

Attitude in sales so what is the big deal?

What would you think is most important in sales: knowledge, skills or attitude?

Knowledge is gained through education, facts and information. A skill is the ability to apply knowledge that has been acquired through training or experience. So why is it that salespeople who have these two important attributes fail to achieve their potential? Is attitude really that integral to sales success? Let's look at attitude.

Attitude

A salesperson's attitude is formed by their experiences and what they have seen. It can be just about anything from other people, objects, and activities to their work environment.

Three elements of Attitude:

1. Feelings - How they feel; their emotions about a topic
2. Thoughts – What they think about and their beliefs on a subject
3. Actions – Attitude that affect how they behave

Each element will influence overall attitude and sometimes but not always one is affected differently than the other elements. For example, a salesperson may think and feel they don't have the ability to perform a particular sales role but will act as if they can because they want the income the sales position offers.

Change in Attitude

Attitude can dominate behaviour but it is possible to change or modify it provided the desired motivation is the core reason to change. These can be:

- **Attitude change through observation:** The salesperson notices the behaviour of their sales manager in a selling situation and wants to be able to sell in the same manner so they copy the behaviour. This is particularly powerful when coaching or mentoring
- **Attitude change through persuasion:** The salesperson truly understands and sees the logic and feels the emotional attraction that a different attitude can provide
- **Attitude change through conflict:** No-one likes to feel conflict but if the internal tension of conflicting beliefs is strong enough and to reduce this internal escalating pressure the salesperson chooses to change their attitude.

Attitude check

When it's tough getting sales your attitude can be the first thing that is tested and lost. Ask yourself these basic questions...honestly:

1. I current think and feel negative? *Yes/No*
2. I see my current problems as weighing me down? *Yes/No*
3. I overeat and or drink too much alcohol or take drugs? *Yes/No*
4. I stopped going to the gym or stopped my exercise program? *Yes/No*
5. I don't have someone to confide in; a family member, colleague or mentor/coach? *Yes/No*
6. I don't have written goals. *Yes/No*

If you score yourself 3 or more 'yes' responses then you need to take affirmative action to realign your attitude.

Let's face it knowledge, skills and attitude are all important attributes of salespeople and their success. Product knowledge and skills can be acquired from the induction into a new job and continue throughout employment. But what if the salesperson has the product knowledge and selling skills but lacks in the right attitude? How do you work with this type of person?

The answer is "*with great difficulty*" and in my opinion if the salesperson won't develop the attitudes that complement their role in sales then they should seek another profession.

If you would like to discuss this topic or any other on sales or sales management then contact Kurt Newman direct on +61 412 252 236 or email info@salesconsultants.com.au.



Kurt's expertise is in sales strategy, sales management development; group structured sales training and infield sales coaching. As a sales person he has successfully sold products and services in 4 major market/product segments: new product sales, consultative sales, relationship sales and retail. During his selling career he created sales records for three companies in two industries and won many sales awards for outstanding performance.