
The “Accountability Factor” ... Here’s How to Make it Work for You and Your Business

Introduction

Is there a single word that can differentiate business coaching from business consulting?

Could that word also be one of the key factors you can use right away to help you grow and develop your business?

Yes, according to **ActionCOACH** founder Brad Sugars, who started the company back in 1993 based on a “coaching” system that relied on asking powerful and insightful questions combined with a process sadly missing in the majority of companies he worked with to that point.

“In a word, the difference for most businesses is accountability,” Sugars said.

“Accountability is also the main difference between coaching and consulting. It is this ‘Accountability Factor’ that keeps people on track and moving toward their business goals that really separates coaching from consulting.

“A good business coach will hold an owner accountable to goals and results. It’s also the factor that most people cite in deciding they don’t want a coach – mainly because they ultimately don’t want to be held accountable for producing results.”

Business “Freedom” – a “Double-Edged Sword”

Sugars also says the lure of freedom for business owners can be a “double-edged sword,” in that many owners mistakenly believe once they own their own company, they no longer have to be accountable since they don’t have a boss or superior.

“The reality is that a business owner does have a boss. It’s called the ‘marketplace,’” he said. “In that sense, accountability for the business owner is more critical than it is for many employees. For instance, if an employee makes a mistake, it can be covered up or another division can help mask that mistake’s effect on revenue or profit.

“However, if the owner makes a mistake, it can affect employees, vendors, suppliers and the owner’s company and livelihood.”

The desire to help business owners meet and overcome those challenges through the coaching process was the one of the driving forces behind Sugars’ decision to start **ActionCOACH**, which over the past two decades has expanded and grown into the world’s number one business coaching firm, with a network of more than 1,000 offices in 26 countries.

By offering a series of systemised business development programs and strategies that keep and hold owners accountable to benchmarks, metrics and measureable results, **ActionCOACH** can help move owners and companies in a new direction quicker and more effectively than many other business help advisory services or conventional business consultants.

“Coaching’s effectiveness relies on accountability, which is also a main source of resistance to coaching for many owners. They don’t hold themselves accountable, and being willing to have someone else do it for them can be a challenge – but the results we can deliver make the work worth it.”

Systems and Accountability

Another strength of the coaching process is the implementation of systems in all area of the business.

Not only do systems help save an owner's time, energy and money, they also help establish benchmarks and help keep an owner's focus on being accountable to numbers and metrics.

"Some owners who are sceptical about the coaching process will say, 'well, that system is easy to implement and I could do that myself,'" Sugars said.

"My response to that is always, 'well, have you to this point, and will you do it in the future?' The odds are, the owner won't."

"It's like having a personal training to help with a workout," he continued. "You are more likely to do something if you are being mentored and being held accountable for doing the work that needs to be done.

Plus, only a coach (and only a good coach) will hold you accountable to delivering on your own results."

The Value of Objectivity

While many owners bristle at the idea of having to report to anyone (after all, could “freedom” be one of the reasons you got into business for yourself in the first place?) – having an objective third-party person who is focused on helping you actually achieve what you’ve set out to do can have a massive impact on your business in a short amount of time.

For many owners, the idea of being held accountable for producing results hinders them from ever moving forward – because they mistakenly believe they should be free to act and do as they please, even if the business isn’t going anywhere.

The reality is, the freedom of business ownership only happens on the back-end, after the hard work is put in on the front-end.

“In most cases, owners work harder only if they are kept on track by a good coach looking over their shoulder,” Sugars said.

There’s also a harder reality to those who think they shouldn’t be accountable to anyone or anything.

“While some owners may not feel the need to report to anyone, the market place is always there, and it is the harshest judge of all,” Sugars said. “From that perspective, accountability is even more critical for an owner, especially if you have employees. An employee can make a mistake and not adversely affect a division or a company. But if you as an owner miss payroll or are late in paying a major vendor, you can put your entire company at risk.”

Ask any successful entrepreneur how he or she got to where they are today, and they will likely say they had someone they could count on to question them, drive them, offer answers and advice and support them in their vision for success.

“Occasionally, you’ll find someone who has succeeded entirely on their own without any support or guidance whatsoever,” he said. “But I’ve found over the years that’s extremely rare.”

Winners in Sports and Business are Led by Strong Coaches

Sugars also notes the similarities between sports and business in terms of winning and accountability.

“It’s been decades since any team or individual in any major sport has won a championship without a coach on the sidelines to guide training, strategy and game plans,” he said.

Likewise, very few, if any “champion” entrepreneurs reach the pinnacle of their industry without help and guidance.

“Even Bill Gates had a Steve Ballmer to drive him and to act as a sounding board,” he said. “Even Warren Buffet has a Charlie Munger who has a second perspective and ‘another set of eyes’ so-to-speak on their business and the overall economy.

“Even with all the knowledge possessed by Mr. Gates and Mr. Buffet, who are great visionaries and entrepreneurs, they were respectively guided and held accountable by Mr. Ballmer and Mr. Munger.”

So, Are You Ready for Business Coaching?

As an owner, you have to ask yourself if you're coachable – or at least willing to be coached.

That means admitting you don't know everything.

It also means being willing to implement new and sometimes uncomfortable ideas for you and your company.

You also need to be willing to do the work necessary to grow the company.

Why?

Because unlike a consultant who may do a project and leave, your Business Coach will educate you on strategy and process – and leave it to you to implement.

Your coach won't do the work, but will expect the work to get done.

For the coaching process, that's where accountability comes in and is key to your achievement and your company's ultimate success.

Your Next Step

If you are interested in improving your company at every level, business coaching may be the right fit for you.

Just as world-class athletes strive to get better by working with the top performers and coaches in their respective fields, more business owners than ever are looking to improve their “game” through coaching.

Just contact me for more information about how to hire a coach, or about group coaching events in your area.

Like a good athletic coach, a good business coach will push you to perform.

If you are ready to take your business to the next level, **ActionCOACH** is too – and will help you achieve the success you want for you and your company.