

The 7 Habits of a Highly Effective Advertising Sales Rep

This is the 4th in a series of Link & Learns on applying the principles described in Stephen R. Covey's best selling book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" to our business. To read the Link and Learn articles on Habits 1, 2 & 3 you can go to www.PaperChainNetwork.net, click on "PaperChain Material Download" then scroll to "Link & Learn Tip Sheets".

Dr. Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" is one of the most successful and practical business books ever published. This article is intended to give an overview of the basic concepts of Dr. Covey's program as they apply to our business. My purpose is just to stimulate interest in the 7 Habits. To gain a better understanding of this powerful material, I strongly recommend that you read the book or attend one of the seminars presented by the Covey organization.

Habit 4 – Think Win/Win

Habit 4 "Think Win/Win" differs from the 1st three habits in that they were focused on what Dr. Covey calls "Private Victories", on setting personal goals and priorities. The next three Habits are about "Public Victories", how we can effectively interact with others. Habits 1, 2, and 3 are about breaking our dependence on outside circumstances. Habits 4, 5 and 6 build on this foundation of independence to move to the next level – interdependence. Dr. Covey says that the "most important ingredient we put into any relationship is not what we say or what we do, but what we are." Once we have established our independence we can choose to be interdependent – capable of building rich, enduring, highly productive relationships with other people.

A principle not a technique

Dr. Covey's program is based on principles not techniques. Win/Win is rooted in a worldview that Dr. Covey has dubbed the "Abundance Mentality." This simply means that "there is enough to go around for everyone." That for me to win...you don't have to lose! It is based on the principle that unless all parties involved in a transaction benefit, the transaction should not be completed. Dr. Covey describes this as a belief in a third alternative, it is not your way or my way...it is a higher way.

Six paradigms of human interaction.

Dr. Covey has identified six types of human interaction. Let's take a look at each of these as they relate to our business.

1) Win/Win

This is the ideal interaction. A good example would be selling an effective advertising program to a customer at a price that allows the publisher to recoup

their costs and make a reasonable profit. Everyone gets what they want from the transaction, the advertiser gets the customers they need to grow their business and achieve their goals and the publisher gets the revenue needed to accomplish his/her objectives. Since both parties get what they want from the transaction they are likely to maintain the relationship to the continuing benefit of both parties.

2) Win/Lose

A sales rep sells a program to a client that the rep knows will not serve the needs of the customer. In this case, the rep wins and earns their commission but the customer gains nothing for their investment. In this scenario, the advertiser loses on the transaction and will move their ad dollars to another media as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

3) Lose/Win

This is a common scenario with inexperienced reps. A rep desperate to make a sale allows a client to bully them into discounting a program to the point where the publisher loses money on the transaction. The advertiser “wins” while the “publication” loses. The rep is working very hard for a small return on their effort and a publication that permits this to happen will soon find itself in financial difficulties. While the advertiser will realize gains in the short term, they will soon have to find a new way to advertise.

4) Lose/Lose

In this interaction neither party benefits. Usually this occurs when egos get in the way of an agreement. It is the attitude that “If I can’t have my way, no one will get their way!” A good example would be if two reps were in consideration for a management position. The party who did not get the position goes out of his/her way to undermine the new manager and to disrupt every meeting. The new manager obviously loses because their job is made more difficult but the disappointed rep also loses. Their pettiness causes them to lose esteem within the company and in the eyes of their co-workers virtually eliminating any chance to earn future promotions. This situation can be exacerbated if both parties seek a Lose/Lose outcome. If, in our example, the new manager replied in kind to his rival, he would lose the respect of his/her team.

5) Win

This paradigm is the attitude of the totally self-centered individual. I don’t care if you win or lose as long as I win. A good example of this is the sales person who joins a firm and rapidly rises to the top of the sales ranking. They work hard but their total focus is on what they can personally gain. They neglect customer service, care nothing about developing good programs and are not above “bending the truth” to land a sale. Invariably, the “Win” rep will have a spectacular but very short career. They hurt their clients and their companies and in the long run will gain less than if they had built a career on a solid foundation of customer service and honesty.

6) Win/Win or No Deal

While Win/Win is the ideal situation, sometimes it is impossible to achieve in the real world. If two parties cannot agree on a course of action that benefits both, it is better to agree to disagree and part ways. Failing to do this will result in one, and most likely both, parties becoming unhappy in the long run. An example of this would be an account that for good reasons can not get their materials to the rep before deadline causing their ads to be rushed and often incorrect. In this case, the client is dissatisfied with their ads and the rep has to do a great deal of work, only to have the revenue adjusted off. If they can find a way to correct the situation, moving the deadline or expediting the copy, and establish a Win/Win relationship, they should do so. If the situation can not be improved, they should decide that “No Deal” is the best option.

A Mature Way to Manage Human Interactions

“Think Win/Win” is about interacting with other people in a genuinely mature way. Dr. Covey defines maturity as the “balance between courage and consideration” Courage is about asserting yourself, about getting your own way. The extreme example of this is a new born infant. They do not care that it is 3 AM, or that mom and dad are tired, they want to be fed and they want to be fed NOW! On the opposite end of the scale is the person who is so considerate of the needs of others that they neglect their own needs. While this might be admirable, people who do this become martyrs and are seldom truly happy. A truly mature person will assert their right to achieve their goals in life but recognize the rights of others to do the same. The truly mature person sees the “glass half full.” They believe that the world is a rich place and that by using the power of the human intellect that everyone can achieve their goals. In every interaction they seek benefits for all involved. If this can not be achieved the truly mature person will walk away.

Conclusion

Win/Win thinkers are respectable people. They hold equal respect for themselves and for others. They seek to make every human interaction a rich and rewarding experience. They build mutually beneficial relationships that allow them to accomplish much more than they ever could alone.

Next Month Habit #5 “Seek first to understand, then to be understood”