

Motivating leaders – where do you go?

Since commencing in my own business some 4 years ago now, there have been times when I have wondered how well I am actually doing. I know that my business is growing, but is it growing fast enough? I know that I am growing as an individual, but am I growing in the right direction? I decided some time ago to seek some outside help to really understand how I and my business were doing. I believe that seeking such help is a valuable exercise for any high performer or someone who wants to be. Spend the time and money investing in yourself and you will come out of the process understanding yourself – your strengths and weaknesses and how they impact on what you do and how you achieve. Let's face it; the recruitment industry is about achieving – achieving KPI's, revenue targets and outcomes. How do you measure your success?

Most of us have trouble with things that we haven't learnt how to do well yet, not things that we are unable to do. That's why I chose to work with a life and business coach. One of the things I realised was that some of the best opportunities are the ones we create for ourselves. I understand that success is 80% hard work and 20% luck and that sustainability is really what it's all about. I also learnt to manage around my weaknesses and focus on my strengths – not the other way around as I had been working up until that point.

I undertook an initial 3 month program and addressed two personal issues and one business issue. My coach believes that if you address the personal stuff first, some of the business related stuff will take care of itself. And so it did. At the end of the first three months, I was noticeably calmer, less stressed and grateful for the wonderful people I had in my life.

I believe as a direct result, the profit in my business increased dramatically by the end of that period. I became better at chasing outstanding debts and refused to discount my services. I realised that I needed to keep working with my coach on an on going basis and so signed up for regular meetings – in my case weekly, but I could have elected less frequent contact. I have just had a 3 month break from coaching but am about to go back to it again because I feel that I am ready for the next stage of my personal and professional growth. So how do you decide if coaching is right for you?

I looked at it this way – I have thought nothing in the past of hiring a personal trainer (fitness coach) to help me reach my fitness goals. I have also had many fabulous mentors during my recruitment career that I wanted to emulate. I also have a financial advisor (finance coach) who advises on investments and insurance. So without being conscious of the fact, I already had many coaches in my life who were experts in their fields. So for me, the decision to try life/business coaching was easy.

Selecting the right coach for you

Remember that like the recruitment industry, there are no barriers to entry for coaches so check out the credentials and methods of those coaches that you speak to before you select the one that's right for you. Coaches don't necessarily need recruitment industry experience, however if you can find one that has worked with recruiters before, it saves a lot of time in explaining jargon and the process behind what we do.

Working with your coach

As you probably already know, it's important to commit if a successful outcome is what you are looking for. That means that after each session you really do need to do what you have agreed to do. A coach won't do things for you, just keep YOU accountable for reaching the goals that YOU have said you want to achieve. It's also really important to keep the momentum going so try not to change/cancel appointments with your coach. Remember that you only get out of something what you are willing to put in!

Assessing your progress

It's important to assess your progress at regular intervals along the journey and your coach should help you do this. Recognise and reward yourself for how far you have come. One of my biggest hurdles was actually taking the time to reward myself for reaching particular milestones. My coach helped me take time to smell the roses.

Finally, coaching isn't for everyone. If you are looking for a quick injection of motivation then the results you seek may not happen as quickly as you would like them to because I found success came after the initial 3 month period.

Other ways to stay motivated

Why not consider joining a business club or SWAP (sales people with a purpose). I joined my local business club on the Central Coast last year. I wanted to know how other small businesses were doing as I really had no idea whether mine was successful or not in relation to other "like" businesses. The benefits in networking and meeting others like you really makes the cost worthwhile. The business club that I joined provided regular guest speakers – experts in areas such as marketing, PR, finance etc. Each and every meeting I came away having learned something that was of value to my development – both personally and professionally.

"Sharpen the saw" as Stephen Covey says. You must take responsibility for your own motivation and development. Don't rely on your company to invest in your development, go out and do it for yourself. If you are a manager and you are not reading a book a month, then you should be! Read books that will teach you something because "you don't know what you don't know". Books can provide incredible motivation to change things about yourself and your life. Learn from others – their journey and experiences. I particularly like reading autobiographies on successful people as a motivational tool.

Finally, remember that at the end of the day it's up to you as an individual to motivate yourself. No one can motivate you to do something that you don't want to do. Use the tools and resources available to assist you in staying motivated and enjoy your journey – don't just focus on the destination. ■



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