



A FEARLESS ATTITUDE HELPS ANDY BIROL SHAKE HIS CLIENTS OUT OF STAGNATION AND INTO GROWTH.

by Terri Mrosko

Andy Birol, a nationally recognized Northeast Ohio business growth consultant, is considered fearlessly straightforward when it comes to telling clients what they may not want to hear. That's why they hire him, of course.

"He certainly doesn't sugarcoat things," says Rob Felber, who, along with his brother Bruce, hired Birol Growth Consulting Inc. to overhaul

their Twinsburg-based marketing firm. "He cuts through the typical psychobabble, all of the typical models that a lot of consultants throw out, and he makes you get things done."

The two brothers recently renamed their firm Felber & Felber on Birol's advice and changed the way they do business, including narrowing their target market and teaching the company how to do its own marketing.

Felber says they "fought Andy tooth and nail" but admits it was the right thing to do.

"Andy really makes you take a hard look at who you are, what you want to be, and, in our case, what you want to be perceived as," Felber says. "Andy talks about passion and conviction. You have to believe."

Ask any of the other 280 business-owners-turned-believers whose companies he helped grow, and most will agree Birol's consulting style is a bit unorthodox.

Yet, if the testimonials from those clients that liberally dot his Web site are any indication, Birol knows what he's talking about.

That's precisely the point, says Birol, who started his one-man Solon-based business, Birol Growth Consulting, in 1997.

"I knew from the beginning that I would have to walk my own talk, and the best credibility I could have as a growth consultant is to grow my own business," Birol says. "Every time I have either made a mistake or learned a lesson, I've not only applied it to my own business, but I am able to use that as a sort of test kitchen for helping my clients."

Birol, who only works with the owner of a company, eschews writing reports and refuses to take sole responsibility for clients' business growth results.

"I require my client to have joint accountability, and I don't sell a report," he says. "I sell and deliver, causing them to move from ambivalence and apprehension to confidence and conviction. I convince them to go for it or lose the dream."

Birol says he appeals to dissatisfied or impatient owners — the ones who want to make a change.

The biggest challenge, he says, is getting them to move out of their comfort zone and take decisive action.

"I'm opposed to many of the 'status quo' behaviors that many business owners fall into here," he says.

Birol regularly shares these views in regional and national publications and through speaking engagements and on-air appearances. ✎

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