

Build Your Career on These 3 Pillars

Make focus, effort, attitude your keys to success

I will admit that luck, karma, fate, or even advice from a Ouija board can play a part in making a sale. And I won't downplay a competitive personality, either, as any trainee who's heard me refer to "scum-sucking, ruffraff competitors" can attest. But by and large, I believe any successes you achieve in life come down to three things: focus, effort, and attitude.

The good news is that, unlike those other factors, we're in charge of these three. This puts the onus of controlling our day and our destiny firmly on us.

Let's look at each one in a little more detail.

Focus

A day in the life of a salesperson can get hectic. There's rushing from appointment to appointment, traffic, the phone ringing off the hook, putting out fires ... you know the drill. Being able to focus on the task at hand can be challenging, but also very rewarding.

To maintain your focus, create a plan every week and every day. Keep that plan visible and remain committed to it, even as you seek to stifle the other noise that crops up during the day. Working solely on that noise can make you seem really busy, but at the end of the day, if your plan remains mostly unworked, what did you really accomplish?

Effort

Successful people do things unsuccessful people won't do. Challenge yourself to make an extra call at the end of an exhausting day, or spend a little more time making cold calls looking for new business. This sales game is hard work; make sure you're working harder than your competition.

Ever wonder why you don't see a commercial on TV for a Lamborghini? People

who can afford them aren't sitting around watching TV.

Attitude

A good attitude is the key to success in many different facets of life. Our reaction to uncontrollable factors goes a long way in defining our outcomes, and that's something I stress during the training sessions I conduct.

A verse from the poem "Attitude," by Charles Swindoll, says it wonderfully: "I am convinced life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our Attitudes."

You Don't Have to Outrun the Bear

While speaking to groups, I often tell a story I believe sums up these three points.

I'm standing in a clearing in the woods with a salesperson I compete against. We're both discussing all the negative things going on at work: orders placed incorrectly by support staff, customers with bad credit, seemingly crazy deals offered by competitors, etcetera.

Suddenly, from the other side of the clearing, a grizzly bear appears. He rears up on his hind legs and lets out a mighty roar. My petrified competitor shakes uncontrollably while I calmly bend over and tie my shoes tighter.

My competitor looks at me and chides, "You can't outrun a bear!" I reply, "I don't have to outrun the bear. I have to outrun you!!"

And the same goes for all of us. Don't focus on things you can't control, like a co-worker's quality of work or insane deals offered by your competitors. Instead, adjust your attitude, focus every day on the tasks at hand, and make an effort to run harder than your competition.

That's how you beat your scum-sucking, ruffraff competitor!



Brian McCauley is director of sales training at Atrium Windows & Doors. He has trained thousands of people nationwide and speaks from coast to coast. Contact him at bmccauley@atriumwindows.com, at 502-409-1816, or on Twitter @Brian_salesguy