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The principle of the offensive applies to business whether you own yours or work for one.

The goal of a business is to generate sales, revenues, and cash flow that are sufficient to assure the survival and growth of the enterprise. In business terms, a sales and marketing effort against entrenched competition is the equivalent of leading armies against entrenched enemy forces. In both cases, there is the possibility of success or failure, victory or defeat. In both cases, the commitment of the continuous offensive is essential for long-term success.

Business is not solely about making a profit. Business is about trying to create and keep a customer. When a business creates and keeps sufficient customers and provides them with products and services in a cost-effective manner, profits are the result. Offensive action in business, the creating and keeping of customers, supported by the artillery of advertising, marketing, public relations, promotional efforts, and sales activities, are the essential requirements for victory.

All strategic planning is therefore customer planning. All actions that take the offensive in the marketplace--in the sense of proactiveness and competing to win--are aimed at winning customers. The strategy of excellent quality in serving customers better than competitors do is the key to winning in tough markets.

Now if you want to get going and

staying on the offensive, then it is vital to think like an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is someone who takes the risk of a new business venture in the pursuit of profit. Even if you're not starting a new venture, there is probably something new from within or outside your business that you can explore and exploit as a new opportunity. Because entrepreneurship is inherently risky due to no guarantees of success or victory, it will require great courage, daring, and willingness on your part to go forward in the face of potential loss.

Successful business people think entrepreneurially most of the time. Even in a large company, the ability to think like an entrepreneur in a fast-changing market is absolutely essential for survival and growth.

Entrepreneurs and business leaders have three special thinking qualities that make them different from the average person. These are: proactivity, responsibility, and result orientation.

Business leaders are proactive rather than reactive. They think, plan, and act decisively. They do not wait for things to happen--they make things happen. They seize the initiative whenever it is necessary, and they never stop until they achieve their goals.

This is quite different from the average person who tends to be passive in the face of adversity and rapid change. Most people are just waiting for someone to come along and tell them what to do and to help them out. They play it safe and never volunteer for anything. They are what Theodore Roosevelt called, “Those timid souls who know neither

victory nor defeat.”

The second quality of entrepreneurial thinking is that of responsibility. Entrepreneurs accept total responsibility for themselves, for their companies, and for everything they do. Instead of making excuses, they make progress. They don't blame other people for their problems. They refuse to complain. They don't criticize or condemn. Instead, they say, “I am responsible!” They take charge, and get on the job. George Washington said, “Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.”

The top people in every field today view themselves as self-employed. They act as if they own the company they work for. They treat everything that happens in their organization as if it affects them personally. They are emotional, intense, and committed to the success of the business they work for. They believe in the concept of winning, of victory, and they are determined to help bring it about.

The third quality of leaders and entrepreneurs is that of result orientation. A continued focus on results keeps you moving forward. Result orientation forces you to continually set priorities and work on your highest value tasks. You continually ask, “What results are expected of me?” Whatever your answer to that question, minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, that is what you should be working on all the time.

So if you want your business to succeed over the long haul, it is vital to go and stay on the offensive.

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