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Columnist

Professional Development

Understanding your sales attitude

Do you feel you're a natural at selling and love it? Or do you do it because you have to and hate it? Your attitude toward sales and marketing is largely determined by your values.

You may remember the series of columns I wrote on values, which I turned into my book, *Why Can't You See It My Way?* I'd like to look at the values most successful salespeople have and help you understand your attitude toward selling.

I had the pleasure of speaking to the Greenville Chamber's Sales Roundtable recently on this subject. I showed them the results of an international study of top salespeople and how it compared with a Hiring Study my company did last year. We looked at the behavioral styles and values/attitudes of CEO's, Managers, HR Directors, and Salespeople in upstate South Carolina companies having 25 or more employees.

The international study was conducted by Behavioral Values Research Associates, Ltd. in 1997. It shows that top salespeople are high in, and therefore greatly influenced by, the Utilitarian, Individualistic, and Theoretical attitudes.

What that means: Utilitarian means top salespeople are results oriented and passionate about getting a return on investment of their time, talent and resources. They have a strong economic drive and want to make as much money as they can for themselves and, therefore, their companies.

Individualistic means they desire power and control over their own destiny and the destinies of others. They are natural leaders and don't line taking no for an answer. They want to be in charge of people and situations.

Theoretical means they are passionate about learning and crave knowledge – knowledge for the sake of knowledge. They know their products and services and the competition, and are confident they're selling the best.

The salespeople in our Upstate Hiring Study are similar in two areas – Utilitarian and Theoretical. They are also greatly influenced by the Traditional value. Those high in this attitude are passionate about their religious/spiritual beliefs and desire to seek and find the highest meaning in life. We concluded the reason our local salespeople are higher in this value than their international counterparts is that we live in what's called

the “Bible Belt” of the U.S. and therefore it would seem logical they rank higher in this attitude.

If you’re low in two or more of these attitudes, you may struggle in your attempts to sell your products and services. The person with the high Social value would rather serve than sell and tends to “give away the store.” Those high in the Aesthetic attitude don’t like rejection or disharmony and have a hard time handling objections.

This data can help you hire the best salespeople. The most successful have the Utilitarian value as their highest, followed by Individualistic and Theoretical. Our Workplace Motivators assessments will give you this information about your sales applicants.

If you can determine your prospects’ highest values, you have a greater chance of closing a sale by showing them how your product or service will give them what they want most.

If you’re selling to another salesperson, you know they are likely high in the Utilitarian value, and perhaps the Individualistic and Theoretical. Here are sections from my book on how to relate successfully with them:

Utilitarian. Focus on how they’ll get a return on their investment with you. Show them how your product/service will get them the results they’re seeking. Don’t waste their time.

Individualistic. Focus on how your products and services will increase their power and get results. Stress how you’ll help them or their company gain position. Let them know you admire their ability to achieve.

Theoretical. Focus on the discovery of knowledge. Show them how your products/services will help them solve problems. Focus on facts and research, not application.

Traditional. If you feel they’re high in this value, focus on the meaning of life. Understand their desire for order and unity. Show them how buying from you will help them serve others.

Next time, we’ll look at how the CEOs, Managers, and Human Resources Directors ranked in our Hiring Study, and show you how to build a strong relationship when selling to people in these positions.

If you’d like a free sample of our Workplace Motivators assessment, go to our website – www.coachannette.com. Under “Resources,” select “Assessments.” Then scroll down to “Hiring the right people” and click on the Workplace Motivators report.

Your own values assessment will show how you rank in the six values, so you can better understand your sales attitude. Call or send me an email if you’d like to find out more.

Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, and Consultant. She coaches “Reluctant Workaholics” on work-life balance. She is also a professional speaker and author of the book, *Why Can’t You See it MY Way? Resolving Values Conflicts at Work and Home*. Contact her at Annette@CoachAnnette.com or call The Estes Group at 864-244-1156.

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