

Have You Thought about the Alternatives When Stressed?

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The last quarter of the year is loaded with stress for many people. There is the year end close and with it, the pressure for additional sales. With increased sales, there are returns and complaints and, possibly, many additional hours of overtime. The good news is that there are three options for handling stress. The challenge is to remember one does have options. The individual can avoid, accept or alter his stressful situation. The correct decision depends upon the circumstance.

Choice # 1 — Avoid

There are times when avoiding the stress altogether makes perfect sense. For example, if a customer has a serious complaint, a phone rep may choose to defer the call to his/ her manager since he may not have authority to make the adjustment the caller is requesting. If a phone rep has had a very difficult call, he may also choose not to go back in cue until he believes he is mentally ready. However, ones' manager would not like it if all calls were passed forward and if the phone rep did not pick up on calls in cue. The circumstance must warrant the decision.

Furthermore, not all stressful situations relate to the outside customer. Some times, stress is caused by co-workers and bosses who are negative or lacking in personal integrity. Reps can avoid interacting with negative or critical peers by changing break times, lunch times or even start times. Managers and supervisors are usually amenable to such changes as long as they do not inconvenience customers. On the other hand, poor relationships with managers and supervisors are hard to rectify. The best alternative for avoiding these situations may ultimately be a job transfer or job change.

Choice # 2 — Accept

Another way of handling stress is to accept that jobs are stressful from time to time. With that determination, it is easier not to let stress become an aggravation. Once reps accept that stress is part of their jobs, they can be more helpful to their frustrated customers.

Additionally, reps that recognize and accept that they have stressful jobs at certain times of year can shore themselves up for the pressure of the season by planning ahead, working out in a gym or setting aside time for themselves.

Choice #3 — Alter

Finally, the third option is to alter the situation with problem solving techniques. Reps who alter their situations constantly look for new ways to make their jobs easier and their interactions with customers more successful.

For example, if reps find that customers get annoyed with them because they do not have product knowledge, they can alter the situation by learning two new products each week. If the reps frequently are asked to repeat, they can pause longer between each statement and end the call sooner because the customer will be able to digest the information more readily. Additionally, if there are things in the reps life that make them come to work frazzled during a peak period, they eliminate them. They shop early for Christmas and make alternative arrangements for their children's activities. They also temporarily delegate things to other family members and ask for help when they need it.

While the stress of one's job can feel overwhelming, it is important to remember that there are options. One does not have to feel hopeless. The individual can avoid, accept or alter his circumstances by making the appropriate changes. Since stress affects one's health, it is critical to learn to manage it, particularly when there is seasonal stress.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.

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