



'TEXAS IS LUCKY TO HAVE LOW REGULATIONS AND NO STATE INCOME TAX.'

Sidney Mendelson
Growth Coach

ELVIS PERAZA / SAN ANTONIO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Sidney Mendelson spent 30 years as a business consultant in New York City before coming to San Antonio to launch his business coaching franchise.

Coaching biz helps build core fundamentals

BY MIKE W. THOMAS

After more than 30 years as a business consultant in New York City, Sidney Mendelson decided to leave the Big Apple and move to San Antonio where he has opened the first Growth Coach franchise in South Texas.

As a growth coach, Mendelson works with small-business clients to help them stay focused on their priorities and not be dissuaded by what he calls "limiting beliefs."

"I had a client who was getting hung up on her definition of success," Mendelson says. "She came from the finance side of corporate America and was having cash-flow issues that were preventing her from buying some equipment that she needed. Her view of success was still defined by her past experiences in the rough and tumble world of corporate finance."

Mendelson says once they sat down and redefined what her concept of success should be in her new environment, she was able to find more time to get out of the office, visit with clients and do the things she needed to do to expand her business.

"I just showed her how her limiting beliefs were getting in the way of her being successful," he says.

Coaching versus consulting

A business coach is different from a business consultant in that the former can work with any type of business without having to know all the fine details. Rather than teaching business owners how to run their business the way a consultant would, a business coach works with them to strengthen core fundamentals. The lessons are applicable across most all types of businesses.

Since coming to San Antonio three months ago, Mendelson has worked with a number of insurance companies, a marketing firm and a water softener business. Mendelson says since Growth Coach does not require high royalty fees from its franchise operators, they can charge very affordable rates and thus reach many small businesses that would otherwise have been priced out. Growth Coach services run about \$3,600 per year, or about \$300 per month.

Mendelson says it was a desire to help small businesses that led him to leave New York City, where he had been a partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers, and hooked up with Cincinnati-based Growth Coach. He then chose to come to Texas, and San Antonio in particular, because of its strong economic environment and its warm, gracious culture.

"Texas is lucky to have low regulations and no state income tax," he says. "I have always believed that small businesses are the core of the economy, and I felt like they have gotten a raw deal from the bailouts and the bad economic climate which they had little to do with."

Fiber of the community

Mendelson says his goal is to contribute something back to the community and not just be a business offering a good service.

"I want to be a part of the fiber of the community and if I can help some small-business owners to grow and create more jobs I will See **GROWTH COACH**, Page 19

GROWTH COACH: Companies without long-term goals will fall behind competitors

FROM PAGE 18

be serving a good purpose.”

A native of Brooklyn, Mendelson started out teaching special education to inner-city youth from 1972 to 1980 before getting involved in the insurance industry and launching his business consulting career. He says his work as a teacher taught him some valuable lessons that have allowed him to be successful in the business world, including knowing when to listen and not talk and learning not to judge people.

“I learned to recognize the dignity inside of all people,” he says.

Joining Mendelson in the business coaching market for San Antonio is Kay Wakeham, formerly of Corpus Christi. She recently brought her Growth Coach franchise to San Antonio where she will divide the market with Mendelson.

Growth Coach generally divides up markets by 10,000 businesses per franchise. Thus a market such as San Antonio could support three or four franchises. Austin, for example, currently has three franchises in its market.

Wakeham says a big challenge in coaching her clients during unstable times is keeping their focus on long-term goals and not letting them get distracted by the latest “scary news” on CNBC.

“Too many people today are afraid to hire or move to a new office or buy a new piece of machinery even though that is what they need to advance to the next level,” she says. “If we can keep them focused on their goals for the next 90 days and not on what the markets did today, then they won’t get caught up in the fear of the moment.”

Mendelson says business owners who retrench during troubled times may find that they have shorted themselves when the recovery comes around and they are left in the dust by their competitors who did not put off investment or lay off key personnel.

Change of Mindset

“We are in the change-of-mindset business,” Mendelson says. “It is a process of self discovery as we show clients the things they are doing or not doing that is holding

them back. If they allow themselves to get trapped by that mindset, then things could go badly for them.”

Companies that stay aggressively focused on their goals are more likely to succeed in the long-term, Mendelson adds.

Wakeham says she asks clients to look at the things they do everyday and determine if those are helping to advance their companies toward long-term goals. Rather than getting out of the office and doing the networking they need, they are often spending time doing mundane tasks and putting out small fires that could better be handled by someone else.



Wakeham

Matt Davidson, owner of 212 Carpet Care, has been working with Wakeham for the past couple of months. He says he sought out a growth coach after his 3-year-old business had stopped growing like he expected.

“We kind of hit a wall and Kay has been

The Growth Coach

What: Business consulting company with franchises in 150 markets

Local franchise owners: Sidney Mendelson; Kay Wakeham

Address: 12618 Lost Maples, San Antonio, 78253

Tel: 210-679-6772; 361-993-2875

Web: www.TheGrowthCoach.com

helping me to see what I can do to get things back on track,” Davidson says. “We started by looking at the things I do that can be outsourced to get them off of my plate and free me up to do more productive things that will grow my business. Next we will look at internal operations and see where we can be more efficient.”

If a business owner is good at technical problem solving and doesn’t like selling or bookkeeping, Mendelson says, then they need to hire someone else to do those tasks or have them outsourced rather than trying to do them all on their own. “You can’t just ignore the parts of business that you don’t like,” he says. “That is what gets you into trouble.”