

Reading People

A topic that often comes up in business and sales is one's ability to effectively "read people." Those who are the most gifted at reading people seem to have clairvoyant, telekinetic, extrasensory powers. They appear to have a crystal ball which provides them with insight and the ability to see into the future and know what a person will or won't do in a given situation. This gift saves them time and makes it possible for them to figure out quickly how to move forward with a prospect. Essentially it gives them an unfair advantage in sales!

People are habitual and in most instances they don't change over time unless they have a strong outside influence or they face a major life challenge and they decide they must change and then take action to do so. With this power you can tell if a prospect will act quickly or slowly. How the client will be influenced. How much information and what specific information will be required. What will be most important to them. Based on the prospect's character you will know whether they will be open, honest and forthright with their feedback, questions, comments and concerns. You can even tell if you can trust them. Generally speaking, what kind of person they are. You'll understand how you can create a stronger comfort with them. You'll know what messages and meaning is apparent in their body language, facial expressions and hand gestures. If they have a clear understanding of what they really want and freely express themselves. If they are cautiously guarded or they seem at ease with themselves. What they are like under varying conditions. How they handle pressure and stress. What they are like when they are experiencing extraordinary good conditions.

In the days of the philosophers, they began noticing patterns in people's behaviours and actions. They began to study these patterns and record their findings and observations. Then they categorized specific behaviors, characteristics, human qualities, traits and tendencies. They narrowed what they discovered into four primary personality styles. In more recent times, recognizing the validity and value of this knowledge, companies like Xerox created training programs designed to teach their sales force about the four primary personalities. They determined that if they empowered a sales representative with the necessary tools they could be more self-aware of their natural tendencies, strengths and weaknesses. They would gain an understanding of their personal likes and dislikes, needs wants and desires. Then, they would be able to recognize a prospect's personality style and the sales representative would be much more in tune with how to adjust their approach and deliver what the prospect wanted and needed in order to advance the sales process and successfully secure the business. In essence, they could teach them how to read people and determine what it was going to take to turn them into a customer!

In ancient times the names that were used for the personalities were Choleric, Sanguine, Melancholy and Phlegmatic. Today (in the same order) we use Driver, Expressive, Analytical and Amiable. Over the years, many training organizations and individuals have developed their own version of the four primary personalities model. The basic principles are the same, the only difference is the degree of depth that they may go into and the names they use to label each personality type. Some use colours to distinguish, others use animal names and so on.

Both simple and elaborate testing is available today that is designed to determine which personality type an individual is. Typically, a subject will score higher in one category compared to another. This high scoring category is referred to as your primary personality, the second highest score your secondary personality and so on. It is highly unlikely that a subject would score 100% in any one category in the testing results. People are made up of a mix of the traits and qualities but one style usually stands out above the rest. Understanding the four primary personalities give sales professionals a huge advantage in the sales arena. There are many books available that go into greater depth on the subject and many companies offer training on this to help people better understand the subject and apply it in their field.

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Getting Beyond Average!



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"To understand the world, one must not be worrying about one's self." - Albert Einstein