

Business Coaching – does it work for country businesses?

By Dr Kristy Howard – Inspiring Excellence

Business Coaching – sounds like something for city business people in suits with six figure incomes. But is it really?

Business Coaching has been used in corporate and business services for many years with much success. Studies¹ have shown that coaching helps businesses and their people:

- Achieve their personal and business goals faster
- Improve their business and personal performance
- Decrease their levels of stress and anxiety
- To ultimately live more satisfying lives.

Does it work for self-employed business owners who live far away from the cities... and the suits ...and the income? Well it depends...

Are you your own boss (or want to be)? Do you want make more time for your family and self, have a better lifestyle or have more money while still running your own business? Did you start your business with a dream of a country lifestyle but found you are just as busy as ever still waiting for the income to exceed costs? If this sounds like you, then a business coach could be the answer.

What does coaching offer a country business owner?

It can be isolating, running your own business as there are few people to hold you accountable or to share your worries and concerns with. A business coach, like a sporting coach, is there to encourage and support you to achieve your potential, to plan your strategy and tactics, to get business fit. But like in sport, your coach doesn't run the race, you do and at the end of the day it's your victory.

Your coach can be someone:

- To bounce your ideas off who holds accountable for your actions.
- To challenge you to find solutions unique to your business.
- Who asks you the hard questions and gets you walk your talk and make the difficult decisions.
- Who takes you from where you are now to where you want to be.

The purpose of working with a business coach is to reduce the likelihood that you fall into common small business traps and to help you get to where you want to be....faster.

¹ Sheila Maher, MA., MBA. and Suzi Pomerantz, MT. (2003) The Future of Executive Coaching: Analysis From a Market Life Cycle Approach, *MCCInternational Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 2003, 1(2), 3-11

What country business owners have said about coaching.....

It made me actually do a proper budget for my business, something I'd been thinking about for awhile and knew I had to do. Now I have one to work to. Business Owner, Wangaratta

The most useful part of coaching was the ability to review current priorities and work through challenges. I have now set priorities and established long and short terms goals for my business. Business Owner, Beechworth.

The most valuable part of coaching was the ability to have someone hold up a mirror to my thought processes and ask salient questions that I then needed to answer. I now have the ability to forward plan and do cost projections. Business Owner, North East Vic.

What does coaching involve?

A coach is usually engaged to work with a client short-term (between 3 and 12 one hour sessions), either face to face, over the phone or using skype. Generally the first session is free, to allow the coach and coachee to assess if they are a good 'fit'. Most coaches offer between session follow-up via short phone calls or email and many offer links to other resources depending on the coaches needs ie worksheets, books, website links etc. The cost of coaching varies between \$150 and \$1000 per hour plus GST for a single session and most offer discounts for multiple sessions (called coaching 'packs').

How to find a good coach.

The easiest way to find a coach is by word of mouth from someone else who has used a coach. Other ways are via the web or advertisements in business publications. A reputable coach will have affiliations with coaching organisations such as the International Coaching Federation (<http://www.coachfederation.org/>) and will also hold coaching or related qualifications. They will also have referees and clients you can talk to.

Beware of the glorified consultant that starts off listening to your situation then tries to 'sell' you a system to solve all your problems or 'do' some of the work (at an additional fee). Genuine coaches tailor their coaching sessions to meet your needs and rarely 'sell' you anything extra unless you ask for it.

Think business coaching could help you?

If you are looking to take your business to the next level, push past the barriers that are holding you back and achieve your business and life goals, contact me for more information or to book a free coaching session.

Eight out of ten businesses fail in the first 10 years and over half in the first 5 years....don't be one of these business statistics – use a coach!

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