

What is Your Managerial Attitude?

Do you ever wonder why some people seem to always be successful and others never quite make it? Sure, the difference can be written off to bad luck, which may be a factor. You may also think that it is due to people's management skills. Granted, management skills are important for business success. However, the way in which you approach an opportunity or a problem has much to do with its successful resolution. So people's attitudes are important for business success. When applied to business I call this "managerial attitude."

Types of Attitudes

Below are five types of managerial attitudes. These attitudes pervade all aspects of business. The descriptions can help determine your managerial attitude.

1) Negative Attitude

We all know people with this type of attitude. Whenever a new idea is brought up, they instantly respond that it won't work. They may cite an individual or group that has already tried it and failed, or they may have another reason why it won't work. Although all ideas are not always good ideas and there may be reasons why an idea won't work, people with a negative attitude dismiss all ideas before they are fully discussed. As a result, good ideas are passed over.

The essence of this attitude is that trying something new is fraught with danger so we had better keep doing things the "same old way."

2) Reactive Attitude

Many people have a reactive managerial attitude. Although they may see change occurring, they don't respond to it. Their approach is "If I ignore it, it will go away." They often "stick their head in the sand" until the situation cannot be ignored any more. When they are forced to react to a situation, their options are often limited. In addition, their

decisions often involve only incremental change, just enough to get by.

The essence of this attitude is not to change until change is forced.

3) Victim Attitude

It's not my fault. I would have been successful if others weren't out to get me. In agriculture we often hear that the "family farmer" is being victimized by big corporations. In other words, someone is out-to-get the family farmer.

This attitude is popular because it allows us to abdicate the consequences of our decisions, especially when they turn out badly. The reason it failed is not because I made a bad decision. Rather, I was victimized. The fact that someone unfairly took advantage of me also allows me to solicit sympathy.

The central question to ask anyone with this attitude is, "Does anyone care enough to spend time victimizing you?" This is important because people with this attitude believe they are important enough to be victimized, which is often not the case. If you have something others want, they may try to find a way of taking it from you. But this is just business. They usually don't have any feelings about you, either positive or negative.

The essence of this attitude is that we are doomed to failure because others are victimizing us.

4) Planning Attitude

Planning is a "forward thinking" exercise. If I am planning I am thinking about the future. How the world will look in the future, how I should respond to it and how my business should look in the future.

The essence of this attitude is that by planning we are forcing ourselves to anticipate change and make plans that adapt to or take advantage of these changes.

5) Entrepreneurial Attitude

Entrepreneurs are innovators. They are always trying to figure out new ways of doing things. The status quo is not good enough. They search for opportunities and innovative ways of taking advantage of these opportunities.

Entrepreneurs like change, the more the better, because change provides opportunities. In fact, entrepreneurs have sometimes created change in order to provide new opportunities.

The essence of this attitude is that anticipating change and formulating innovative responses to the changes will result in success.

Locus of Control

A core factor for managerial attitude is “locus of control.” This factor is a central difference between the managerial attitudes discussed previously. This is a concept dealing with “who has control.” Some people believe they have control over their lives while others believe they don’t have control (outside forces have control.) Those with

a positive locus of control believe that success or failure in life is based on the choices they make during life. Those with a negative locus of control believe that success or failure in life depends on the circumstances in which they find themselves, and that the choices they make during life are controlled by their circumstances.

What is Your Managerial Attitude?

If you are managing a business, what is your managerial attitude? A personal self-assessment may be valuable. As you can see, some of these managerial attitudes are structured for success and others for failure. Although it is difficult to see ourselves as we really are, taking an honest look at ourselves can help sort out strengths and weaknesses.

Over time we probably show elements of each type of managerial attitude. However, one type will tend to be dominant. If you want to be successful in business in today’s environment, your managerial attitude needs to be dominated by planning and entrepreneurship.

Table 1. Summary of business attitudes

Attitude	Business Environment	Response to Change	Taking Action (decisions)
Negative Attitude	Should be ignored	Change is bad	Is riskier than not taking action
Reactive Attitude	Is too complex to understand	Change should be avoided	React to problems
Victim Attitude	Is controlled by others	Change brings threats	Blame others for bad decisions
Planning Attitude	Needs monitoring and analyzing	Change should be anticipated	Actions are the result of planning
Entrepreneurial Attitude	Requires proactive search for opportunities	Aggressively seek out change	Always ready to take action

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