

I was in the car with a few young children the other day who were laughing and talking all the while playing on their Game Boys™. They were all playing the same game and they were looking over each other's shoulders to see who was winning!! All you could hear was the click of the keys and their impatience to "win" the game first!!! Then, from the back of the car, came a voice crying out:

"I WON"

The others started yelling -

"LET'S DO IT AGAIN"

Everyone is always looking to gain that competitive edge and when they don't succeed it's the will and perseverance to try again that can help the next "win" be theirs!

Sometimes when we compete with one another, it's the pace of the game that helps us achieve that winning goal. Then there are those "other" times when sitting back and re-evaluating who we are and where we need to go to "win" the game are the key ingredients to our future success. The quick wins are always great!! However, the "win" that's achieved through setting a goal and achieving it in the long term is often the most satisfying victory. It's those times when we, through discipline and a positive attitude, achieve what many may deem "the impossible."

In our current business environment, there are many companies that are experiencing a competitive advantage. There are others that are losing market share. In both cases, opportunities exist for improved performance.

For those suffering in this downturn, they are (or should be) "stepping back" and re-evaluating their business as a whole. What will give them a "competitive edge" in these tough times? What is a competitive edge? It is an advantage over competitors whether in athletics, academics or business. No matter the company (or the person) we should always be looking to enhance our competitive edge. In these tough economic times, there may be even greater opportunity, as well as need, to focus on this. How do we find, develop or strengthen our competitive edge?

We have seen some unfortunate examples in recent years of how not to gain a competitive edge by the use of "performance enhancing drugs" in baseball and other sports. The lesson? Whatever we do to gain a competitive edge must be legal, ethical, positive and real. Do we really improve our self-confidence, self-esteem or skills (whether in business, academics or sports)



by using artificial, external means? If we pursue that route, then the competitive edge can be purchased by anyone and it is not unique to us or our business.

How do we build real competitive advantage whether personally or in business? Rather than working furiously at what we have always done, even though the times and challenges have changed, we should step back and ask ourselves the following questions:

- *What are our strengths and weaknesses?*
- *What are our customers current needs in these changed conditions? How can we fill those needs?*
- *Can we improve our customer service for existing clients?*
- *Are we communicating with existing clients how our services and products are even more valuable in solving the new challenges of these changed times?*
- *Can we identify ways to find new clients?*

The bottom-line for any person or business ultimately lies in their sales ability. When times change, the methods for sales and service success that worked in the past may not work today. Without sales and quality customer service, companies will fail. There are situations where the nurturing, customer-focused sales person can succeed. There are times when a hard-driving risk taker is the person needed to innovate and bring in new business. In times like these, companies need to really look whether they have the "right people in the right jobs" (alignment with customer needs and company goals) and/or give these sales/service employees new tools to guide them in "how" to succeed in this new economy.

The competitive edge is always there if we take the time to look within (turn weaknesses to strengths) and to look out at the changed landscape and figure out what customers and potential customers need to succeed in these new times.

Today more than ever, the contributions of each person need to be maximized for a company to succeed and the challenges of keeping a motivated, dedicated work force are even more daunting. The PI® is always there to help you lead, manage and motivate your human capital to best effect. Today, we also offer the objective [Selling Skills Assessment Test \(SSAT\)](#) and [Customer Focused Selling \(CFS\)](#) programs to help with alignment and maximization of the sales and service efforts that can help you **REDEFINE THAT COMPETITIVE EDGE** in this new economy!

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