

TOUGH TIMES ATTITUDES FOR SALESPEOPLE

Doing business in tough times requires a tough attitude. Half of the battle is in your head, and the other half is on the streets. Customers will object to price—that's what they do.

First, they test your price; next, they test your resolve. Being prepared to sell in tough times is the mental game of success. Positive thoughts provide the mental fuel you need for your journey. Positive behavior results from these positive thoughts. These tips will help you move in a positive direction in tough times.

Increase calling by twenty-five percent. One study of purchasing agents found that salespeople reduce face-time by thirty-eight percent in tough times—for whatever reason. They are calling at sixty-two percent the rate that they call in good times. If you increase your calling by twenty-five percent, you are effectively doubling your coverage vis-à-vis the competition.

Increase your penetration. If your company has twenty percent market share, that means that eighty percent of the market is not buying from you. This is an incredible opportunity! Expand your calling efforts to include those areas where you currently do not get the business.

This includes existing customers where you share the business with the competition. Get greedy. Expand the depth and breadth of what you sell to existing customers. Are there other locations, branches, or satellite operations of this account where you can call?

The tough times attitude you must embrace is that unless you have all the business, you have an opportunity to grow—even in tough times. Seventy percent of companies survive in tough times; twenty-five percent fail; five percent actually thrive. Where do you want to be?

I spoke at a national sales meeting last week, and the president of the company told his sales force that there may be rumors of tough times in their industry, but they will *not* participate. His optimism was greeted with thunderous applause. This sales force wants to thrive in tough times, not just survive. Of course, they are the type of company that will prevail in tough times—their collective psyche is positive.

Be a positive information source to the customer. You may be the only positive salesperson that the customer meets with this week. Remember, misery loves company. When the economy weakens and things slow down, the commiserators work overtime. Visualize a room full of naysayers, sitting around a conference table regurgitating the latest negative news and feeling worse for the experience. Contrast this to the salesperson that throws the customer a lifeline of hope and optimism. From whom would you rather buy? Tell the customer about all the positive things that your company is doing to thrive in tough times.

One company that I worked with continued their practice of reinvesting in research and development during the last recession. Their message to their customers was simple: “We plan to be here in a big way when these tough times pass (which they always do), and we will be ready to help your company reach the next level.”

Some will fail in tough times; some will survive; some will thrive. Which will you do?

Author byline: Tom Reilly is a professional speaker and author of twelve books. Tom is literally the guy who wrote the book on *Value-Added Selling* (McGraw-Hill, 2010), the book that started the value selling revolution. For more information on Tom's presentations, training, and products, visit his website www.TomReillyTraining.com or call his office, 636-537-3360.