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Football, Baseball or Business... to Win the Game You Need a Coach

Written by Lisa Kanda

What would any sports game look like without each team having a coach? Really, think about this. How would the team players prepare for the game? How would they know what plays to execute? Do you think there might be chaos on the field?

Every great performer, professional athlete, business legend or performing superstar is surrounded by coaches and advisors. Do you know why? Because they know the key to their success is by having a coach. It's been proven and it would be foolish to think they could make it without one.

So why do businesses still hesitate from making this investment in their success? The number one reason is "they think they can do it themselves." Like professional athletes, business owners need a helping hand, an impartial third party to bounce ideas off of and to provide insights that wouldn't have occurred to them otherwise. That's where a business coach comes in. A return on investment study from Fortune 1000 companies showed an average of a 600% return on the dollars they invested in executive coaching. They saw specific improvements in productivity, quality, organizational strength, and customer satisfaction. Another study showed a 529% ROI directly attributable to coaching and other intangible benefits. When they included the savings from decreased turnover the number was 788%.

This means business coaching isn't a frivolous purchase – it's a well-thought out, sound investment in your company's future. Business coaching is like consulting, but the difference is business coaching helps the business owner discover what's wrong and how to fix it so problems don't arrive in the future. The benefits and rewards of having a coach far outweigh the alternative.

Q: "What should you expect from a business coach?"

- 1 Your coach is totally dedicated to accelerating your success and your sense of well being. They have no agenda except to help you and your business become the best it can be.
- 2 Your coach is not there to provide answers or solutions. They are there to help you increase your capability to overcome obstacles and achieve your goals.
- 3 Your coach is there to help you chart your course and accompany you on the journey to provide ongoing support, guidance and encouragement.

Coaching in not a quick fix; it is a process. Your coach should tailor your sessions based on the needs of the person or business being coached.

What is expected of you in the coaching relationship?

- 1 Find a business coach that is a good fit for you and your business. Ask for referrals or search the Internet – and look for testimonials from satisfied clients.
- 2 Expect to work hard with regularly scheduled sessions – either by phone or in person.
- 3 Expect to complete homework assignments in between sessions.
- 4 Expect to participate fully. A good coach will not tolerate procrastination or excuses.
- 5 Enter the process with honesty, a desire to excel, and the courage to change.
- 6 Understand what a coach can—and can't—do. Coaches help you move forward. If you have deeper issues, you may need to seek help from a therapist.

Having a coach makes you accountable for your actions. This is very different than being held accountable to a spouse, partner, or business associate. Your coach will require you to set goals and create action plans to achieve those goals – and keep you in line to achieving them.

Real success only comes from doing the work. Anyone who thinks they can get by just doing the minimum will not go far in today's global marketplace. The common theme for 2011 is you must do things differently to succeed in this changing environment. But many of us are not motivated or willing to work beyond what's ever been expected before – but there is no alternative choice. You must win. If you want to see results in your life and business, hire a coach. If you are happy with the status quo and not interested in working hard to achieve success, don't hire a coach. It's that simple.

Coaches come in all shapes and sizes, so a word of caution, do your homework. Many coaches offer a free consultation, so take advantage of this to see if this is a good fit before you make your final choice. ■



Lisa Kanda, Elkay Corporate Advisors specializes in leading, coaching, consulting and training businesses and individuals to help them be more effective and profitable. We use customized processes and practical guidance to help clients make strategic and informed decisions to achieve success faster and easier than they could on their own.

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732-963-9234

lisa@elkayadvisors.com

P.O.Box 3104, Long Branch, NJ 07740
www.elkayadvisors.com

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