

What does attitude have to do with sales?

by Tom Young
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January 9, 2008...How many times have you heard a person in sales say—"I don't know what the problem is, but nobody is buying"?

Since retiring from exhibiting at retail and wholesale shows, I have made the study of how people expecting to make sales react to prospective customers a priority. What I have learned is both sad—but not particularly surprising—at the same time.

Some things do not seem to change.

In general those who are not meeting their goals tend to blame everyone and everything but themselves. Simply put, an awful lot of people in sales should not be there unless they are willing to make significant attitude changes. Those who are successful know the reasons why and will continue to be successful.

This is not meant to single out those who sell at temporary locations such as artists and craftspeople often do, but rather all who sell including persons in the specialty shop environment as well.

What you say to and how you treat prospective customers is of particular importance.

During a trip this past October to the Fall Festival in Galena, Ill., a retailer made the statement that she did not know what the big deal was about the festival because she did not see an increase in business. She went on to say these people just look and never spend money—upon hearing that we headed straight for door.

Prior to that point my wife and I had been in five shops and made purchases in three of those.

What influenced those purchases? The people in the shops engaged us in brief conversation, letting us know they were there to help. They were pleasant and made us feel welcome unlike the lady in the earlier example.

Similar experiences are repeated regularly at shows. Exhibitors seem to be either attentive and pleasant or more interested in talking to their friends, on their cell phone or reading books.

How much energy does it take to put a smile on your

face, make eye contact and say something like—"Hello" or "Let me know how I can help"?

As a customer who would you rather deal with?

The difference of how a prospective customer reacts to the mind-set of the salesperson will often be the difference between making a sale or not.

Think about it. Attitude has a lot to do with the end result.

You may be pleasantly surprised at the results from making a change. **TCR**

Tom Young was born in Wisconsin in 1946. He now makes Illinois his home.

After exhibiting at juried shows from 1975, he entered the wholesale marketplace in 1988 by exhibiting at BMAC in Valley Forge, Pa. He produced functional items using hardwoods, realizing the importance of creating work of a lasting quality.

An example of the stunning architectural projects built and installed by Tom are the sound chambers for the electronic organ for Divine Providence Church in Westchester, Ill. The cabinets required 360 linear feet of molding, which Tom made from walnut 4x4 lumber to make the face frames.

Tom's first commerce website was built by a developer in 1998. He then dropped his last retail show, selling retail on the Web while continuing to build his wholesale business. He and his son Jonathan built and launched www.tkyoung.com, selling retail along with password-protected wholesale access, in May of 2000.

Tom's life experience also includes five and a half years of work in the credit reporting and consumer finance industries as well as more than 11 years of employment in the production area of a large manufacturing company. He has presented small business workshops since 1992.