

Why Choose Coaching for your Business, and How to Choose the Right Coach for You...

Level Up is a business coaching and mentoring practice based near Langport in Somerset.



Started in 2006 by Graeme Crosbie, they have successfully coached and trained hundreds of family businesses across the West Country for growth, greater profitability, better lifestyles and successful exit.

Level Up is delighted to offer a FREE one-to-one business review consultation to any business in the West Country. Simply call on 01458 253366 or contact us through our website levelupbusiness.co.uk to arrange a meeting.

Sports stars have sports coaches, singers have voice coaches. So if it works for them, why shouldn't Business Coaching work for Business Owners? Well the truth is, it does ... but only if you really want it, need it and choose the right coach.



As at Jan 1st 2014, I've officially been a Business Coach for 7 years. Well, at least that's what it's said on my business card, on my websites, on my Social Media profiles .. everywhere. But what does it mean? What do clients get when they engage a Business Coach?

And herein lies the real challenge. There are probably about as many different takes on Business Coaching as there are Business Coaches in the world. And I strongly suspect that the only people who use the expression 'Business Coaching' are business coaches and their clients. Sadly - perhaps only for me - Business Owners not already in the know are unlikely to wake up one morning and say to themselves 'What I really need in my life is a Business Coach'.

So what are they waking up and saying to themselves?

Perhaps they are looking at their current situation and saying "I don't know how to get out of this". In which case, maybe they'll look for Training.

Alternatively they wonder, as they brush their teeth, "Am I still going to be doing this same old, same old in 10 years time?" So they go to their smart phones and google "Business Planning".

They could be thinking "I'm running out of Ideas" (Consultant?), or "I'm running out of Motivation" (Mentor?), or "I need to run this past someone" (Advisor?). They may even be thinking "I need someone to help me keep on track" - in which case they might just think "Coach".

Within a corporate environment, it is quite feasible for individual specialists in each of these areas to be available on tap when it's needed. Training departments, Mentoring schemes, Steering Groups, Mastermind Groups, Executive Coaches, Non-Exec Directors. Corporates have the scale to be able to provide this resource to their organisation. But how many SMEs can afford to do this for their own small team?

And that, to my mind, is where high quality Business Coaching comes in. The Coach works with the Business Owner to identify the differing needs in each area of the business operation, and is able to provide the right type of support at the right time to the Business Owner and his senior team. From skills training, through business planning, to mentoring and advice ; providing the tools to measure and monitor progress, the signposts and access to the right resources, new ideas and insights from their own experience and learning, the accountability to make things happen, and the objectivity to challenge behaviours, actions and decisions.

In short, the right Business Coach is the person who enables the Business Owner to become a better Business Owner and who enables the Business to become a more successful Business. Or, put another way, the person who allows the Business Owner to get Better Results.

So, here are the 7 questions that every Entrepreneur should be asking when considering engaging a Business Coach ... and why it's important

1. Do I want a different result from my business in 12 months time?

If you don't want improvement or growth, just carry on doing what you're doing and you'll get more or less the same results.

2. Am I prepared to change the way I do things in order to get that result?

In the same vein, doing what you always did will get you what you always got - so if you want a different result, you're going to have to do things a bit different. If you're not open to change, then no coach, trainer or advisor is going to do it for you.

3. Does the prospective coach understand the whole business, not just a particular area or function?

A change in one part of the business - for example Sales - will have a knock-on effect in other parts - for example, Production or Cashflow. Does he/she understand this and can he/she help you cope with that knock-on effect ?

4. Does the prospective coach have a track record of getting results with his/her clients?

There's a difference between having knowledge and getting results. You can be blown away by someone who clearly knows more about business than you do, but if they are not capable of transferring that knowledge into lasting change in a variety of businesses, you'd be best advised to ask them what books they have read and buy those instead. Ask for references and follow them up.

5. Does the prospective coach ask questions that make you feel uncomfortable?

An initial meeting with a coach should not simply be a cosy chat. They should be testing your coachability as much as you are assessing them as a potential supplier. The best coaches are the ones who recognise that making you feel comfortable will not move you forward one iota - see question 2 above...

6. Does the prospective coach ask you more questions than he/she answers?

Beware the Management Consultant in Coach's clothing. Someone who comes in with all the answers is unlikely to bring you lasting change in your business for your sake. An effective business coach is there to help you access all the right tools, resources and knowledge to take your business where you want it to go. If your prospective coach is asking intelligent questions and is obviously listening to your answers, then he/she is much more likely to deliver a satisfactory result than someone who has their own ideas and own agenda

7. Can I get on with this person through thick and thin?

A proper coaching relationship is not a short term hit. It takes 4 - 7 months on average to start seeing lasting, tangible change take effect within a small business (even though there might be some good quick wins in the early days too), and the path to lasting change is rarely a smooth one. Between Coach and Coachee, you need to be able to maintain a positive attitude, mutual respect and a friendly, cooperative working relationship. If you have any doubts about that, then you'd be best advised to keep looking till you find the right person