

Leadership Perspective: Attitude

As we began this section we reviewed 10 primary skills and characteristics desirable in leaders for your contact centre. Today we look at how attitude can make or break the success of a leader.

/ˈæt ɪt juːd/ > noun 1). a way of thinking or behaving. 2). a hostile or resentful manner. 3). Self-assured presence, especially in being unconventional or outrageous. 4). a pose, especially adopted for dramatic effect.

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Attitude

If you have not yet discovered the writings of Martin E E Seligman, PhD, let me introduce you to the leading thinker and influencer on the key attitudes of optimism and helplessness.

How leaders think about themselves, those around them and the situation they are dealing with right now makes the greatest difference and impact on how successful they will be within an organisation, especially during change. And no part of any business seems to change as much, or originate change as often, as the contact centre.

An optimistic, but realistic attitude is vital. What experience do they have and what examples can they relate about "surviving" through difficult situations? Their methods of coping and working through times when things weren't going smoothly will give you a hint of how they think. Listen for words that reveal their underlying attitudes.

For a leader nowadays, it's a dangerous world in the workplace, and consequently there's an epidemic of protective, ruthlessly competitive and "helplessness" thinking resulting in futility and fatigue. Sometimes it doesn't seem there's a chance to "fix things". So if leaders are not naturally optimistic they will begin to display behaviour that destroys a team and they may eventually crumble under the pressure.

Optimism is defined in three dimensions:

1. Stability - is this situation going to last forever or can I "see" the light at the end of the tunnel?
2. Global-ness - is this situation going to affect and/or undermine everything or is this simply a specific incident under these specific conditions?
3. Internalisation - is this situation of my own making or is there someone or something outside me that is more likely the cause?

Outstanding leaders innately have an optimistic attitude. Those who follow them sense this and it influences how day-to-day and long-term business is conducted throughout the contact centre.

Read about the author, Darlene D. Richard, at www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm