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CHUCK TALK: Things to take personally, and those you shouldn't

Store your passion for things that really matter to your success

BY CHUCK MACHE

A few weeks ago I was in North Carolina giving a keynote speech to a room full of CEO's and executives on "Building a Scalable Sales Team." The more speaking you do, the more you're able to gauge your success on a couple of factors. A key one is the "look" that you are getting from your audience while you are speaking. If they are really into it, eyes are keenly focused on you, heads are nodding in agreement at the right time, people are busy jotting down notes, they laugh at your impromptu comments and you can see listeners making quick and small comments to others that are indicative of their interest in what you are talking about. In short, they're into it and they get it.

From those and other indicators, I was certain that I had nailed the talk. After the speech, an individual came up to me seeking council on a particular situation that he was having in his company related to the topic I had just covered. During the conversation, he was telling me about a speaker he had listened to the day before when he said the following: "And he was the best speaker I have ever heard." Now I don't know about you, but that's not exactly what you want to hear when you are fresh off the podium, where you just gave it 100 percent.

I proceeded to let his comment really bother me for the rest of the day.

In fact, I really took it personally. As my day progressed, I let it affect my self-esteem to a point that I began questioning the very speech that I was certain that I had done a good job on.

I had phone calls and e-mails to respond to, several coaching calls, and a meeting to prepare for the next day. Honestly, as I went through my day, I was more focused on this gentleman's comment than I was on my work. By taking his comment so personally, I really let it hinder my productivity.

It got me to thinking about the danger in taking things personally in business. When should we take something personal and when shouldn't we? What should really bother us? How thick should our skin be? Should we let everything just roll off of us or is there an opportunity to fuel our self-motivation by taking some things personally in business?

I know what I don't believe. I don't believe the comment, "you can't take business personal." It's too broad of a statement and if you are any good at all, it's virtually impossible to adhere to it all of the time.

While I was flying home a day later, still slightly chewing on the innocent comment that I took way too personal, I made a list of 10 things not to take personally in business.

- A client or prospective client cancels a meeting. This happens every day so get another meeting.
- Disagreements over strategic direction. Not everybody agrees with you. Get over it.
- Calls or e-mails that go unreturned. Communicate with a different message or move on.
- Important decision-making that drags on. Perhaps this issue is more

important to you than others.

- Market conditions that are affecting your income. Take a new action.
- Criticism over your work. Find the pearls that will make you better.
- Those around you that move too slow. Blow by them or directly discuss your issue with them.
- People's innocent comments that hurt. Truthful or not, thicken your skin.
- A deal lost to a competitor. Have the courage to find out why you really lost and do your best to take corrective actions in the future.
- An overall bad day. It happens, tomorrow will be different.

On the other hand, I believe there are some things in business you should take very personally. Here are 10.

- Your work ethic. Only you can control how hard and focused you go.
- Your integrity in business. The value of your word is very personal.
- Your tactical execution. Disciplined thinking and implementation requires passion.
- Your ability to change midstream. No flexibility will limit your opportunities.
- Your pursuit of your goals. Pig-headed determination is very personal.
- Your productivity. Your scorecard is very personal.
- Your rank among your peer group. The truth as to where you stand is very personal.
- Your ability to take a punch. Take the wrong things personal and you can't take a punch.

- Providing an exceptional customer experience. Taking it extremely personal is required.
- Getting the most out of your team. True leadership is very personal.

You can't take business personal? I don't think so. That's too broad of a statement and there is too much about business that is personal. Take the things that fuel your success very personal? Yes, because I think that's good business.

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Chuck Mache, president of Chuck Mache Communications, is a speaker, executive coach and consultant. His work is dedicated to helping companies and individuals break through to their next level and he is the bestselling author of the *The Four Kinds of Sales People: How and Why They Excel and How You Can Too*. Learn more and sign up for Chuck's complimentary monthly newsletter at www.ChuckMache.com.