

A Matter of Attitude

There is an elusive “something” which every manager yearns for in each of their employees — *attitude!*

What does it mean?

“Get me someone with attitude. I’m sick of these people who just don’t have what it takes.”

Have you ever heard that before? It’s usually said with a modicum of frustration (or even anger) in the voice. But what is this mystical thing called “attitude”?

More importantly, is it something which can be manufactured — called forth, as a genie from the lamp?

The Basic Elements

Everyone knows what “attitude” means in its literal sense. But when used in this context, there is a much broader scope to the meaning. It can mean different things to different people, but here are some of the elements:-

- Interested in the job.
- Does not need constant supervision.
- Can think ahead of the game.
- Takes a positive view of things.
- Wants to contribute.

There are probably many more items you could list, but this will suffice to set the scene.

And there is a way in which you can view these things which is useful. Consider each element

within the framework of the basic production formula:-

IDEAS + ACTION = RESULTS

How do basic elements of attitude stack up against each of these production factors?



Interest in Job

A person with a good attitude has lots of ideas about their job. They are constantly seeking new ways to improve things.

They also get a kick out of producing the results of their work and quite easily show a degree of pride in what they create.

Their interest is high because they are good at what they do.

No Supervision

Don’t you hate it when you have this constant feeling that you can’t turn your back on a particular employee for too long. If you do, the wheels tend to fall off, right?.

By contrast, a person with a good attitude just gets on with it. You find you have time to look after your own job because you know that their area is under control.



A Matter of Attitude

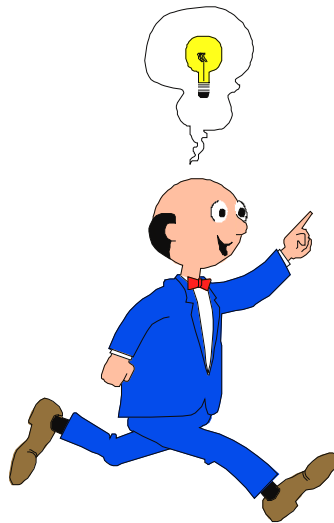
The actions performed by a person with a good attitude can be relied upon. You know they will get the required results without your needing to constantly check up on them or direct their actions.

Can Think Ahead

What's "thinking ahead" really mean? It means that the person not only has a good grasp of the basic concepts of the job, they can also **envisage the end results.**

The good ones can even see things in their area which **you** have overlooked!

A person with the wrong attitude often cannot see where they are going or what they are supposed to achieve. You have to keep pointing the way for them — a painful chore!



Takes a Positive View of Things

This one can drive a manager right up the wall. If you only get negative comments and excuses from someone, you're looking at a person who is unable to handle the action. They run into barriers and simply stop and complain.

A person with the right attitude looks at barriers as the **fun part** of the job. They can't wait to get stuck into them — to find some new ideas on how to overcome them and to go over, under, around or through the barriers to get their result.

Wants to Contribute

When an employee has a "good attitude", they just naturally want to contribute to the forward progress of things. They jump at the chance to

help out when they can. They offer to do things which are not in their area, but which will definitely contribute to the overall results.

Why do they do this? Why is it apparently so hard for others to assume this attitude?

It all comes down to understanding the **ideas** which underpin the operation and recognising the correct **actions** which will bring about the end **results.**

A Top Performer's Attitude

It's clear from the above that the definition of attitude closely aligns with that of a top performer.

Attitude has to do with getting results — taking responsibility for their achievement.

Can "Attitude" be Manufactured?

In some cases, the answer is yes. If you can help an employee to improve their performance, you will see an improvement in their attitude.



For those employees who do not have a natural ability to operate effectively with their ideas, actions and results, (i.e. who are not top performers), there is still some hope.

A Matter of Attitude

1. Make the basic ideas which support their function very clear to them. Take time to spell it out so they really do see where their job fits in with the rest, and where it comes from.
2. Help them remove the barriers to their ability to act. But try to do it in such a way that they learn from it. In particular, try to engineer this so they get a personal win out of the exercise. In this way, next time they are confronted with similar barriers, they will have the confidence to be able to act alone.
3. Make sure they know **precisely** what the results of their job are. Make the results more important than the actions they perform. And acknowledge them for their achievements.

Of course, the most effective way of ensuring you have people with good attitudes is to hire top performers!

