

QuickTips

Winning Attitudes are something that we were first introduced to in our first ever sales training course. Apart from perhaps occasional references at a sales conference, we probably never consider our attitudes and how they affect our overall performance, yet if we reflect for a moment, it is obvious that 'attitude' is a key foundation of a successful sales career. At ProAct, we have used the combined experience of our Consultants, all of whom have held senior sales management positions in both global organisations and strong local players, together with the thousands of people in IS organisations that we work with every year, and tried to encapsulate what we believe to be the best practice Winning Attitudes, necessary for success in complex B2B selling. This is summarised by our acronym POCAPP.

Pre Meditated: Great sales people think through and plan their actions. They may use tools such as Powerbase, TAS or MAP, or they may have developed tools that are tuned to their particular situation, but in nearly all cases a great sales person can clearly explain what situation they are in with an account or opportunity, are very clear about what they want to achieve, and have decided on particular strategies, with firm action plans committed. In nearly all cases, great sales people have these written down in some form.

Opportunistic: While they are pre-meditated in their approach, the best sales people are also quick to seize opportunities that arise. They know that situations develop and can never be totally predicted, so they are quick to change their plans in response to a changed situation. Timing is important, and great sales people seek to seize the initiative as early as possible to give themselves the best chance of shaping the future.

Can Do: Life in complex B2B selling in any high technology company is nearly always frustrating, which the best amongst us see as part of the joy of the role. At any one time it may be tough market conditions, unreasonable customers, competition coming along with solutions that have superior features or better pricing, and often it is our own company. The infrastructure to support a sales person in any fast changing high technology supplier will always be behind what is desired. There will be many issues around process, procedures, tools, systems, strategy, skills, knowledge, and particularly interdependence with other departments, that can easily be perceived as barriers to sales success. In many cases these barriers will be real resistors, however great sales people find a way of working within their environment to achieve extraordinary results. A Can Do attitude is essential not only for success, but also as a personal survival mechanism for the majority of sales people operating in complex, fast changing B2B sales.

Aggressive: Internally we all know that 'assertiveness' is the approach that will lead to most success. In the market however great salespeople are very aggressive, and extremely competitive, taking any loss as a personal affront.

Proactive: As well as being very Opportunistic, great sales people are proactive in that they initiate activity. They seek to influence events, in particular creating and shaping opportunities. Proactive sales people can be contrasted with reactive 'shopkeepers' who simply keep asking people if they "want to buy something today". We see proactivity as a major differentiator for successful sales people, as shown in our Type R and Type P model.

Professional: Hard to define but easy to spot, professionalism can be one of those words without meaning, however it cannot be ignored. For us professionalism means adhering to a set of values that include honesty and integrity, being conscious of your actions, minimizing risk and displaying the other POCAPP attitudes above.

'Type R' sales teams	'Type P' sales teams
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many surprises• Lot of focus on products / solutions• Often 'blindsided' by competition• Strategy determined in reaction to customer / competitive actions• Senior management used mostly in emergencies (closing deals / resolving problems)• Business at risk if loss of Account Manager• Inaccurate forecasting• Poor time management• Inefficient use of resources• Low level of teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear view of future account relationships with short and long term outlook and strategies• Focus on client business and how we can add value• Significant level of business gained without competitive pressure• Executives nurturing long term relationships• Generating new possibilities• Regular informed discussion of alternate strategies• Clarity why business is won / lost• Account teams working effectively

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