



JONATHAN GOLDHILL
CEO

The Growth Coach

Change or DIE!

It was a cold, snowy, February day in the suburbs of New York when my pregnant mother took a taxi into New York City and trudged into Doctor's Hospital through the raging snowstorm. My father, meanwhile, was recovering in another room in the hospital from his first heart attack. While on vacation in Greece two years later, when my father was only 35 years old, he suffered a second massive coronary and died. Sadly, he left my mother a widow with three young children aged 8, 6 and 2.

It makes me sad to think about growing up without a father. Maybe he could have prevented his death and lived longer. After the first heart attack, he did make some of the recommended changes to his diet and lifestyle, but, unfortunately, it was not enough.

Despite the enormity of a life changing event like a coronary heart attack, most people don't change their behavior as much as necessary to live longer, more fruitful lives. In fact, according to Dr. Edward Miller, the dean of the medical school and CEO of the hospital at Johns Hopkins University, "if you look at people after a coronary-artery bypass grafting two years later, 90 percent of them have not changed their lifestyle."

Behavior patterns within our control are a huge factor in our own health and well-being. Since the mid-1950s, numerous articles have demonstrated that 90 percent of the healthcare budget is consumed by five behavioral issues: too much eating, too much drinking, too much smoking, too much stress and too little exercise.

Ever since I was a young boy, I vowed that I would lead a healthy life: a life filled with regular exercise and healthy eating. What I didn't know then was that I would also become an advocate for others to lead healthier lives.

You may be wondering: what does this have to do with owning or running a small business?

A lot, actually! We are living in scary times. Most of us are experiencing sluggish sales and, as a result, are still feeling a bit anxious, uneasy, and uncertain about the economy. This overall feeling of fear and uncertainty is sending record numbers of us into "fight or flight" mode. Much like a patient facing a situation where behaviors must be changed to improve their health, in businesses the fact is that we must "Change or DIE!" No business remains static. Progress is made by growing sales and/or increasing profits; otherwise the business will regress.

Changing habits and behaviors is hard, if not impossible, for many people. This is especially true for "off-season" entrepreneurs. I'm referring to those who are an entrepreneur or strategic business owner only during the few months in the winter when business slows down; the off-season signals the time when work must be done "on" the business. This makes it difficult to personally develop as a leader, effective manager and strategic business owner. When spring arrives, we get so busy being busy. We lose sight of important business issues that need to be fixed. Marketing goes on auto-pilot and sales-skills training is exchanged for lead conversion efforts in the line of duty.

Let me paint a clear picture. To be successful in business, we must work "on" the business consistently year-round. To grow, not die, consistent effort must be put into the right activities on a regular basis. Business practices must be constantly improved. Activities like strategic planning, creating and measuring the effectiveness of tactical marketing plans, management and sales-skills training, and optimizing systems must become as basic as the behaviors of improving diet, exercise, and stress levels for the people we spoke of earlier.

For your business to grow, you need to grow.

To build a team that will help run the business so you can get some time back for yourself, this too must be done year-round, not just in the slow months. Don't be an "off-season" entrepreneur!

You must grow your business or it will die. If it dies, who will you leave behind and unattended? If you have a spouse, employees, and customers that count on you, then don't leave your business to chance.

Jonathan Goldhill, The Growth Coach, is a business coach who works with construction and service businesses. Learn about his services at www.TheGrowthCoachLA.com. ■

UTILIZE TECH TOOLS TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS

GreenLinksSM Over 7,000 pages of plant information and photographs you can use to create and customize your plant lists. Email directly to your customer, with photos, in minutes.

LandSenseSM More than 400 plants that are low-water use, sustainable, attractive and available to help landscape professionals design and install eco-friendly landscape projects.

Salvia apiana

Leonotis leonurus

Sedum rupestre 'Angelina'

We are the Best Source for Plants in California & Nevada

Availability and Access Like Never Before at www.BambooPipeline.com

BAMBOO PIPELINE

America's Fastest Growing Green Goods Company.

Toll-Free: (888) 288-1619 Fax: (805) 764-2626

First Time Customer?
[Visit www.BambooPipeline.com](http://www.BambooPipeline.com)
 for 25% Off!