

Just call him Coach

When Jim Pouliopoulous of Westford was laid off from his marketing job at IBM, he decided to do what he's passionate about: coaching small businesses. **Page 18**

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Job coaching is Westford man's passion

By Marie Donovan
Sun Correspondent

WESTFORD — Jim Pouliopoulous has been teaching his Bentley University students real-life business skills for nearly 10 years. He also has been serving as a volunteer career coach for undergraduate and graduate students for much of that time.

So when Pouliopoulous got laid off from his full-time job at IBM as a senior marketing manager working on software products during major layoffs in February 2009, he took it as an opportunity to craft a full-time career doing what he felt was his calling.

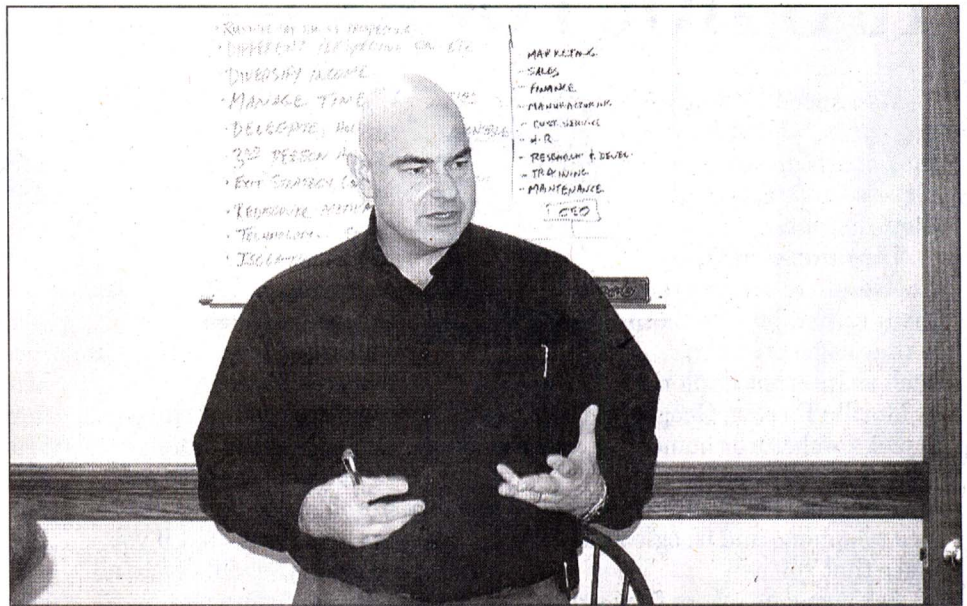
"Coaching and teaching people is what I'm really passionate about," Pouliopoulous said.

In October, Pouliopoulous opened a local franchise of Cincinnati based The Growth Coach, an executive franchise that works with clients to help small businesses boost their profits and improve their efficiency through both group and one-on-one coaching sessions.

The Growth Coach was a natural fit for the Westford resident, who still teaches a senior level marketing and business class at Bentley, where he supervises undergraduate and graduate students in writing business plans for local companies who partner with the university.

"Their philosophy matched mine — drive success while maintaining a balance in your life," said the married father of three, whose various hobbies include karate and drawing pencil portraits.

"The demand for business coaching services in the area is high. Business



Jim Pouliopoulous leads a recent Growth Coach session.

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owners are increasingly seeking professionals to help them boost financial profits and increase personal fulfillment, particularly in this challenging economy," Pouliopoulous said.

A former Brockton High School football player, Pouliopoulous played football and rugby for Worcester Polytechnic Institute while he worked on his BS in Engineering. He also earned an MSEE from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and an MBA from Bentley.

The Growth Coach was founded in 2002 by former CPA Daniel Murphy, who still serves as president of the franchise. It operates in more than 140 North American markets, including Burlington and three other Massachusetts communities.

Pouliopoulous coaches clients on things like new product launches and how to counter competition for business from similar enterprises.

You need to work more efficiently and delegate, so you can leverage the people that work for you to create optimum results, Pouliopoulous said.

Most Growth Coach clients are beyond the start-up phase, with typically three to four years in business. Clients run the gamut from sales persons and technicians like electricians, plumbers, landscapers and general to self-employed professionals like CPAs, attorneys, HR managers and contractors.

"A lot of people feel like if they're going to work harder, they're going to get ahead. That's not the way it works," he said.