
WHAT'S IMPORTANT | Vol. VI, Issue 5 | October 6, 2010

"What's Important" is a universal concern. The phrase resonates with an infinite number of meanings. What's important is both a question and an answer, depending on the situation.

Kevin lost his sales groove.

Or, at least that's what he thought when his numbers hit the skids. Accustomed to success, this managing director for business development felt the full blow of the nation's economic slump. But, this hit extended far beyond the bottom line.

His morale was battered and bruised from one "no" right after another. He began to take it personally. Before long, this once confident sales executive feared making the ask because he didn't want to face yet another rejection.

The red ink on the monthly sales report was proof that the business development team was struggling to meet quotas. Yet, Kathy the CFO noticed a deeper struggle in Kevin and brought it to his attention during a one-to-one meeting.

In an uncharacteristic act, Kevin opened up about being off his game, losing his confidence and feeling rotten about not being able to deliver when the company was most in need.

Kathy shared the story of an important sales lesson she learned from her nine-year-old son.

My son wanted a new video game. I told him that if he earned half the money needed, I would match the amount and he could have the game.

That afternoon he got busy baking cookies. He went up and down our street trying to sell cookies to anyone who would open the door. By the end of the weekend he had earned his half.

Not everyone bought cookies, and I asked him if hearing "no" made him feel bad.

He said, "I never thought about that. I just knew that if I didn't knock on the door the person inside couldn't say 'yes'. And if they said 'no', I figured they just weren't in the mood for cookies."

Despite the fact that his success rate was only about one in four, he didn't give up and he didn't take "no" personally.

Kevin believed in the company, the product and their value to the customer. But, he had stopped believing in himself. Reminded that a "no" was just a "no" and not a value judgment about him as a person, he started to shake the slump and get his sales groove back.

What's Important is when you expect to be defeated you beat yourself before anyone else has a chance.

Email me at chuck@durakis.com to share your thoughts.

Thanks,

Chuck