

# The Business Coaching Handbook

Everything You Need To Be Your  
Own Business Coach

Curly Martin

“... a business owners conscience and a  
wake up call, all in one”

Carmin De Ieso

*The Business  
Coaching  
Handbook*

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Your Own Business Coach*

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All stories in this book are true but the names of the individuals concerned have been changed

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**Disclaimer Notice**

This book offers business information and guidance only and is not intended as direct advice. The author and publishers have no control over the way that you use the information contained within these pages – you alone are responsible for compliance with local rules and regulations, with governmental obligations and, equally importantly, for the outcomes of any actions that you take.

This book is a valuable guide and it is recommended that you always employ qualified professional specialist advice. Remember, the responsibility for the way that you apply the information contained in this book is yours.

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## *Introduction*

# *A very personal letter from the author*

*This introduction is a vital part of the book.*

Even if you typically skip pages like this, now is a great time to change the habits of a lifetime, because many of the following chapters will encourage you to make similar changes to your attitudes and beliefs about business. If you are totally new to the business world, they will ensure that you embark on the correct course from day one.

This introduction will help you get the optimum benefits from the ideas and concepts that follow, so stay with it for a few moments longer.

## *The Fun Begins*

This book has been compiled for business entrepreneurs who have recently achieved the first goal of getting the enterprise up and running, or have been operating their own professional practice or business for a few years and now want to take it to the next level. It can also be very beneficial if you are just dreaming about going it alone by creating your own business.

I recommend that you start with a glance through the synopses of each chapter first, so that you can prioritise or select those that are the most meaningful to you at the moment. If you have recently reviewed your current business and now have clear goals to work on, you can select the most appropriate chapters to support your plans. Perhaps you have been thinking of making some changes and want some inspiration or ideas on how to generate more

money – if so, simply select the chapter for your immediate needs. Your focus and needs will change as your business changes and evolves, and you will certainly change your priorities too.

If you have borrowed this book, apart from questioning your commitment, it is important that you return it to its owner in good condition, so resolve now to order your own copy today. If you have bought this copy, thank you and congratulations! Now I am about to send you shopping again.

It can be infuriating to read a good idea and then be unable to find it again later, so I invite you to buy a set of three coloured highlighter pens. As you read, use a traffic light system to mark the sections that apply to you. For example, you could select red for 'must do' items, yellow for 'should do soon' and blue for 'OK at the moment but may need attention soon'. Keep a pen with the book too, and then you can circle your significant page numbers as an additional rapid reference guide.

Ideas will come to you as you read and may well be forgotten by the time you turn the page. Ideas are as fragile as fluffy white clouds on an otherwise clear summer day, and will vanish almost before you can say 'look at that'.

Any one of those ideas could be a breakthrough moment of 'Aha' rainbow brilliance and far too valuable to lose, so acquire a notebook and use it to capture key word reminders of your ideas as you read. Then refer to it later when you have time to develop your ideas further.

Within each chapter are diagnostic question boxes which are designed to make you think about your business and prompt you to consider what could be done to improve it. Spend time with the questions and write the answers in your notebook along with any actions you need to take.

**DIAGNOSTIC  
QUESTION  
BOX**

**What are  
your plans  
for taking  
your  
business to  
the next  
level?**

At the end of each chapter there is a diagnostic action box along with a final page dedicated to your personal action boxes. These are designed to encourage you to commit to taking actions on the ideas and strategies you will have read. The diagnostic action box has suggestions of actions you might need to take. The last page of each chapter requires you to write the actions you want to take and to identify the dates by which you will have achieved them. The personal action boxes are deliberately small because they should work as an aide-mémoire and motivator. Make more detailed observations in your notebook as soon as ideas are generated. Using the action boxes and the notebook simultaneously will hold you to your commitments and act as your silent coach.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diagnostic Action Box</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Plan your succession arrangements when you plan your business</li><li>2. Consider how you can add value for the day you choose to sell</li></ol>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action I Will Take</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Completed on:</b> / /</p>
---

I have already given you several simple instructions and you will come across many more in each chapter. I have introduced them this early to establish a pattern. I can coach you to coach yourself, but unless you take positive action, we are both wasting our time. There, I have said it, that magic word 'coach'. Coaching may not be magic, but the outcomes it can create may seem nothing less than magical. This is an opportune moment to define what I mean by coaching.

## *Coaching Simplicity*

You will probably have come across coaching in a sporting context – business coaching and life coaching work just as effectively and in similar ways.

Your coach cannot do the work for you but can, and should, suggest where you direct your focus to gain the optimum benefit from doing what you do. Self analysis without a support system can be

# *Chapter Five*

## *From Lead to Sale*

*You have defined your ideal customer and have accurately targeted your marketing and publicity. Now on to the big step of creating the sales.*

### *Synopsis*

**You might be tempted to skip this chapter in the belief that you know all about ‘cold leads’, ‘referrals’ and all the standard textbook stuff. That would be a shame because how you classify your lead will determine how you follow it up, and how you follow it up can be the difference between a sale made and a lost chance.**

There was a company which made log cabins. To many prospective buyers they were simply ‘sheds with attitude’ but to the company founder Roger Bath, who was also the designer, every one was a miniature house. It had taken years of research, trial and error to create his range of cabins.

The prototype cabin was designed through the comparatively simple exercise of converting Roger’s concept into drawings and then building it. The first buildings were dismantled to see what modifications would be needed to create a prefabricated flat-pack. This necessitated several alterations, but Roger was careful to ensure they would not compromise the integrity and durability of his designs. Yet more changes were needed to allow the components to be securely contained on standard wooden pallets for delivery to customers.

By now the original retail price had gone through the roof. So it was back to the drawing board for a cost reduction programme. By standardising custom parts and applying cost engineering concepts, the product range was ready to launch into the top end of the market.



As the publicity programme was rolled out, Roger recruited two salesmen.

Tony was the first. Although he had no previous sales experience, he had been involved with the company since the earliest days when he had helped to source the raw materials. He knew the product inside out – literally! He followed up every lead as soon as he could and allowed his product knowledge and enthusiasm to do the selling for him. Customers chose to buy as opposed to feeling that they had been sold to.

George was the other recruit. He would tell anyone who would listen that he was a ‘born salesman’ who could ‘sell snow to the Eskimos’. He had sold encyclopaedias and vacuum cleaners door-to-door; he had sold double-glazing, loft insulation and even stone cladding when it was fashionable. George would group his leads around his busy social life and get to them ‘as and when’. Then, he delivered such a hard sell that many seriously interested prospects were turned off.

The leads and enquiries were evenly distributed to both salesmen. Within the first six months Tony, the ‘non-salesman’, had outsold George by a ratio of four to one.

George left in a huff, blaming everyone but himself for his dismal results. Tony, who had an instinctive understanding of lead conversion, is still with the company and is enjoying a good income with profit-sharing incentives.

Very few people truly enjoy selling and yet it is the key to any successful business. No cash comes in until your product or service is sold. Whether you like it or not, this is a fact of business life. Previous chapters have described strategies and techniques for getting enquiries from genuinely interested potential customers who are ready, willing and able to buy from you. You have already converted them from ‘suspects’ – the entire population of your catchment demographic or chosen reservoir of potential customers – to ‘prospects’, those who have a need that you can satisfy.

At this stage your prospects are simply leads. Figuratively speaking, you have told them that you are open for business and they

have checked you out. You are about to discover the next step, where you convert leads into selling appointments, telephoned orders or mailed-in orders with payment.

Not all of your leads are equal. Some are 'warm', for example, where personal recommendation has led them to you, and others are 'cold', where an individual has clicked the box on your website for more information or has responded to your advertisement out of curiosity.

If you are new to sales jargon, let me give you some examples of 'warm' and 'cold'. But first, how about 'red hot' leads?

Some years ago, I was involved with a training organisation that held free introductory seminars. Their objective was to attract potential students who would pay £2,000 to sign up for a distance learning course. The seminar presenters were professional communicators who created a storm of enthusiasm and audience participation. Although a few delegates left as soon as the presentations ended, most stopped by the many tables to buy the books and audio programmes that had been raved about during the presentation, and some wanted to qualify for the 'Sign up tonight and save twenty per cent' offer.



**DIAGNOSTIC  
QUESTION  
BOX**

**How much of  
your budget  
goes on cold  
lead  
generation?**

Within two hours, several hundred 'suspects' who walked through the door had been converted to 'prospects'. Then, while they were caught up in the dynamic excitement of the event, well over fifty per cent became 'buyers' – all within 120 minutes. They were 'red hot' leads!

You need to exercise some caution when dealing with red hot leads because you can get a bad burn if you expect every one of them to actually follow through. When the euphoria of the day

## Chapter Twelve

# Challenge Resolution

*Every challenge, in every business, in every country, is eventually resolved, therefore a problem is not a problem until you make it one: call it a challenge instead.*

### *Synopsis*

**This chapter is about dealing with challenges, about turning mountains into molehills and molehills into flat plains of smooth endeavour. There has probably never been a business that has not had its share of challenges. The unprepared go under – which is still a solution of sorts. The coached business owner uses challenges to build a stronger business than before, like the landlord in our opening story.**

The public house had stood in the centre of the market square for over 250 years. It was virtually unchanged but it had seen many changes happen around it. Originally it was a coaching inn on an unmade road in a small village on a popular pilgrimage route. Apart from the church opposite, it was the largest building in those days. It had never suffered a fire, nobody had ever been killed or injured in it and the ever-changing menu had never poisoned anyone.

Eventually, progress almost defeated it. The road had been surfaced and the oil lamps were replaced, first with gas and then electricity. The village green became a car park and the village grew into a small town, but the inn retained its former character. It was a popular meeting place for locals and tourists alike. It had retained its independence and survived by providing good, honest accommodation and meals that were famous for miles around. Then the 'men in suits' came.

Although it had never had a fire, the current landlord Stan Gibbs was required to spend a small fortune on fire precautions and subject his premises to an annual fire certificate inspection – or be closed down. Although nobody had ever been killed or injured, the accommodation had to comply with the recommendations of an annual health and safety check. Although nobody had ever been poisoned, the kitchens had to be open to random inspections by public health officials.

Stan accepted these additional burdens, wrote the cheques for the inspections, maintained the policy manuals and certificates and got on with his business. Then the various rules and regulations were modified. This led to a business challenge which threatened to end the pub's commercial viability.

The rear of the kitchen was slightly below ground level because the building was on a small hill. There was a window on the wall at ground level, which kept the chef cool and sane in the warmth of summer and allowed any condensation from cooking to escape, just as it had for two-and-a-half centuries.

"That window is a health hazard," said the public health man. "It must be bricked up – or else!" "That window is part of your fire escape route," said the fireman. "It must be kept with clear access at all times – or else!" The health and safety inspector said, "It is too big – people could fall in from outside. Reduce its size by seventy-five per cent – or else!" To complete the landlord's dilemma, the heritage people who had listed the building said, "You must not change the external appearance, including that window – or else!"

Stan was inventive at solving business challenges; he found a solution that satisfied all the men in suits, and one that still allowed an opening big enough for his rotund chef to escape.

The chef was delighted with this new slim-line shelf unit that allowed him to store and retrieve his jars of spices. He had not even noticed that it had a steel back and was exactly the same size as the window beside it. That is where the rack stayed most of the time, even during the fireman's visit. He had not even paid any attention to the runners above and below the window frame that allowed the shelf unit to slide across, and totally conceal the window from within, when the other 'suits' made their annual visits.

The external appearance did not change, except for the planting of a large bush that hid the window from any prying eyes or potential intruders in the garden. Stan said, "I couldn't face the challenge head-on and satisfy all the authorities. So I did what anyone could do – instead of going over or under the challenge, I just went around it."

It is often said that 'a problem shared is a problem halved'. It is more motivating to say that, 'a challenge defined is a challenge solved'. As soon as you define a challenge from every angle, you can establish its size, scope and potential for disaster. Better still, you can examine all the options towards resolving it.

There is an earlier preliminary step. You may think that you have a challenge but if your clients, suppliers, staff and business associates do not believe that there is one, then you had better examine your conscience and see if it exists in reality. It may only exist in your own mind. Attempting to resolve a challenge that does not exist will only create one.

If you suspect that you have a real challenge, write it down in simple words – the fewer the better. A short pencil is better than a long memory, and the act of writing is the first step towards identifying your challenge. Write as many different descriptions as you need until you reach one that describes the challenge most accurately and in the briefest format. Now transfer this version to the top of a fresh sheet of paper and place it aside. You will return to it later.

As you work on this editing task, ask yourself these questions.

- Is this situation of my own causing and is it down to me to do something about it? Think of this as a 'me' challenge. For example, if your business financial outgoings exceed your income.

**DIAGNOSTIC  
QUESTION  
BOX**

**What type  
of challenge  
is it?**

## What's it about?

*The Business Coaching Handbook* reveals what business coaching IS, how to assess the shape of your business and what steps you need to put in place to grow it successfully.

## Who's it for?

Compiled for business entrepreneurs who have achieved the first goal of getting their enterprise up and running, or have been operating their own professional practice or business for a few years and now want to take it to the next level.

Set in a user-friendly format, *The Business Coaching Handbook* coaches the reader through a step-by-step process to business improvement. It is all about knowing where you are, where you are going and the actions that you need to take to get there.

## What do experts say about it?

"Without doubt Curly Martin is in the vanguard of a movement for change which is totally in tune with the current business climate. Her depth of knowledge and insight have proved to be an invaluable tool for me in the success and expansion of my Company. Highly recommended!"

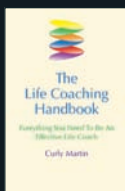
Margaret Edmondson, Director, Edmondson & Company Ltd

"... packed full of extremely useful information. There are many different practical business models which are explained clearly and easy to apply."

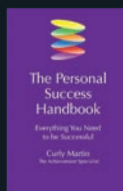
Jo Down, Dartmoor Horse Trails

"Curly's clarity of thinking coupled with her ability to apply personal development concepts to real world situations has proved invaluable in both my personal and business life."

Nigel Winship, Managing Director, First Thought Consulting Ltd



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Curly Martin is the founder of Achievement Specialists Limited. She is a bestselling author of *The Life Coaching Handbook* (isbn 978-189983671-0), a sought-after international speaker and a pioneer of life coaching in Europe.

Curly would love to hear from you and has created a website to support your journey through this book, [www.thebusinesscoachinghandbook.com](http://www.thebusinesscoachinghandbook.com)

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