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RETAILING TONY GATTARI

You reap what you think

IN THIS MONTH'S column I want to focus on two tales which reinforce the truth that the most important retail strategy that will allow your business to prosper is your business attitude. Be careful to protect your mind during these challenging times. Remember what you focus on is what you will receive!

The first is the 'Story of the hot dog man'

A man lived by the side of the road and sold hot dogs. He was hard of hearing, so he had no radio. And he had trouble with his eyes, so he read no newspapers. But he sold good hot dogs. He put up signs on the highway advertising them. He stood on the side of the road and cried, "Buy a hot dog, Mister?" And people bought his hot dogs. He increased his meat and bun orders. He bought a bigger stove to take care of his trade.

He finally got his son to come home from university to help out. But then something happened. "Father, haven't you been listening to the radio?" his son said. "Haven't you been reading the newspaper? There's a world recession and war has erupted in the Middle East. People are losing their jobs. You need to save money"

Whereupon the father thought, "Well my son's been to university, he reads the papers and listens to the radio, and he ought to know".

So the father cut down his meat and bun orders, took down his signs, and no longer bothered to stand out on the highway to sell his hot dogs. His sales fell overnight. "You're right, son" the father said to the boy. "We certainly are in the middle of a big recession."

The second tale is "The Barber and the Salesperson"

Once there was a critical, negative barber who never had a pleasant thing to

say. A salesman came in for a haircut and mentioned that he was about to make a trip to Rome, Italy. "What airline are you taking and at what hotel will you be staying?" asked the barber.

When the salesman told him, the barber criticised the airline for being unreliable and the hotel for having horrible service. "You'd be better off to say at home", he advised.

"But I expect to close a big deal. Then I'm going to see the Pope", said the salesman.

"You'll be disappointed trying to do business in Italy", said the barber, "and don't count on seeing the Pope. He only grants audiences to very important people."

Two months later the salesman returned to the barber shop. "And how was your trip?" asked the barber.

"Wonderful!" replied the salesman. "The flight was perfect, the service at the hotel was excellent; I made a big sale, and I got to see the Pope".

"You got to see the Pope? What happened?"

The salesman replied, "I bent down and kissed his ring".

"No kidding! What did he say?"

"Well he placed his hand on my head and then said to me, "My son, where did you ever get such a lousy haircut?"

The moral of the story

Our challenge is to think right in a negative world. Every day we receive news that is less than uplifting. We all know people who can hardly wait for the future so they can look back at regret.

Negative thinking and living does many detrimental things in our life, it:

1. Creates doubt at critical decision times
2. Is contagious

3. Blows everything out of proportion
4. Limits our potential
5. Keeps us from enjoying life
6. Hinders others from making a positive response

Make a choice this week to see the damage that negative talking and thinking has on you, your business and your family. Make a choice to change. It will take time to reach new heights. Be patient, knowing that anything worthwhile is worth working for; although change itself is not progress, it is the price we pay for progress.

Finally in order to improve your attitude, here are some simple tips

- Be thankful for what you do have. Focus on what is good in your life at the moment, your friends, family and lifestyle
- Hang around the right people. You can't soar like an eagle when you hang around with the turkeys
- Invest in yourself. Be a student of people, learn, read books, listen to CDs in your car. Invest in your mind. Grow daily
- Believe in yourself. Never forget your self worth; invest daily in positive self talk and affirmations. ●

■ Tony Gattari was the General Manager of the computers and communications division of Harvey Norman and oversaw the growth of this business from \$12 million to \$565 million in nine years. He is the founder of The Achievers Group and is a professional speaker, business educator, author and corporate business advisor. Tony has worked with over 110 businesses around the world.

Website: www.achieversgroup.com.au

Email: tony@achieversgroup.com.au

Phone: (02) 9440 7373