



OPTIMISM TIPS TO HELP DRIVE SALES RESULTS IN AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMY

By Terry Paulson, PhD

Optimists don't expect life to be easy in a difficult or a good economy. After all, earning success in sales has never been easy. Results earned are achievements appreciated. Because of their track record of overcoming obstacles, optimists are realists. They face their problems head on and get busy solving them on their way to driving positive results. They've done it before, and they know they can do it again.

Wouldn't you rather be an optimist than a pessimist? It's time to sharpen your attitude, your skills, and your positive focus. It's time to deliver results without excuses by claiming your own *optimism advantage*! Master these practical strategies that will help you deliver the results you want. What are you waiting for? Start using these tips to control your attitude and claim your optimism advantage:

Claim the power of a mission based on service and integrity. Nothing is more motivating than driving a meaningful mission that provides true value to your customers. There is an added benefit; when you serve, *you are served*. You can't sincerely serve others without helping yourself. Whether you're offering a smile with an encouraging word, going the extra mile to go above and beyond what you promised, or providing exceptional service in any way, you reinforce your own optimistic attitude and personal satisfaction when you make a difference for others. Trust is a fragile commodity; serve and live your values every day with every client. What can you do today that would make your customers brag about the service you provide?

Turn adversity and setbacks into a search for opportunities. Identify and argue with your own negative beliefs that stop you from achieving success. When struggling with catastrophic thoughts that "everything is going wrong," think of these thoughts as if they were being said by some external person whose mission in life is to make you miserable. Actively dispute those thoughts because most negative beliefs that follow adversity are inaccurate. You can reframe adversity with a simple question—"In five years, will this matter?" Then get busy turning your setback into a stepping stone for better results. After all, if ruminating about adversity doesn't lead to an action you can add to your to-do-list, set it aside and get busy doing something that does.

Stay in the game by focusing on the vital Three P's: Position, Perform and Persist. Trade the pursuit for perfection for progress in increasing your batting average in the great game of sales. Focus on the vital Three P's: Position, Perform and Persist. You're looking to find your own sweet spot of success—that intersection of your personal passion to serve, your skills, and your customers' needs. Remember, failure doesn't come from falling down, but from staying down. NO is ON spelled backwards! In

the good times, you may get one sale for every ten contacts. In the tough times, it may take far more. Persist. Results come to those who stay in the game.

Live the action imperative to focus on the right business. The most difficult shift is moving your goals into action. Stop the head nodding and do something! It's better to be doing something than doing nothing. If you start doing something, you are changing the rules of the game in your favor. To have a great idea, have a lot of ideas. You miss 100% of the shots you never take. Focused action so often beats brilliance. Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and soon you're doing the impossible.

Make your *net* work to support you and those you serve. Spend time with the right customers and the right friends. Relationships are like deposit systems; you have to put something in to take something out. Nurture your relationship with your key accounts, colleagues, business advocates and resident cheerleaders. Some people bring you up; some take you down. Decrease your time with people who bring you down. The people with whom you most want to spend time you have to schedule time to even see. The people you want to see least have a knack of finding you wherever you are. Make dates in your calendar with your key clients, your resident cheerleaders, your family, and your emotional support network. We all need a village, but pick and nurture the right village.

Motivate yourself daily—Build on what's working and learn from what's not. Treat yourself like you treat those you care about. Everyone makes mistakes; the best learn from them. Optimists look for ways to use their mistakes to make necessary adjustments on their journey to success. What course-corrections can you make today to get you back on track? Don't forget to also catch yourself being effective. You may be winning and not know it unless you're keeping score. End your day by scanning for what you did well. Journal that accomplishment in an email to yourself. Collect your "positive" evidence to read when you need a lift. What did you handle well today that you could write in your email? Send it...

Learn, Unlearn and Relearn—Be good at what's needed. It's easy to be optimistic when you have the competencies that match your future opportunities. Build a history of lifelong learning—refocus and retool. The best sales professionals are always busy helping their customers invent a profitable future. Always invest five percent of your time in developing your skills. What new competencies do you need to develop to be positioned for the future?

Use attitude adjusters that can transform your moments into momentum. Instead of waiting for something to make you optimistic, choose to be positive every day unless something happens to warrant problem solving. Even then, get busy dealing with whatever happened so you can reclaim your joy. You control your moments. Use attitude adjusters that break the worry cycle—take a walk, listen to upbeat music, take time with your pet, read an uplifting story, or enjoy a hobby. Engaging in simple pleasures provides an oasis-like experience in your daily life. You don't control the world, but you can control your moment. Do something this moment to lift your mood and create your own momentum to help you get back in the game with renewed enthusiasm.

Choose gratitude over griping. Start your day by listing five things you are thankful for. By taking the time to *collect joys*, you'll learn that worry and grateful thoughts are incompatible. So, instead of just griping about the economy or the biggest hurdles on your to-do-list, start your day by taking a few minutes to actually count your blessings. Every day has the potential of becoming the best day of your year. Start by thinking of the clients that you are most thankful for? If you are having a hard time starting your day, reconnect with one client to thank them for past business and let them know you love having the opportunity to serve them. Build momentum with the power of expressed gratitude.

Quickly turn your worries into constructive attitudes and actions. When there are obstacles, be pragmatic. Find new tactics, new directions, new alternatives, and take advantage of unexpected opportunities. Optimism thrives on the art of the possible. In the darkest room there are often doors ready to be opened to the light beyond. What opportunities are you missing in the challenges you face today?

Become a problem solver instead of a problem evader. You don't escape the responsibility for tomorrow by evading it today. Avoiding problems drags you down while facing them lifts you up. Whenever there is a problem with a client, immediately confront the problem. By being available and accountable, you build trust and cement your relationship as a problem solver. Well-handled problems will build your business and increase your referrals.

Take your job seriously and yourself lightly to build rapport and results. There is no better card to play in the game of sales than the joker, because it can make even a poor hand a winner. People want to be with sales professionals who bring them joy. Don't worry about the doses. Laughter is a non-fattening, contagious, pleasant tranquilizer that doesn't have any major side effects. Everybody has used the expression, "Someday we'll laugh about this." Why wait? Bring laughter into your sales plan, and you'll have fun producing results together.

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