



Sell Yourself

We rarely think of ourselves as sales people, especially when we hold positions in management, accounting, finance, operations or marketing. However the reality is that most of our professional life is spent selling.

Traditionally, we think of sales in terms of products or services, but how about viewing selling in terms of an idea, or, more importantly, YOU! Aspiring executives know that while the key to their success is their track record their ability to sell themselves is just as important.

When I talk about selling yourself, I mean having the ability to get your ideas across in a convincing manner. In other words, winning over the majority and getting other to buy into your vision. To accomplish this, you must first prove you have the abilities. To quote Dale Carnegie: "You have to earn the right." Simply put, you "earn the right" through experience, dedication and proven commitment. That being said, from a coaching perspective, earning the right is only half the equation of selling yourself. The other half of the equation embodies learned behaviors or skills like persistence, clarity, focus, determination and a positive attitude.

These behaviors and skills are present in each and every one of us. For some, they come more naturally and for others, it takes a little work. The good news is that with a little coaching, these behaviors and skills can be improved and a sense of control and balance can be reintroduced into the lives of those who truly have "earned the right."

Interestingly enough, of the five behaviors and skills needed to move forward in your career, you only need to have three present. However, the utilization of all five will not just accelerate your career, but also bring to it a greater sense of work life balance.

Persistence can be defined as the ability to follow up with clients, leads or team members. Eighty percent of the clients with whom I work don't follow up after making the initial phone call. Fifty percent of the clients with whom I work struggle with meeting deadlines. Having conducted multiple interviews with managers and recruiters around retention and hiring strategies, the principles of following up and following through were fundamental in achieving a promotion or getting a job offer.

One of the primary reasons for the lack of persistence is distraction. We all have multiple activities going on in our work and professional lives. Without clarity, we quickly loose track of those things we needed to do. From the outside, this can be perceived as being unmotivated. To maintain clarity, we need to keep the clutter at a minimum and work toward prioritizing those tasks that need to be done. Clarity will help you become more persistent.

An individual can be clear and unfocused as well as focused and unclear. Think of the individual that is very organized but doesn't know what he or she truly wants from their current position. You can also identify those people in your life who know exactly what they want from their career and are making huge sacrifices in their personal lives to get there. Both of these scenarios suggest that progress can be made, but at what cost? Clarity brings balance to your life, while focus allows you to zone in on what it is you want out of your career. Together they can be a powerful tool and when these skills are recognized by others, their confidence in your abilities grow.

Handling rejection is a critical skill to master as you go through your career. The determination to continue to try and not give up is a asset in any career tool box. Determined individuals know that their ideas or products or working styles are not suited for everyone. In many cases, determination – coupled with a positive attitude – allows for this individual to overcome adversity and deliver the results that no one thought could be done. It is important to know that the combination with a positive attitude is critical in the work life balance model. You can move forward without a positive attitude, this is seen everywhere in business. However, the truly satisfied individual brings with him and generates a level of motivation that transcends through all those with whom they interact.

All of us possess these abilities. It is up to us to pull on the behavior or skill at the time when it or they are needed most. By becoming aware of how these abilities affect your professional life will be a tipping point to a career full of excitement and fulfillment.

Eric Lutzo earned his Masters of Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. Eric is the founder of Forward Thought, a coaching and leadership development practice. (www.forwardthought.net)

Email: Eric@ForwardThought.net