PEER RESOURCES Papers

Assess & Improve Your Company (By John Seiffer)

Reviewed by
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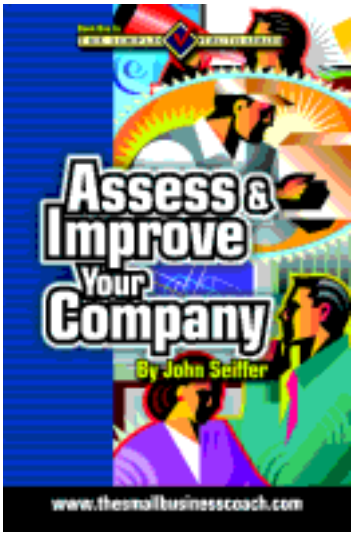

One of the biggest changes in the business world today is the growth of the small business, often propelled by a one-person operation. Yet of equal strength is the demise of the small business. Too often entrepreneurs have great product ideas and exceptional service, but they are not experienced in building a business. Usually this takes the form of working long and hard hours, reducing the amount of time spent with family and friends, and engaging in necessary business activities that seem to be far from what they are good at and truly enjoy doing.

Enter the business coach. Within the last few years more and more business owners are recognizing why top athletes, actors, and executives have a coach: to help them build on their strengths and abilities and maximize their use. The coach is a keen listener, asks powerful questions, acts as a cheerleader and sounding board, and provides the challenges necessary to bring out the business owner's talents, abilities, and wisdom.

Most coaching takes place on a one-to-one basis, typically in person or by telephone. Yet every now and then, published materials can provide valuable coaching and business owners can learn to coach themselves towards the results they want. One such publication is Assess & Improve Your Company authored by "America's Small Business Coach, John Seiffer <www.smallbusinesscoach.com>. In this 49-page booklet Coach Seiffer provides the same coaching process he offers to one-on-one clients, including the opportunity for interactive dialogue and self-assessment tools that provide feedback to uers.

Coach Seiffer believes that business owners need to attend to four simple, but all-encompassing truths. To be successful a company must have: an ownership focus (potential to provide what the owners want); an outward focus (an ability to provide value to the customers); an inward focus (ability to operate profitably); and a forward focus (responsiveness to changes and shifts that occur).

Each focus area in the booklet provides the reader an opportunity to learn about the importance of the focus, assess their progress or status within the area and develop strategies to improve or strengthen that focus. And each focus is detailed in simple, straight-forward language. There are no jargon or buzzwords and most of the booklet contains the kind of language that is more like a conversation or dialogue, making it easy to follow, yet yielding powerful results. At the same time it is the kind of booklet that is

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best read with a notebook at your side to write down the insights.

While the booklet has been designed for small business owners, that is people currently running a business or those considering such an activity, it can actually be useful to virtually anyone involved in business. Employed individuals will also benefit from the interactive exercises and the four-focus perspective. This book is an excellent coaching tool that can also be used as a supplement to an on-going coaching relationship.

The booklet is available from Decipher Publications <www.DecipherPublications.com>, 777 Federal Road, Unit 24A, Brookfield, Conneticutt 06804; Tel: (888) 656-6020; Fax: (203) 775-6671. The cost in the US is $12.95. You might want to consider ordering more than one copy.

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