



Coaching the Six Sigma Way

The main objective of an executive coach is to develop an employee to achieve company objectives. Most executive coaches generally focus on personal behavioral change, gaining self-awareness, understanding personal goals, achieving their development objectives, unlocking their potential, and learning to listen. This is great for the person being coached, however it is not always effective when problem solving for the company (unless the problem is the employee).

In a small business, the owner is the primary stakeholder and CEO. Hiring a coach or consultant is usually not in the budget, but relationship building is critical to success. A different approach that can achieve both a behavioral change and a solved problem, is applying Six Sigma tools and methodologies.

To coach the Six Sigma Way, start by establishing an objective or pick a problem that the business needs to solve. The objective must be based on a product, service or process failure. It must be defined in terms of a business metric or customer requirement. The business metric must support the business objectives.

Keeping the objective statement and metric in mind, have the coachee describe how he (or she) supports the objective. Create a personal SWOT. Everything item listed in the SWOT must pertain to the metric. A SWOT is a Six Sigma tool that stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. Usually a SWOT is used at the business level but applying it at the personal level will get the coached person thinking about his or her skills and behaviors. Most coaches get coachee behavioral information from others. Using a personal SWOT allows the coachee to self-evaluate. Once the coachee understands how his or her behavior affects the company, he or she is more likely to willingly initiate appropriate changes. The change is more likely to be permanent since it can be critical to success for a small business.

At Metamorphism we start with explaining the SWOT, give samples (visit website for a sample personal SWOT), allow the coachee to self-evaluate; then we aid in the mitigation of the weaknesses and threats by applying Six Sigma tools like Brainstorming, 5 Whys and the Solutions Matrix. Keep in mind that at a small business, all employees with valued skills should be coached / developed. Employees that are coached are more likely to stay with the company, thus reducing employee turnover.