

Be Committed To Having A Positive Attitude



I often believe that many of us are guilty of admiring someone for having a sales “skill”—that really isn’t a skill at all, but an attitude. The following is how Webster’s defines each one:

Attitude—A mental position toward a fact or state.

Skill—Ability to do something well, especially as the result of long practical experience.

As I was doing research for a talk that I gave at our recent Joslen Region Leaders’ Meeting in Semiahmoo, Washington, I came across a book by Zig Ziglar that I had not read in the past. In one chapter he gave the following story:

“What does it take to be what everyone wants to be, but relatively few are? One of the things I do in my seminars around the world is to ask the audience to identify the qualities of the most successful person they know or of an imaginary individual who would make an ideal employee, employer, mate, neighbor or friend. Interestingly enough, regardless of the geographical location and regardless of who is in the audience—whether

dentists, salespeople, educators, ministers, and the general public—the answers will be remarkably similar. The desirable qualities or characteristics are:”

What he said really intrigued me, and very well may intrigue you, even though many of us have been around sales organizations and sales people much of our lives. There are many characteristics of a sales culture, but what I am specifically referring to for this example is the importance of having a positive mental **attitude**. I have not been to one sales meeting where the importance of a positive mental **skill** was consistently taught. I am not discounting the importance of being taught sales skills, but I have found that an agent with a positive attitude, and less skill, goes much further in this company than one with positive skills and a bad attitude. In this same book, Zig Ziglar says, “Positive thinking won’t let you do anything, but it will let you do everything better than will negative thinking.”

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Below are the words that described the qualities that Zig Ziglar was talking about. Take a moment to go through each of them and put an “S” for skill or an “A” for attitude next to each word.

Assertive	Friendly	Persistent
Caring	Goal-Directed	Personable
Character	Good Listener	Positive
Commitment	Hard-Working	Mental Attitude
Competent	Honest	Prompt
Confident	Integrity	Self-Image
Consistent	Intelligent	Sense of Humor
Creative	Loving	Sensitive
Dependable	Loyal	Teachable
Energetic	Motivated	Thoughtful
Enthusiastic	Optimistic	Understanding
Faith	Organized	

Now, how many of these words did you put an “S” beside? One? Two? Three? None? Personally, I put an “S” next to just two of them, Intelligence and Creative, which could also be considered gifts, and an “S/A” next to Organized and a couple of others. Zig Ziglar says that the average person categorized four to six words with either an “S” or a “S/A”. What does that tell us? More importantly, what does that tell you?

Allow me to tell you what it tells me. First of all, it reminds me of a quote that I used in an acceptance speech at Reunion a number of years back by Magic Johnson, the former Lakers and NBA great. He says, “When I go to the playground for a pick-up game, I never pick the player with the most talent (skills) but the one that will work hard (attitude)!” Is hard-working in the above list? Of course it is. The exercise above essentially tells us that virtually all people put a higher value on qualities that are choices vs. qualities that are gifts.

Remember the definition of each word that we began with? An attitude is positioning yourself, meaning you have a choice, whereas a skill is something obtained through the result of long practical experience. In my opinion, the items on the list above can be learned, which would also make them skills. If these skills are considered to be important and valuable to cultures around the world, then why were most of us not taught them in school in the same manner that we were taught other skills? That is probably best left for each individual to answer. The important thing is to obtain knowledge in developing and teaching these important skills that we desire in order to grow as individuals, which in return will help us grow our businesses. Additionally, are we teaching and preparing our

children for success by training them in these skills that we know will be important for their future success?

You may ask how this relates to you, or how this applies to our business or your career. I believe it applies because of the principle that many of us have heard, which is that “the customer buys us, not the product.” Zig’s study has already shown us that no matter where you are in the world, people are attracted to, and desire to be around, the same type of people: those who choose to make a positive decision. In an exercise that Mr. Ziglar does not mention, I wrote down the opposite of each word. I believe that such an exercise can further challenge us to keep our attitude in check. Are we not motivated? Are we not teachable? Are we not prompt? Are we not persistent? Are we not honest? Would you agree that just these five qualities alone could make the difference between a successful career with UGA and a UGA career that does not provide for your family in the ways that you expected it to?

Many of us are currently attending our annual UGA Reunion in Dallas, Tex. This will be my 18th convention. One thing that comes easily during these fun-filled days is the ability to be POSITIVE! I believe that one of the most significant reasons for this is because we are surrounded by positive news, positive energy, and positive people. In other words, it is easy to be positive, isn’t it? Are your sales meetings like this as well? I would bet that the meetings in Rick Fuller’s, Alan Shimamoto’s or Mark Zayti’s Area Offices are full of positive energy! Is it a coincidence that they are the top three Area Leaders in all of UGA this past year?

My challenge to you is that you concentrate on staying positive, even after you have left Dallas, Tex. I challenge you to be a person that your office counts on for positive energy—a person who is going to look at the positive side of any situation. And lastly, I challenge you to remember that having a positive attitude is more than just enthusiasm; it is a decision that you make that causes you to choose a positive quality or characteristic whenever there is a choice. Be the person that other sales agents look to for positive energy and decision-making. Be the sales agent that others in our self-employed market want to associate with. Be the UGA Leader that will continually motivate others by always seeing the value in taking the positive side of every situation. Remember that attitude is a choice. Make that choice a positive one.

Committed to pursuing a higher “Standard of Excellence.”