



COBEN

Corporate & Executive Advisory



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Coben Advisory is a specialized corporate & executive advisory firm that offers services to help our clients plan, improve, grow and succeed in or exit their businesses. We focus on specialized disciplines and processes that are often missing or “under-served” by existing internal resources in businesses. These specialized services are usually essential to achievement of owner or business objectives and often are one-off or infrequent needs for a client.

If your business was easy, everyone would be doing it. The fact is that every business in some manner of speaking generally does the best it can with imperfect information and limited resources. Businesses survive and thrive by doing the best with the skills and assets that they have, in spite of gaps and weaknesses. Most owners or managers at some point wish they had a trusted advisor that they could bounce ideas off, ask questions or rely on for help when issues arise...in other words, fill an important gap. Advice most valued by clients is based on a foundation of financial expertise, world class corporate and executive experience, specialized knowledge and balanced with a deep respect for a client and sincere desire for his/her success.

Plan. Improve. Grow. Succeed.

“plan”

/plan/

noun

1. *A detailed proposal for doing or achieving something.*

synonyms: procedure, scheme, strategy, idea, proposal, proposition, suggestion, action point.

2. *An intention or decision about what one is going to do.*

synonyms: intention, aim, idea, intent, objective, object, goal, target, ambition

Strategic Business Planning

Plan Processes. Analyze. Evaluate. Strategize. Develop Plans.

There are of course many directions you can take if you are in a boat in the middle of an ocean. Businesses can be like that...with little visibility on the surface as to where to go from here. Planning is the process of identifying and evaluating alternative destinations and the best paths to get there, as well as developing the tools to measure success and designing ways to reduce risk.

Planning provides opportunity for broader input from your best people, for consensus building and for better decisions. It is a well-known fact that a company that thoroughly plans evaluates alternatives and stays on track with a well thought out strategy will have a much better chance of meeting its goals. Good planning helps prevents bad investments of time and resources.

Service Overview

*Strategic Business Planning
Evaluation of Investment Opportunities
Project Planning
Financial Modeling & Planning*



“im·prove”

/im' proof/

verb

1. Make or become better.

synonyms: make better, better, ameliorate, upgrade, update, refine, enhance, boost, build on, raise, polish, fix (up), amend.

2. (a) Develop or increase in mental capacity by education or experience.

(b) Achieve or produce something better than.

synonyms: surpass, better, do better than, outdo, exceed, beat, top, cap.

Efficiency, Profitability & Management

Problem Solving. Identify Improvement. Financial Management. Governance.



Often the first step to improving your business or its profitability is recognizing there may be opportunities to improve or potential solutions to problems you thought were unsolvable.

It is a bold owner or manager who admits that his/her business, processes or practices are less than perfect and a wise one who engages the organization in the process of improvement. Isolated issues, problems or opportunities are often clearer and actionable with independent analysis and expert advice. Hands on advice from advisors that have walked in your shoes as a manager or executive is especially valuable.

Service Overview

*Business Case Evaluations
Financial Analysis & Solutions
Commercial Advice
Business Process Improvement
Efficiency Review
Outsourcing Review
CFO Services
Governance Review
Risk Management*

“grow”

/grō/

verb

1. (Of a living thing) Undergo natural development by increasing in size and changing physically; progress to maturity.

synonyms: get bigger, get taller, get larger, increase in size More.

2. Become larger or greater over a period of time; increase.

synonyms: increase, swell, multiply, snowball, mushroom, balloon, build up, mount up, pile up; informal skyrocket.

Growth Strategies, Acquisitions & Financing

Growth Plans. Acquisitions. Joint Ventures. Financing. Due Diligence. Negotiation.



Sustainable growth is not easy. It requires research, detailed analysis, wisdom, perseverance and realism. Discerning “good” growth from “best” growth is challenging at best, whether organic growth or growth by acquisition, given inherent uncertainties and risks. Growth discipline is usually central to the success of an organization. However, the skills and expertise to identify the “best” growth strategies and opportunities, to evaluate alternatives, to acquire, merge or partner, to finance growth opportunities or to implement smooth transition or integration plans are often not housed internally in many organizations, and very seldom in smaller organizations.

Careful planning, evaluation and execution of growth activities with the proper expert guidance is necessary as companies often don’t get a second chance to mess this up. Acquisitions and related due diligence, negotiations and agreement making can be very complex and are not for the faint at heart.

Service Overview

Growth Strategy Development

Mergers & Acquisitions

Financing

Partnerships, Joint Ventures & Alliances

Coordination of Acquisition Process

Growth Implementation & Transition Plans

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Dwayne Coben, the principal of Coben Advisory, has over 30 years business experience in Canada, United States, United Kingdom and Australia across a broad range of industries and sectors. Dwayne has held CFO and executive merger & acquisition positions in both public and private companies, including executive positions for Berkshire Hathaway companies in the United States.

In 2002, Dwayne founded Coben Advisory to offer clients advisory services in disciplines that he acquired considerable expertise such as strategy development, financial evaluation and mergers & acquisitions. Dwayne was CFO and part-owner of a private alternate fuels technology company in Calgary from September 2000 to early 2002. Prior to moving to Calgary, he was Senior Vice President and CFO of HomeServices of America, Inc., a Berkshire Hathaway company based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Dwayne led the company through a successful US\$49 million initial public offering in 1999. Dwayne was also responsible for the acquisition strategy for HomeServices, growing the company from start-up and its first acquisition in 1998 to the second largest full-service independent residential real estate brokerage company in the United States through the completion and integration of several acquisition and merger transactions.

Prior to this, from 1997 through 1999 Dwayne was Vice President Corporate Development of MidAmerican Energy Company, an electric

and gas utility in the US Midwest with annual revenues in excess of US\$4.5 billion, where he was responsible for mergers and acquisition activities. MidAmerican is a Berkshire Hathaway company based in Des Moines, Iowa. MidAmerican completed the fourth largest utility merger (US\$6 billion) in the United States in 1999 with its merger with CalEnergy. Dwayne led the due diligence team for MidAmerican, including the evaluation of synergies and other merger benefits and costs. Amongst several other acquisitions and divestitures, he managed the spin-off of HomeServices from MidAmerican's non-regulated investments.

From 1990 to 1997, Dwayne held various business development and customer services senior management positions at BC Hydro, an electric utility based in Vancouver, BC, with annual revenues of \$4 billion. As part of his business development role, Dwayne was responsible for development and structuring of strategic alliances and partnerships in a key BC Hydro initiative to increase shareholder value by leveraging its core assets through public and private sector arrangements. Previously, Dwayne was a partner in a venture capital firm in Vancouver from 1987 to 1989, and worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Vancouver, BC and London, UK from 1981 to 1986.

Dwayne is a Chartered Professional Accountant (Chartered Accountant), a Certified Management Consultant and holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting Major) from the University of Saskatchewan.

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Coben Advisory is a specialized firm that offers specialized services. These services may be relevant to companies that have needs related to planning, business improvements, growth or a succession / exit. Engagements are carefully screened before acceptance to ensure there is a solid fit with specialized capabilities and client needs to ensure high likelihood of success.

Proper **planning** under the guidance of an expert advisor can be a major step forward in enhancing profitability and shareholder value, as well as stress-reducing for an owner or executive. Utilizing a trusted capable advisor who brings proven processes to help businesses identify and implement **improvements** to efficiency, profitability and financial or risk management is just good business. Profitable sustainable **growth** of businesses usually requires purposeful focused effort and can be significantly augmented with a proven specialized advisor working with you throughout the process. Finally, an owner or executive can considerably improve results of business succession/transfer or sale to a third party of a business by engaging a trusted confidential advisor to prepare well in advance for a **succession or exit** event.

If your business needs help in any of these areas, contact Coben Advisory for a free confidential discovery session.





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