



Small Business Services: Unique Challenges.

Many small businesses owners are aware that top executives of major companies use personal coaches to help them achieve their leadership goals and increase the bottom-line success of their firms. Yet small business owners generally do not consider the advantages of working with a personal coach and applying organizational development principles to their own companies. Since they face many of the same challenges as corporate leaders - and some challenges unique to their domain - they too can benefit greatly from bringing an experienced professional coach into their business environment.

Alone at the top.

Often the individual business owner, alone at the top, finds that simply running the business day-to-day demands all of his or her focus. Taking time out to assess the health of the firm, address long-standing problems, and plan for future growth - all these activities are pushed to the bottom of the to-do list. As years go by, various management, people, and/or operational problems can become entrenched, interfering with running a successful business. In partnership-led businesses, long-term relationships between the partners can engender complex tensions that limit the achievement of objectives and, at times, seem to defy resolution. Sometimes these factors create much more on-the-job stress than the pressures of the marketplace.

The entrepreneurial profile.

While many business owners find the constantly changing market environment difficult to navigate, entrepreneurs relish these very challenges. Creative, flexible, willing to take risks - the entrepreneur thrives during the phase of business development where the idea is born, the concept is sold, and the product is introduced into the market. But when the business begins to grow, a different set of management abilities and operating processes come into play to take the business to the next level. The entrepreneur's ability to communicate, delegate, make decisions, and measure impact becomes vital to continued success. The business response to change needs to be orderly and integrated to be effective: procedures need to be regular and consistent; performance has to be managed; strategies have to be well thought out and methodically executed.

A coach is an ally.

An effective way to face the issues unique to your business is to recruit the services of a professional coach. A coach is your enlisted partner on your personal management team. A personal coach's only agenda is to help you assess how your business is operating, to identify issues that drain time and energy, and to help you develop an action plan that addresses impediments to achieving your business goals. A personal management coach can be a vital ally in running a business - an important voice that poses the critical question, engages in the difficult dialogue,

provides the missing information, or offers the unexpected solution.

Coaching is not just about "people" issues.

Although it is important for both owners and coach to understand the people issues, the root causes of problems as well as their solutions often are found in the organizational structure and operating processes that are at the core of the company. Like larger corporations, small companies need to grow and respond to changes in the market place and the forces of competition. They also need to recruit, train, manage and develop loyal, competent employees. How responsibility is delegated, expectations communicated, decisions made, and problems resolved create the culture of the company. Who has authority over what? What are the standards of behavior that determine how people are expected to work together and serve customers? Discovering the answers to these questions, and closing the gaps between the desired and present cultures, often creates an environment where interpersonal issues diminish or disappear.

We believe that addressing the people issues in conjunction with the organizational issues is the most effective way to help small businesses, be they individually or family owned. Our consultants are seasoned professionals with a combination of training and experience in management coaching, team building, organization development, and psychology, with a track record of having helped individuals and families with their interpersonal issues.

Our approach.

We begin by assessing your needs and developing a plan that clearly establishes mutual expectations for working together. Some of the areas we can help you with include:

- Resolving interpersonal conflicts and building partnerships
- Making timely decisions
- Creating processes and procedures
- Developing management skills
- Improving interpersonal communication
- Transferring leadership and managing succession
- Raising employee morale
- Managing performance

Our bottom line: achieving results for you.

Efforts to change or improve the performance of an organization, a team, or an individual are only as cost-effective as the results they deliver. We measure the success of our efforts by the achievement of clear goals and objectives. Our training and experience make us sensitive to your privacy and enable us to earn trust and gain cooperation, identify and address impediments and resistance to change, and follow through on action plans. At the same time, we partner with our clients to make sure that our efforts make sense, add value, and are well managed. Our goal is to help our clients become self-sufficient in pursuing their goals; our attitude is that we are guests in your organization, facilitating your development initiatives.