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The Mingle Index: A Guide to Charlotte Area Tech Networking Groups and Regular Events

Networking

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By Courtney Gabrielson

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Don't be an innovator, entrepreneur or tech wizard in a vacuum.

An easy way to avoid this (besides checking out our monthly [Inno Approved calendar](#)) is getting involved with a tech-centric meetup group, a casual place for attendees to learn, network, create or just hang. Charlotte has plenty of these tech and business groups for every interest, focus or taste. We've highlighted some of our favorites below — a few of which, it's worth noting, are technically a bit more than meetup groups, but facilitate so many networking events we made room for them here.

Do note that these organizations and annual events aren't the only ones in Charlotte providing networking opportunities; often coworking spaces (see our guide [here](#)) or accelerators and incubators (think [Queen City Fintech](#); see that guide [here](#)) also offer events big or small. Eventbrite and [Meetup](#) also provide additional events and groups for every taste if you're still looking for something you don't see here.

Are we missing anything? Let us know [here](#).

- **1MillionCups (Charlotte)**

- **Who:** A host of community organizers work on these events.
- **What:** "As a program of the Kauffman Foundation, 1 Million Cups works with entrepreneurs, empowering them with the tools and resources to break down barriers that stand in the way of starting and growing their businesses. Mr. Kauffman believed it was a fundamental right for anyone who had a big idea to be able to bring it to life — and we're here to fulfill that mission."
- **Where:** Rotating locations.
- **When:** One morning, monthly.

Agile in Action

- **Who:** Kert, Anthony and Roger lead the Meetup group.
- **What:** "Agile in Action is a community of agile students, teachers, and practitioners who meet for two types of sessions: agile activities ... [and] field reports."
- **Where:** Rotating.
- **When:** Monthly meetings.

BLKTECH Interactive

- **Who:** Desmond leads the Meetup group.
- **What:** "We're creating an inclusive ecosystem of dope startup founders, committed leaders and engaged citizens moving North Carolina forward. Whether you are currently in business, wanting to take the leap into entrepreneurship or a working professional we open our doors as a safe space for you to develop, build and connect."
- **Where:** Rotating, but frequently at 1776 Statesville Ave.
- **When:** Multiple events per month.

BIG Council

- **Who:** Established by 13 "[Founding Trailblazers](#);" Terry Thorson Cox currently serves as its president and CEO.
- **What:** "Business Innovation & Growth, a membership nonprofit organization, aims to create an intimate community of like-minded, high potential entrepreneurs and provide a meaningful and rewarding peer-to-peer exchange among those facing similar challenges with growing their businesses."
- **Where:** 1431 W. Morehead St., Suite 102 Charlotte, NC 28208-5217
- **When:** Once monthly.

Carolina Black Professionals

- **Who:** Joseph Burton and a host of other organizers run the meetup event.
- **What:** "Our members seek personal and professional growth through exploring our area, exchanging ideas, and meeting exciting people. This is your opportunity to engage with others in the Black Community and explore the Carolinas (including Charlotte, N.C. and beyond); exchange ideas (personal and professional development); expand opportunities (employment and entrepreneurship); improve through exercise (fun fitness activities); meet exciting people (volunteering, networking and connecting)."
- **Where:** Multiple monthly events.
- **When:** Various dates and times.



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- **Charlotte Area Technology Collaborative**

- **Who:** N/A
- **What:** "The Charlotte Area Technology Collaborative brings together businesses, education, government and organizations to inspire and grow the advancement of a diverse and skilled technology pipeline."
- **Where:** Packard Place, 222 S. Church St., Suite 100, Charlotte, NC 28202
- **When:** Regular events.

Charlotte Asian Professionals

- **Who:** Harsimran Singh, Brandon Lee and others lead the Meetup group.
- **What:** "This is a group for Asian Professionals. As the diversity of Charlotte grows, I wish to build an Asian community that may share the similar interest of food or culture. But you don't need to be an Asian to join our group. We have members who have Asian stomach, or just simply like Asian cultures. Everyone is welcome to join us."
- **Where:** Multiple different monthly meetings.
- **When:** Rotating.

Carolina Fintech Hub

- **Who:** Chris Hart is CEO and Tariq Bokhari serves as executive director.
- **What:** "With a unique combination of banks, Fintech startups, and talent, the Carolinas provide a rich ecosystem for companies and individuals looking to build, learn or grow in the field." The entity including an annual Fintech Generations conference co-sponsored by [Finsiders](#).
- **Where:** 222 S Church St., Charlotte, NC 28202
- **When:** Various events at different times and locations.

Charlotte Internet of Things

- **Who:** Dan Thyer serves as organizer for this Meetup group.
- **What:** "The Internet of Things, IoT, is upon us in a big way and more objects are becoming embedded with sensors and gaining the ability to communicate. This group is for those who are excited about connecting disparate devices to one another ranging from wireless communication to the internet. Everyone is welcome from novices, hobbyists, makers, experts, wizards and the inquisitive."
- **Where:** Locations rotate.
- **When:** Monthly events.

Charlotte Professionals After Hours

- **Who:** Tara Phillips leads a team of other organizers on Meetup.
- **What:** "Be part of a fantastic networking group, where there are no annual dues and no required referrals to do business. But to help each other grow our businesses."
- **Where:** Various locations.
- **When:** Monthly events.

Charlotte Venture Challenge

- **Who:** A function of UNC Charlotte, event sponsors include National Science Foundation Innovation Corps, NC IDEA FOUNDATION, North Carolina Biotechnology Center and SBTDC.
- **What:** "At the 18th Annual Charlotte Venture Challenge, Ventureprise highlighted campus research, entrepreneurship and community startups."
- **Where:** N/A
- **When:** Annually, in the spring.

Charlotte Virtual and Augmented Reality Meetup

- **Who:** Led and organized by Steven Freund.
- **What:** "The Charlotte Virtual and Augmented Reality Meetup brings together like-minded individuals that see the potential of the emerging virtual reality/augmented reality industry. All levels of interest are welcome. Whether you are a developer, an enthusiast, or just want to try out VR for yourself, we encourage you to participate in the VR/AR movement."
- **Where:** Various locations.
- **When:** Typically once a month.



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10'000 Hours

- **Code for Charlotte**

- **Who:** Jill Bjers, director and brigade captain (along with Andrew Natoli) lead Open Charlotte, a "volunteer army uses its time and talent to make Charlotte a more open and accessible community."
- **What:** "Charlotte's center for civic innovation through design, data, education, and technology."
- **Where:** 1776 Statesville Ave., Charlotte, North Carolina 28208
- **When:** Community Nights meet monthly, as well as Hack Nights, Happy Hours, Project Nights and more.

Collective Hustle

- **Who:** Sam Smith, Founder & CEO, Vishion; Mary Johnson, founder and CEO of Brave New Word; and Aru Anavekar, co-founder & CEO of Botsplash are on the Collective Hustle leadership team. Interested participants [must request an invitation](#) on the group's website.
- **What:** "What is Collective Hustle? A Charlotte investor and startup coalition looking to improve the Queen City's entrepreneurial ecosystem." It boasts pitch competitions, panel events and more.
- **Where:** Various locations.
- **When:** The group meets typically once a month.

- **CreativeMornings**

- **Who:** Matt Olin, co-creator of [#ToAMorePerfectUnion](#), serves as event host.
- **What:** "CreativeMornings/CLT gives our city's fast-growing creative set a place to call home — to gather each month to get inspired, support each other, forge relationships and collaborate. We're committed to showcasing Charlotte's creative thinkers, makers and doers on a global level." Coffee and breakfast provided.
- **Where:** Rotating.
- **When:** One morning every month.

Digital Summit Charlotte

- **Who:** The event, run by Digital Summit, attracts markets who are "the movers and shakers influencing the growth and success of their company's digital marketing — and the future landscape of the digital economy."
- **What:** "The definitive digital marketing gathering." Digital Summit has locations throughout the country."
- **Where:** The Charlotte Convention Center.
- **When:** 2019's Summit runs Oct. 2-3.

• **EO Charlotte**

- **Who:** Part of the global Entrepreneurs' Organization network; for founders who meet certain qualifications.
- **What:** "The Entrepreneurs' Organization is a global, peer-to-peer network of more than 14,000+ influential business owners with 188 chapters in 58 countries. Founded in 1987, EO is the catalyst that enables leading entrepreneurs to learn and grow, leading to greater success in business and beyond."
- **Where:** N/A
- **When:** Regular monthly events.

eWomenNetwork

- **Who:** Melissa Taylor serves as managing director.
- **What:** "At eWomenNetwork our purpose is to support, promote and showcase our members' products and services and to help them achieve their professional goals."
- **Where:** Various locations.
- **When:** Weekly events.

Finsiders CLT

- **Who:** Jason Malo and others run Charlotte's iteration of the international group.
- **What:** "Come together to discuss the intersection of banking, design, and technology in creative spaces, with inspiring people, talking about really interesting and global topics, with a few drinks to boot. Casual, entrepreneurial, inquisitive minds are welcome!"
- **Where:** Rotates.
- **When:** Rotates.

Forward Faster Breakfast Series

- **Who:** David Phillips and Dan Black of Faster Glass Consulting
- **What:** Forward Faster is perfect for those who wish to be inspired by new information, perspectives and approaches. Each event focuses on a particular mindset, technique or application of Design Thinking in the Innovation space. Together we explore how the discipline can fuel business, civic and social innovation. All levels of experience are welcome from curious to crackerjack.
- **Where:** The McColl Center for Art and Innovation.
- **When:** Second Fridays, monthly.

hackathon CLT

- **Who:** Abhishek Mehta of Tresata and Jim Clendenen of Harris Teeter founded the event; Sherrell Dorsey and Brittany Box of Tresata organized it and Holly Eskridge of the city of Charlotte served as its advisory board.
- **What:** "hackathonCLT continues to educate, challenge, entertain and inspire innovation and engender productive, positive, tech-powered dialogue in the latest tech hub in America."
- **Where:** Discovery Place.
- **When:** This is an annual event.



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- **I Heart Gigabit**

- **Who:** N/A
- **What:** "A community focus[ed] on making Charlotte the crown jewel of Gigabit internet cities." Offers newsletter and blog as well.
- **Where:** N/A
- **When:** Regular events.

LaunchLKN

- **Who:** Erica Madden serves as the executive director of LaunchLKN; it has an additional board of directors.
- **What:** "LaunchLKN is a collaborative community of entrepreneurs, mentors, and community leaders dedicated to sharing knowledge and motivating growth." It's focused on the communities of Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson and Mooresville.
- **Where:** The Hurt Hub@Davidson, located at 210 Delburg St., Davidson, NC 28036.
- **When:** Events range in content offering and frequency.

PitchBreakfast

- **Who:** Founded by Vic Howie, with Juan Garzón serving as executive director, the event is free for audience members.
- **What:** "At each event (monthly in Charlotte, quarterly in Asheville and Charleston), we feature three to four startups who pitch their companies to the audience and a panel of experts we put together. In our standard format, each startup is given five minutes with slides to pitch followed by 10 minutes of feedback and Q&A with our panel and audience. Breakfast and coffee are provided, courtesy of our sponsors."
- **Where:** PitchBreakfast travels to Asheville and Davidson, but meets at The Garage at Packard Place for its Charlotte meetings.
- **When:** Its Uptown Charlotte events occur the second Wednesday of every month.

- **Startup Grind**

- **Who:** The Charlotte chapter is led by director Robert Ingalls, with sponsors including Google for Startups.
- **What:** "Since launching in 2014, the Charlotte Chapter of Startup Grind has hosted events featuring successful entrepreneurs from all over the world."
- **Where:** Meeting locations change.
- **When:** There's no set schedule.

Tech After Five

- **Who:** Founded by Phil Yanov, "a technologist with personality."
- **What:** "We create meaningful connections through live, face to face networking events." It also offers a podcast and newsletter.
- **Where:** Greenville, S.C.; Charleston, S.C., Columbia, S.C. and Charlotte.
- **When:** Once monthly in all four participating cities.

Tech Talent South— Charlotte

- **Who:** Tech Talent South behind the events. Their "mission is to develop more tech talent in the South through immersive beginner-focused programs teaching web development and computer programming."
- **What:** "Our meetups center around our goal to contribute to the local tech and startup scene in Charlotte. Through free community events we connect with people who share these interests to provide valuable information and new knowledge, as well as our course offerings."
- **Where:** Various locations.
- **When:** Typically weekly.



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Morsa Images

- **Techstars — Charlotte**

- **Who:** Led by a local team of thought leaders.
- **What:** "Techstars supports new ventures, provides resources for entrepreneurs, and connects the community. Charlotte is a part of a global movement dedicated to ensuring that anyone can experience entrepreneurship, no

matter where they live. We're fully driven by local volunteer efforts, being led by the best and brightest Charlotte's entrepreneurial community has to offer."

- **Where:** N/A
- **When:** N/A

Third Thursday Legal Lunch

- **Who:** N/A
- **What:** "Third Thursday Legal Lunch is a recurring monthly event that provides practical legal information relevant to entrepreneurs and startups."
- **When:** The third Thursday of every month.
- **Where:** Packard Place (or Facebook Live for remote viewing).

Women Entrepreneurs of Charlotte

- **Who:** Jerilyn McDonald serves as the group's organizer.
- **What:** "Welcome all lady entrepreneurs! We are a women based networking group (but men are welcome) that helps one another grow our businesses. Small \$3-\$5 fee per meeting. You can also find us on Facebook while attending a meeting. Networking events are posted regularly."
- **Where:** Monthly.
- **When:** Various locations.

Women Who Are More Than Their Day Jobs

- **Who:** Stacy Cassio organizes the group.
- **What:** "This Meetup is for women looking for professional inspiration and passion! Each month we visit a small business founded by a woman to learn about the business and the path it took to get there. Come and be inspired to follow your passion and purpose, and meet the ladies who will support you along the way. Leave your day job behind (at least for the day!) And explore passion, purpose, and entrepreneurship!"
- **Where:** Various locations.
- **When:** Typically monthly.

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