innovation Victoria's database powered by Dealroom.com.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Ascent is designed to be practical, interactive and immediately applicable. Rather than a webinar series, it is delivered as a cohort experience, so participants can learn alongside peers facing similar workforce challenges, test ideas in their own business, and build accountability across the program. Smaller breakouts or working groups may be used to create meaningful discussions and peer learning.

Learning and Development

1. **Three online sessions:** Participants take part in three facilitated 90-minute sessions delivered over three weeks. Sessions combine expert content, facilitated discussion, practical exercises and peer learning.
2. **Practical application:** Participants use their own business as the case study and complete short activities between sessions to turn concepts into decisions and actions.
3. **Program takeaways:** By the end of the program, participants will have developed a small set of practical tools tailored to their company, which may include:
 - Hiring Readiness Snapshot
 - AI Workforce Design Canvas
 - 6–12 month Hiring Roadmap
 - Role Prioritisation Matrix
 - Team Operating Principles

Cohort Environment & Chatham House Rules

Ascent is delivered in an interactive, discussion-based format. Participants are encouraged to share real company challenges and decisions. To support meaningful peer learning, cohort discussions are confidential, and participants are expected to engage with candor, respect, and constructive feedback.

Session Format & Facilitation

Program sessions are designed to be practical, interactive, and applied. Each session will include short facilitator-led content, supported by slides, alongside facilitated discussion, peer learning and hands-on work using participants’ own company context.

Participants should expect to:

- Engage with concise expert content and practical frameworks
- Take part in facilitated discussion and peer learning
- Apply tools and activities to their own company context
- Actively participate throughout each session

Facilitators may adjust session flow or emphasis based on cohort needs while maintaining the overall program objectives.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Component	Focus
Program Kick-off – 60-90 minutes	Meet the cohort, clarify your current workforce challenge, and prepare for the first session.
Session 1 – From Founder to First Team	Hiring readiness, founder bottlenecks, capability gaps, workforce planning and AI-assisted organisational design.
Session 2 – Hiring with Intention	Role prioritisation, outcome-based role design, sequencing hires, interviewing, and avoiding common hiring mistakes.
Session 3 – Building a Team That Scales	Onboarding, delegation, team operating principles, leadership habits, and planning for the next 6–12 months.
Closing Event – in person	Cohort is brought together to consolidate learning, build connections and connect with the broader Basecamp alumni and Innovation Victoria community.

TIME COMMITMENT

Ascent is designed for participants who are actively preparing to build or grow a team and can apply the learning during the program. Participation in all core sessions is expected.

Activity	Indicative commitment
Kick-off	60 -90 minutes
Three online masterclasses	4.5 hours (over three weeks)
Between session tasks and activities	Approximately 2–3 hours
Closing event	Approximately 1.5 hours
Total	Approximately 10 hours across five weeks

Participants are expected to bring real workforce and hiring decisions into the sessions, complete short activities between sessions and contribute to peer discussion and reflection.

WHO ASCENT IS FOR

Ascent is most useful for founders and company leaders with a genuine near-term workforce or hiring challenge who can apply the tools during or immediately after the program. It is not designed as generic HR training or for companies without the capacity to implement planned hiring decisions.

The objective of this program is to bring together participants who are at an appropriate stage of workforce growth and are likely to benefit from, and contribute to, the cohort learning experience.

1. **Stage and Readiness:** Applicants should be at a stage where workforce planning and hiring decisions are becoming a priority and be able to apply the program to a live workforce decision.
2. **Capacity to Participate:** Applicants should be able to commit to the full program and demonstrate the capacity to apply the tools and approaches introduced throughout the program.
3. **Relevance:** Applicants should demonstrate a clear workforce, organisational design or hiring challenge in the next 3- 6 months that align with the objectives of Basecamp: Ascent.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to the application process:

1. **Innovative Company:** A business developing new products, services, technologies or business models with strong potential for growth, commercialisation and market impact
2. **Victorian-based Company:** is an innovative established company that operates, is registered, or has a significant presence in the State of Victoria.
3. **Capacity to hire:** The company has sufficient funding or revenue to reasonably support planned recruitment in the next three to six months.
4. **Participant:** the person who will attend the program sessions.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

Basecamp: Ascent is designed for early-stage companies approaching a period of team growth, with a genuine near-term workforce or hiring challenge that can be worked on during the program.

To be eligible and selected to join the program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- preferably a founder/CEO; people leaders or senior operators are also eligible where they hold meaningful responsibility for hiring or building the team.
- the participant;
 - resides in Victoria, or
 - the participant's company is a Victorian based company.
- The participant's company;
 - intends to hire one or more roles within the next three to six months and/or;
 - has sufficient funding or revenue to support planned hiring.
- The participant's company has a current Dealroom profile.
- Participants can commit to kick off, three sessions, and the closing event.

Applications may be assessed progressively during the Application period. A waitlist may be used where demand exceeds capacity. Innovation Victoria may invite eligible portfolio companies and alumni to apply; however, all applicants will be considered through the same eligibility and assessment approach.

TIMELINE

Stage	Dates
Applications open	Monday, 12 October 2026
Applications close	Thursday, 29 October 2026, 1pm
Application assessment	Rolling during Application period
Participants notified	Tuesday, 3 November 2026
Kick Off (online)	Tuesday, 10 November 2026
Session 1 (online)	Wednesday, 18 November 2026
Session 2 (online)	Wednesday, 25 November 2026
Session 3 (online)	Wednesday, 2 December 2026
Closing event (in person)	Thursday, 11 February 2027

Note: From 6.00pm on 3 November 2026, the Victorian Government will enter caretaker mode ahead of the State Election on 28 November 2026. While this will not affect the delivery of the Basecamp Ascent program, some government communications and public-facing activities may be subject to caretaker conventions during this period.

APPLICATIONS

Applications must be received through the online Application form.

When we reach capacity, eligible applicants who can't be offered a place may be added to the waitlist and considered for future Basecamp: Ascent cohorts or other relevant Innovation Victoria programs. If a confirmed participant withdraws before Kick Off, Innovation Victoria may offer the place to an eligible waitlisted applicant. Participant substitutions require Innovation Victoria approval.

QUESTIONS?

For questions about the application process, eligibility or Basecamp: Ascent, please contact the Innovation Victoria programs team at programs@innovationvictoria.com.