If you want a ‘yes man’ to come in to assess your business, don’t hire Chris Steely. His mantra and methodology is to tell CEOs exactly like it is — good or bad.
All you really need to know about Chris Steely in order to do business with him is that Tony Robbins handpicked him be part of his team as his top business consultant to travel throughout the world on Robbins’ acclaimed Business Mastery Tour.

That speaks volumes about the trust and confidence Robbins had in Steely, who is the Founder, Managing Director and President of GPS Business Group, a global firm established in 2003 and based in Southern California.

Wait, here’s more about Steely: The prominent global business coaching firm, Actioncoach, was so impressed with him and his experience and energetic style that it hired him to train 1,200 business-coach franchise owners and master-licensure coaches – yeah, the same folks who train and coach 12,000 clients per week across 26 countries.

“There’s no doubt that Chris is the guy who has had a big hand in shaping the global business coaching industry,” says Greg Kopchuk, an Actioncoach Master Licensee.

Now that’s respect.

Steely comes from a unique breed: he grew up in the cornfields of Indiana, where trust and honor are core characteristics. Then he moved to Florida – almost the opposite of Indiana. One day in the public school system and he knew his next stop was a military high school, which shaped his foundation of leadership and business capability. He won a NCAA national rowing championship in college, earned his MBA, and wound up in the Marines, handling logistics and IT as an officer and company commander, acquiring key traits that he would carry on until this day.

The turning point for Steely and his career was in 2003, when he was an executive for nearly a decade at the Silicon Valley firm, Indus International, which was acquired by Ventyx.

He was riding the great wave of the dotcom boom. Yet at the same time, he was frustrated. Frustrated with what he calls “the business-as-usual matrix – businesses hiring friends instead of the most qualified and competent people,” he says. “A classic case of cronyism and nepotism.”

So he broke away and went on a “crusade” to help fix corporate America in various ways.

“My dream was to optimize businesses ethically, honorably and with courage -- everything the Marine Corps teaches, everything you learn in championship-level athletics to do what it takes to cross the line first,” he says. “And that’s not choosing the easy road. It’s not about cutting corners.”

Steely changes the culture of businesses from the top down. He goes in and performs a thorough evaluation, interviews executives and managers, and puts systems and methodologies in place to help the company get out of the status-quo and help it climb to the top of the mountain. He’s worked with hundreds of companies in the U.S., Canada, Australia and Europe – and his system works. He finds the unexpected, exposes the flaws and sets the company on a new course of effectiveness, success and brilliance.

If companies want to bring in a “yes man,” Steely is not your guy. He does his thorough analysis with his project team, looks you straight in the eye and tells you like it is. And sometimes, it’s not what a CEO wants to hear.

“Too many CEOs and company presidents have blinders on,” he says. “They’ll say, ‘Hey I want to reach this objective,’ but they don’t have the 360-degree perspective and aren’t able to see their blind spots. Through our process, we give the CEO or owner perspectives on the business that they didn’t have before and focus on areas where they can be more effective. It’s about giving them a perspective they don’t really want...
to hear but you have to hear in order to break through and move to the highest level possible. One of the keys to business is getting to know what you don’t know.”

As a result, Steely can only work with a small percentage of companies – the companies that want to hear the truth about gaps in their system and how to correct it. Steely is masterful in particular with sales teams, exposing ineffective personnel and elevating the team as whole to a level they never dreamed of achieving. That’s because he’s been in sales from the time he was a youngster prancing through the Midwestern cornfields. And he admits that there was a time he deviated off the track, but he caught himself, fixed it and vowed to teach everyone he could about “selling from the heart.”

An Industrial Aerospace company in Southern California was seriously struggling to reach sales goals. Enter Steely. Shortly after he finished his assessment, the company generated a $1 million in gross revenue in one day and soon doubled its revenue.

How? “By systemization, processes, leadership and a growth map,” Steely says. “It’s seeing the business as it is currently and where it can be. You make it as you see it – you just don’t talk about it. You do it.”

Ultimately, what Steely did was shift the CEO’s mindset, enabling her to realize that “Yes, I can do this.” Steely had the CEO step in and close a deal herself with the firm’s biggest client. The CEO was brilliant, yet shy and sometimes apprehensive. Steely turned her into, well, a steely fierce shark – yet one with passion and heart.

“The company’s sales force was good and reputable, but they were not engaging the client as effectively as they could,” he says. “The CEO was the ace in the hole.”

Steely convinced her that in order to generate a record-high company transaction, she had to engage herself. He got her to believe more in herself.

“What came through was her confidence and clarity,” Steely says. “The fact that she had all the systems in place was key – having the right conversation with the right person at the right time in the right way allowed her to make the right decision and it directed the $1 million deal.”

When engaging with potential new clients, Steely is often asked what makes him unique or different from others in his crowded space. Well, that’s easy – it’s him. Anyone with his strong roots, military experience, championship athletic performance and mindset, and personal Tony Robbins influence is someone who stands apart from the pack.

“Through our forensic analysis, we look at things that people don’t normally look at,” he says. “We’re very good at that. We ask the right questions at the right time. We challenge people and expose flaws.

“We’ve learned that once a CEO or key employee is in ‘that zone’ and aligned with our systems and methodologies, there’s no stopping you. Too many people stop short of that. We help them break through that barrier.”

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