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Consultant: Businesses must grow – or they'll die

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

OK, the economy is sagging. But this is not the time for business executives to sit on their hands, according to a consultant who insists companies – especially small operations must grow – or die.

Entrepreneurs need to overcome the anxieties about the sagging economy and muster the confidence to be successful, even in an uncertain economy, Andy Birol told a small group of executives Wednesday at the Skyline Club in Southfield.

"It may take thinking differently," said Birol, whose company is based in Cleveland. "But there's always a way to grow your business."

Birol, whose fifth book, *The*



Birol

Five Catalysts of Seven-Figure Growth, is expected on bookshelves next year, doesn't think of himself as a motivational speaker.

"I'm more about cold, hard truth," he said, even if it means an entrepreneur getting out of a dead-end business and doing something else.

Birol measures success by helping companies grow, even if they don't hire him as a consultant. He advises companies to do things like determining their Best and Highest Use® – his trademarked program – and focusing on finding, keeping and growing their customer base.

"People can do it (use his

strategies) themselves," he said, but they've got to step back from daily operations and make some assessments.

Sometimes success means loosing a dream, Birol said. He refers to business executives involved in obsolete or dying businesses as "dead men walking," who would be better off in a new business.

"He thinks outside the box," said John Lawler, resident manager of the Skyline Club that hosted Birol's presentation. "People were certainly impressed," he said.

One of those impressed was Adam Berg, owner of A Man for All Seasons, a landscaping and development firm in Farmington Hills.

Berg said he had heard Birol speak before and had read some of his books. "But there's always some new," he said.

Berg said he also followed some of Birol's advice, with delightful results. "Everything worked as he said," Berg said. "I've hired six people, and I'm in the process of hiring two more."

His brother also enjoyed the presentation. "Birol makes complicated things simple, said Seth Ethan Berg, project director of Splat Innovation, an East Lansing creative development firm specializing in marketing and human resources.

"It's easy for a small business to get wrapped up in one thing, while loosing sight of everything else," he said. "But Birol helps you stay focused."

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