

Coaches have the grow-how



HOT PROSPECTS: Chef Patrik Minder

WITH the economic outlook gloomy and the cost of day-to-day life soaring, is this the right time to splash out on a business coach?

Many people clearly think so, with figures suggesting that the UK business coaching industry is growing by 18 per cent a year. Experts say it can help business owners to focus on their goals while providing them with the ability to expand their firms.

Brad Sugars, 37, is the founder of Action Coach, an international network of business coaches that operates in 26 countries.

'Most business owners know how to start, but not how to grow a business. A coach brings the benefit of experience and can act as a good sounding board,' he says.

Brad believes that business

By **HELEN LOVELESS**

coaching is even more valuable when times are difficult. 'In a downturn, businesses often batten down the hatches and many go under.

'But a change in the economy is a business opportunity and coaching can help businesses make the most of it.'

Patrik Minder, 37, runs The Lemon Tree restaurant in Colchester, Essex, and has just finished a year of business coaching. It is the fourth time he has had coaching since setting up his restaurant 11 years ago.

He says: 'The main benefit of coaching is that you gain from the experience of others. Having another objective viewpoint when there are challenges

ahead can be invaluable. It has helped me to grow my business.'

Business coach Alistair Morrison, 44, who runs Kent-based consultancy The Results Mentor, says: 'Small businesses are often doing so many things that key issues slip their minds. Being accountable to a business coach can help to ensure they remain focused and motivated.'

Finding the right coach to suit you and your business is key. ActionCoach carries out a personality assessment of business owners to match them with a coach that will suit them, and business owners must also feel comfortable, says Patrik.

'Coaching is hard work and you have to spend time working closely together. If it doesn't feel right then you won't get the benefit.'