

The “Best” Test

Chris Widener

I spoke to a group of salespeople in Kansas City on the topic “Simply the Best.” So as I prepared, I asked myself, “What characteristics would help someone pass the “Best” test? That is, what are the characteristics of those who become the “best” at what they do? Here are the thoughts I shared with them:

- ❖ **The Best are Optimists.** You can’t get to the top if you don’t think that there is a top or if you think you can’t make it. One characteristic of those who reach the peak is that they always believe that things can get better or be done better. This pushes them on to be their best.
- ❖ **The Best have Vision.** They can see ahead of the pack. Their eyes aren’t locked into the here and now. They see the bright future and what things will look like when they reach their destiny. While working hard for today, they live for the future! They do what Stephen Covey calls begin with the end in mind.
- ❖ **The Best Relentlessly Pursue Excellence.** The status quo is not for them. They want to be the best and experience the best. And that means giving their best. They go the extra mile so that in everything they do, in everything they say and think, they are striving for excellence.
- ❖ **The Best have a Life Long Habit of Personal Growth.** They don’t want to stay at the level they are at. They want to grow in their work, their intellect, their spirituality, their relationships, and in every area of their life. And they discipline themselves to put themselves in situations wherein they grow. Personal growth doesn’t “just happen.” You choose to grow.... Also, read more. The old saying is true: Leaders are readers. So are those who pass the “Best” test.
- ❖ **The Best Understand that They will be Pushed by the Competition—and They Welcome It.** Like the lead runner in the race who has someone on his heels, the best know that the competition is right behind them. They love it though because they know that the competition keeps them from becoming lazy and resting on their laurels. Instead, the competition pushes them to go faster and to achieve more—to remain the best by forging ahead.

- ❖ **The Best have a Quest for Leadership.** Someone has to lead—it may as well be the best! Those who attain it get there because they want to. They want to lead and help make a difference. And they want to be equipped with the skills necessary to lead others on to a better place.
- ❖ **The Best Leave a Legacy.** They aren't in it just for themselves, though they will surely reap the rewards of being the best. Rather, they build things that last beyond themselves, things that can be enjoyed by others as well.
- ❖ **The Best are Adept at the Two Most Important Pieces of Time and Personal Management: Prioritize and Execute....**First, prioritize your activities. The important stuff goes on the top. Then, execute: do them. The best have habits and discipline that get them to the top by doing the best things and doing them first.
- ❖ **The Best Focus on Building Relationships.** Success does not come alone. Everyone who achieves much does it with the help of countless others. How do the Best get others to help them? They treat them right. They embrace them and help them. People become the best because they help other people, and people like them.
- ❖ **The Best Make no Excuses.** When they fail they admit it and move on. They get back up and do it right the next time. They let their actions speak louder than their words. They stand tall and do the right thing the next time. No excuses, just results.
- ❖ **The Best Understand that the Good is the Enemy of the Best.** Yes, they could say, "this is good." But that would mean they have settled for less than the best. Many people think that good is good. Good is not good. Good is the enemy because it keeps us from the best. Choose your side: the good or the best. The Best choose, you guessed it, the Best.
- ❖ **The Best Dare to Dream.** While others live the mundane and settle into a life they never bargained for, the Best dream of a better life. And then they take the risks necessary to achieve their dreams. They live by Teddy Roosevelt's quote: *Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the grey twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.*