

Productivity Improvements require ‘powerful partnerships’

Why do so many people start a new business, only to fail?

According to the Commerce Department 80 percent of all new businesses close their doors within the first five years. Of those that survive another eight in ten will fail in the second five years.

There are thousands of books, tapes, seminars and lectures designed to teach us how to be more productive. So what’s missing?

A review of these instructional devices shows that, for the most part, they teach us how to be productive. What’s missing is “powerful partnerships.”

American business is still entrenched in the Lone Ranger School of Productivity. Most of us start our own businesses out of a need for independence and freedom from the corporate structure. What we take from our former jobs is the notion that productivity is based solely on the individual.

But it is this “I’ll-do-it-myself” mentality that can eventually kill a small business.

By developing a new mode of business that focuses on creating partnerships – what some like to call “Hot Teams” – business owners can draw on the experiences of others and receive positive coaching from people who want them to win. These coaches will honor their partners’ commitments and let them know if they fail to keep them.

By developing such a two-person Hot Team Partnership, the small-business owner will see a breakthrough in productivity and profit for years to come.

Preferably, your Hot Team partner will be separate from your company and even your line of work. But he or she will know exactly what your business goals are and will hold you to your promises.

Suppose Susan, an acquaintance of yours, has a skill that you know you need in your business. Tell Susan specifically what your goals are and when you want them accomplished. Tell her you will phone her every week to report on your actions, and ask her not to accept any excuses for your temporary setbacks.

Tell Susan what you want to be told if you're forced to admit that you've fallen off the horse. What should she say to get you back in the saddle? Sometimes a simple reminder of why the business is so important is all that is required.

Try to line up one Hot Team partner for each of your skills or attributes that you feel you need to improve. You, in turn, may be a Hot Team partner for someone else because of a quality you have.

Caution: Keep your partnerships clean, and honor boundaries. For example, avoid asking your spouse or your best friend to be on your Hot Team, unless your relationship allows that person to be totally objective.

Let other business owners know that you are available to be on their Hot Teams. It's a great way to contribute to others' success, and it could be an excellent vehicle for referrals.

For more information regarding this column, or for current information on Mission Facilitators International's training programs, please contact Dean Newlund at 623-444-2164, or visit www.missionfacilitators.com