

Everything Begins With Attitude

By Mike Stewart, CSP



Most salespeople have been told as long as they can remember, "To be successful in sales you gotta have a Positive Mental Attitude." I agree. The challenge I see is one of definition. "What, exactly, is a positive mental attitude?"

Conventional wisdom tells us that a Positive Mental Attitude is one of unshakable faith and confidence in one's company, one's product and one's self, and that it is expressed with exuberance and enthusiasm at all times, regardless of the circumstances.

It is a good and desirable thing to have faith and confidence in your company, your product, and yourself. However, the fact of the matter is, your company is going to let you and your customers down, sometimes; your product is going to fail to perform as promised, sometimes; and, you are going to make mistakes, sometimes.

While it's good to have faith and confidence, it can be self-defeating and goal obstructing to have blind faith. People who seem to always be "up" can be in a state of artificial motivation trying to impress others, or convince themselves. They are like cheerleaders always talking a good game, but not producing results.

Even though their enthusiasm may be artificial and temporary, they have a better effect on those around them than people who mope and grump around always seeing the dark side of everything.

There will always be daunting circumstances beyond our control and they make it easy for us to find excuses and blame others for our failure to meet expectations.

"At the end of the day people are much more interested in getting the job done than the excuse as to why the job wasn't done."

– General Tommy Franks.

Whining, blaming, and expecting someone else to take care of your responsibilities is a wrong attitude.

If someone else does cover for you, you can bet it will be

temporary. More and more I see pressure on executives to grow their businesses by growing their sales. Those expectations flow downhill and, rightly so, wind up on the plate of the sales force. More often today than just a few short years ago, I see such wrong attitudes leading to the end of employment of tenured salespeople and sales managers.

What, then, is a realistic positive mental attitude in the face of tough circumstances?

I believe it is acceptance of the realities of your particular situation, being an agent of change to make things better where you can, having the willingness to accept the things you cannot change, and, finally, possessing the determination to fulfill your responsibilities no matter what the cost.

***"Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side,
keep on the sunny side of life."
- Traditional Folk Song***

Always look on the bright side. Think and talk in terms of success, not failure. Be an obvious part of the solution and not part of the problem. Look for the good in every situation, and make a conscious effort every day, in every way, to be a positive person who is known as someone who exhibits energy and enthusiasm for the task at hand. Be someone who doesn't dwell on the difficulties, but always seeks ways to overcome or bypass them and make something good happen.

This will set you apart from the also-rans. It will enable you to become a winning player who leads by example instead of just a cheerleader on the sidelines who is never in the game. The right attitude can lead you to success far beyond your present expectations.

Here's a final thought:

***"If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you."
- Unknown***

***"In sales and in life, when at first you do
succeed, try not to look surprised."
- Unknown***

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