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In the New Economy, owning and operating a business is certainly not easy. There are improvements to be made, employees to train and a market to keep track of. Not surprisingly, **59 percent of small business owners said it is harder to run a business now than it was just five years ago**, according to a recent infographic from Constant Contact. Difficulties aside, 72 percent of SMBs expect their revenue this year to outperform last year, so there is certainly a reason these small-business owners are in the game.

How do companies differentiate themselves from competition? Executive business coaching has proven to be just the secret weapon to not only set the organization apart from others, but grab more of the market share in the long run.

Business coaching for executives can bring a 5 to 1 return on investment,

**Boosts productivity by
nearly 90 percent!**

according to The Manchester Group, with training alone, increasing productivity by 22 percent. Training, when done in concert with coaching, boosts productivity by nearly 90 percent.

Most business executives are so busy running their organizations tactically that time put aside to work on the strategic aspects of their company is extremely limited if not non-existent. According to a report from the National Federation of Independent Business, 83 percent of SMB owners are owner-managers, while only 8 percent are owners but not managers. This means they take on a litany of tasks that don't center on pushing the organization forward strategically.



About 10 percent of business owners' time is spent on planning or strategy, which may leave the company lacking a true vision to excel.

What can a coach do for your company?

While the business owners are busy, they need to formulate ways to move forward. No one knows more about the company than the owner, but small-business owners may need some assistance to grow profitability. A business growth expert can help company owners strategize on how they can expand, and coaches can act as a sounding board for new ideas about what may work in the business world.

It is short-sighted not to adopt a coaching solution. While many may think they are extremely crunched for time, modern technology can bridge the gap between coach and business to help them meet on a consistent basis. According to a Right Management Consulting survey, as printed in "The Other Side of Leadership Development" by Donna J. Bear, 94.3 percent of coaching can be done virtually, so not having any time is no longer an excuse; businesses need to figure out a way to get an edge on the competition any way they can.



Although many think they can go through the business world by themselves, having someone's ear for feedback and expert stance for guidance can provide a **powerful competitive edge**. Growth coaches and executive consultants connect with small-business owners as needed versus the high costs of full-time staff members with the same level of experience. Coaches let the owner know he or she is on the right track, provide avenues to fix issues, and hold them accountable to reach particular goals they just never seem to get to.

Here are some benefits of having a business coach as your and your company's "secret weapon" for continued growth and success:



KEEPING GOALS: One thing that often gets lost in companies, no matter how large or small they are, is the ability to set the right goals that matter. A report by Merrill C. Anderson called "What ROI Studies of Executive Coaching Tells Us" showed that when expectations are in place, such as increasing the number of high-potential leaders who are ready for promotions within the company by 10 percent, a coach comes in and holds the organization's feet to the fire in regard to meeting this exact type of goal. Instead of procrastinating when it comes to meeting objectives, a coach frequently reminds business owners that this is something they set out to do and is integral in assisting them to meet their goals by working out an action plan together and the necessary policies and procedures required to follow through on it. The 3Ps of successful businesses are a time-tested tool for affecting influential, sustainable changes.

“Communicating this clear link to business leaders, coaches and clients reinforces in their minds that coaching is not only a developmental initiative, it is a business initiative,” Anderson said. “Coaching is therefore in a stronger position to be perceived as adding value to the business as well as to the individual participants.”

By setting these goals and periodically meeting to make sure progress is being made, development objectives for the company and clients it works for can be met more easily, according to Anderson.



CONSISTENT MEETINGS: Instead of making goals or having ideas and forgetting about them, a business coach is there for company leaders on a consistent basis. From this, the organization gains better sense of where it

needs to go, which means small to medium-size business owners realize they do not have to struggle alone. This goes back to simply having someone to speak with, as leading a company can be a lonely venture. Meeting with someone and having them listen to ideas without worry of judgment can help take a great weight off the mind of business owners. Confidence is an important factor in running a business.

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CHALLENGING BUSINESS OWNERS: One potential danger of not having an outside coach is that relying on internal feedback (from your own employees or even peers) may leave one wondering if everyone is acting as a

75 executives at six different Fortune 100 companies noted a big benefit of coaching was the challenging feedback

"yes-man." This can take a company sideways rather than forward because success may be fleeting if it isn't backed up with perspective, asking the hard questions, and challenging ideas. Having a coach to ask if anything different or more can be done with an idea can mean a more well-tested and likely more successful venture. Even more so, business owners will not waste valuable time, energy and income on the wrong endeavors.

According to a report from the Manchester Consulting Group, 75 executives at six different Fortune 100 companies noted a big benefit of coaching was the challenging feedback they received which could help lead to enlightening behavioral or business changes. This is something that brings true return on investment to a company and shows great results immediately.

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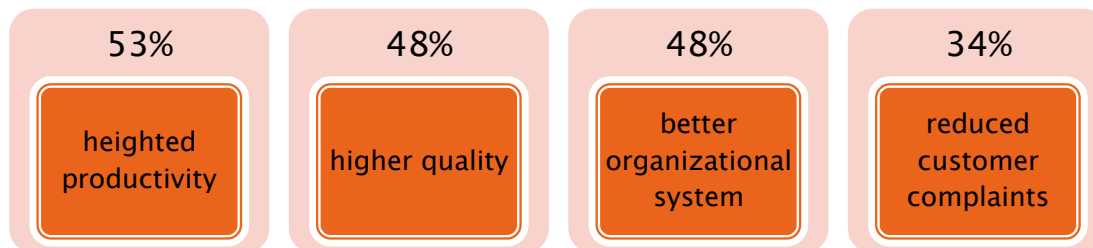
POINTING OUT MISSED CONCERNS: In every industry, there are areas which will more than likely boom or bust at some point. However, as mentioned earlier, small business owners are often so busy maintaining the "status quo" that it can be difficult to capitalize on new opportunities for revenue growth or make being nimble enough to do so a top priority. CEOs notoriously get

distracted by the immediate fire in front, rather than the long-term, revenue-generating goals that will ultimately make or break the business.

The U.K. Department for Business Innovation and Skills said hiring a business growth coach provides companies with a way to find areas where there could be potential for big-time growth or investment and, even more importantly, drive the organization's owners effectively toward it. There may be business owners who are good at multitasking and growing their companies even if they are busy, but what may take a busy entrepreneur months of research and learning could more feasibly be accomplished by merely bringing in the expertise and wider resources of a business growth coach.

What results can be expected from enlisting a seasoned business coach?

Any new initiative a business adopts needs to bring one thing: **RESULTS**. Coaching does just that, and a report from Anderson and MetrixGlobal found that results included:



Many companies find that other results fit their bill better:



IMPROVED DEVELOPMENT OF TALENT: With so many demands on business owners' time, there may not be enough opportunities to pass down pertinent knowledge to employees who one day could have a bigger stake in running the company. A report from the Hay Group, which dealt exclusively in speaking with Fortune 5000 organizations, found that 21 to 40 percent of business leaders utilize some kind of executive coaching, as this is seen as the standard leadership tool in these businesses for new employees and long-standing professionals.

The Hay Group said coaching is about building relationships that promote change and improve people, thereby maximizing their potential. The ability for

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the business owner to perhaps even become a stronger mentor and teacher to other employees can help build confidence across the organization.

Through the coaching process, business owners find a more pronounced place as effective leaders within their organizations. **This prepares employees to help with:**

- ✓ Fact-checking, planning and reflecting on what can be done before they meet with the leader
- ✓ Figuring out techniques to make the conversation move more easily
- ✓ Taking a more positive attitude toward the

meeting for optimal results

- ✓ Knowing what steps can be taken during and after the conversation to grow

EXTREME IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS' STRATEGY: As we now know, tactical issues take up a large amount entrepreneurs' time. Day-to-day tasks, while extremely important, are not as likely to grow the business over the long haul. A report from MetrixGlobal found 58 percent of clients whose coaching experience was limited to tactical issues saw significant improvement after receiving coaching, and 100 percent of organizations focusing on strategy saw noted advancement.

Taking time to work closely and honestly with a coach to learn what steps are needed to improve the business' strategy will likely have a large impact on how the company runs now and in the future.

100 percent of organizations focusing on strategy saw noted advancement

The International Coach Federation said in its “2013 Organizational Coaching Study” that conversations about business growth have never been more vital to enterprises trying to expand. Leadership development, performance, increased levels of employee engagement and better teamwork are all improvements derived from business coaching that should have a great effect on the company's strategy.

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GETTING A GREAT MONETARY ROI: The Harvard Business Review said the average coach costs about \$500 per hour, and as previously mentioned by The Manchester Group, there can be as much as a 5 to 1 ROI or greater from the relationship between coach and business. Like anything else, the business must look for the right qualifications in its business coach, such as certification and business experience within the same lines or verticals. Most impressively, **Anderson's study found coaching can lead to an ROI of up to 788 percent.**

“The ICF Global Coaching Client Study Executive Summary” found that 86 percent of people who are able to provide numbers for the effect of coaching at least saw a 100 percent return on their coaching investment, and a 19 percent indicated an ROI of at least 50 times the initial investment. Another 28 percent said they experienced an ROI of between 10 and 49 times the investment, with a median return of 700 percent.

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GAINING PRODUCTIVITY: Losing time may be one of the biggest problems business owners and their employees face in terms of revenue sinkholes, but the American Management Association's "Coaching: A Global Study of Successful Practices" found that 79 percent improved individual performance and productivity by implementing business growth coaching. In addition, 56 percent were able to improve organizational performance, 44 percent were able to address workplace problems and 41 percent said they boosted employee engagement.

Six out of 10 participants in the survey said they also wanted to increase their individual worker skill level by bringing in executive coaches. By adopting coaching, businesses train employees to be more self-aware, well-educated and attentive to give higher quality work.

Conclusion

More frequently than ever, savvy entrepreneurs and business leaders are looking to executive business coaches to help them take ground from the competition. Instead of waiting for other companies to move in on the trend, organizations should look to hire their own business growth coaches to be sure they are far ahead of the curve versus being left in the dust. Benefits to doing this can include pointing out areas they may have previously missed, keeping and meeting goals to help grow and expand the business' inner-workings, driving revenue and implementing a far better and more competitive business strategy moving forward.

By 2018, the AMA's report establishes that the need for coaching will continue to rise. Professional coaching is focusing its services on smaller and mid-level organizations, meaning having a coach on the side of business to navigate the competitive market will be essential.

Metrics that determine the productivity and ROI of coaching require continued refinement, so companies should constantly innovate ways they might be able to better establish the tangible business benefits of coaching. On the plus side for businesses, AMA's report said agencies will become better at measuring performance. The industry is on the upswing; it will be up to business owners to catch the wave at the start and ride it to the apex of success prior to being unseated by competitors who caught on more quickly.

Playing catch up in today's economy is just not going to be the place owners want to be running their businesses from when the market is hard enough as it is. Entrepreneurs must be able to set themselves up for as much success as possible in a hard-nosed world of business, and leadership and skills-based coaching does just that.

Get the coaching help you need right now by starting with a FREE Growth Coaching session from a Chet Holmes® Method™ trained Executive Growth Coach- [CLICK HERE](#) to get started.

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