

'Coaching empowered my business'

KEITH Harvey, managing director of Durban-based company Sovereign Health, knows what it takes to succeed in business — putting your faith, and time and energy, into the people who run your organisation and empowering them to deal with change.

"In today's world change is a given. The only question is how fast it will happen," says Harvey.

"It is futile to equip people only with the skills they need to succeed in their jobs. We need to equip them with the ability to acquire new skills and to adapt to change."

The ability to change is not a well-developed faculty in human beings.

Most people, when faced with the need to change, stand only a 10% chance of getting it right, even if they are 100% committed.

"You need only look at the billion rand diet industry worldwide, for example, to realise that change does not come naturally to people," says Harvey.

"It takes a special intervention to improve the ratios and give people a fighting chance to really change when the situation calls for it."

But is there anything powerful enough to effect that kind of

Coaching, is that a person's behaviour follows from the way they see the world (their structure of interpretation).

"This means that the way one sees the world at a particular moment determines the actions one takes," explains Craig O'Flaherty, director of the centre.

"Each person's structure of interpretation is unique and is shaped by experiences, beliefs and intentions.

"The role of the coach is to find ways of making the clients aware of their own structure of interpretation. By so doing they are able to observe something in ways they were not able to before.

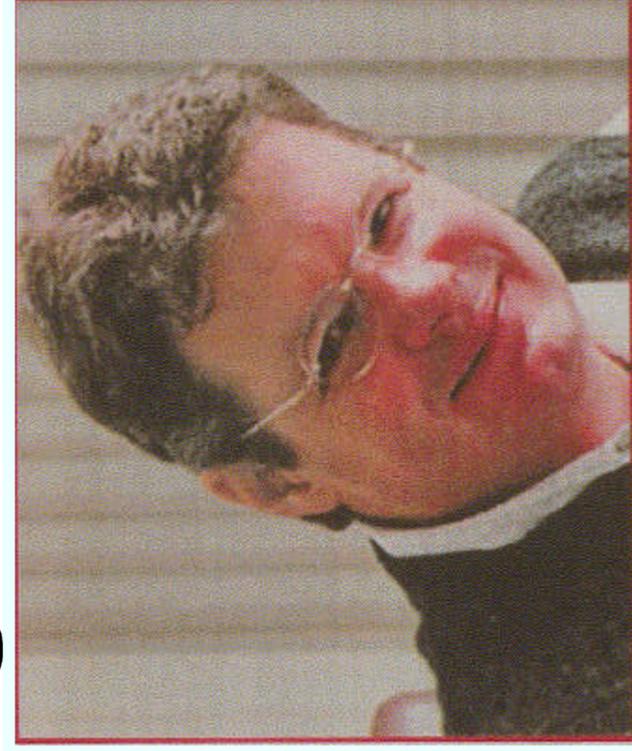
"New possibilities for action become available so behaviour changes."

Harvey is wasting no time in ploughing these insights back into Sovereign Health.

He works in a one-on-one coaching relationship with his senior leadership team and has organised coaches for the middle management structure of the organisation.

Harvey says that the ethos of coaching is also having a positive impact on managing transformation within the organisation.

"We are striving to bring a leadership style into the organisation that is congruent with



Keith Harvey ... 'we need to enable employees to adapt to change'.

transformation?

Harvey believes there is and it's called coaching.

He is an enthusiastic advocate of coaching, and is better equipped than most in this regard.

Not only is he the MD of Sovereign Health, he is also a fully certified integral coach.

A recent graduate of the Centre for Coaching at the UCT Graduate School of Business,

he says he was inspired to train as a coach because he thought it would equip him with an effective leadership style that would enable him in turn to empower the leaders in his organisation.

Something else he got from the centre was an intense crash course in understanding himself and other people.

The premise of coaching, as developed at the Centre for

coaching and to ensure that the language of coaching becomes common currency.

This is vital in a multicultural environment."

While Harvey is something of a pioneer in taking this approach to managing his business, he is not alone.

A 2006 international study by the International Coach Federation (ICF) has shown that the coaching industry is contributing \$1,5 billion to the world economy.

"Society is increasingly recognising that a coaching relationship is worth both the commitment of time and the financial investment," said Janine Everson, academic director at the Centre for Coaching.

And while the coaching industry is still concentrated in the U.S., the response rate of coaches in South Africa to the survey, which was the highest of any country taking part at 58.1%, illustrates the degree of interest in this profession in the country.

The UCT GSB Centre for Coaching will be running its entry-level Coaching to Excellence Programme for the first time in Durban on May 9 and 10.

Phone 021 4061493 for more information.

— Witness Reporter

