



The Power of POSITIVITY

Laura Ashley-Timms, the Licensing Industry's very own Coach, has teamed up with Total Licensing to challenge you to improve yourself and your business.

So read on... and then send in your questions to be answered in our regular 'Coaching Corner' feature.

Having just had the most difficult and stressful 2 days, writing this article was an interesting experience! Facing adversity whilst remaining positive is a major challenge for most of us but incredibly powerful...

I know that by the time I finish this I am going to feel fantastic! Just writing that line has immediately changed my mood for the better. The 'Power of Positivity' is at work in real time!

So is your glass half full or half empty?

This is a huge topic. If you search for Positive Thinking on Google you will get 48 million references! So clearly we are only going to be able to scratch the surface here today.

I would like to introduce you to two characters – one, in my opinion, runs his organisation with a 'Half Empty' philosophy. The second gentleman lives his life 'Half Full'.

Introducing Mr Half Empty

On paper Mr Half Empty has everything. He is a successful young entrepreneur. He has a beautiful wife, a young family, a garage full of sexy and flash cars, three large houses and a fast growing business.

Sounds great, based on this description I would expect to meet a man who is light hearted, positive and inspirational to be around and learn from. His staff would be motivated and relish their interactions with him...

Working for Mr Half Empty

This is not a pleasant experience. Mr Half Empty has an interesting style. His basic assumption is that everyone is trying to get one over on him and since he can do a better job than they can, it is his job to constantly prove it.

As a result, things regularly grind to a halt in the office. This week alone the milkman has stopped delivering the office milk (Mr H.E. thinks the milk bill may have an error so has held up payments), the Legal Director is not allowed a shredder for confidential documents (it isn't a legal requirement), members of the IT team have to drive for 8 hours to attend meetings to save fractionally on the train fare (a serious health and safety risk), the sales team have been forced to "over promise" customers in order to meet unrealistic sales targets (leading to negative PR) and staff regularly resign. The expectation in the office is that any work that is presented will be torn to shreds. He can always outwit you and find the one question you forgot to cover before humiliating you in front of the room. There is little room for negotiation or consultation. It is his way or the highway. I can tell that you are all dying to work there.

The novelty of his success story wears thin pretty quickly. On average after about 3 months most people can't stand working there. A few loyal hangers on stay around hoping that some of the wealth may rub off, but most of the brighter ones can only take so much of this negativity before they head for the door.

What's the impact of this Half Empty philosophy?

- Decisions take twice as long, as you constantly have to prove and reprove your case
- Staff are demotivated and there is a high staff turnover
- Creativity is stifled
- People feel undervalued
- There is a fear to make a decision
- Apathy prevails
- Managers have no real credibility and are constantly undermined in front of their teams
- Negotiations are win-lose
- Suppliers rarely deal with the company twice

The success is short lived, is not sustainable and the business has to be sold.

Introducing Mr Half Full

On paper Mr Half Full has very little. He works for the minimum wage in a supermarket. Lives in a modest house with his family and saves hard to take them on one simple holiday a year. Sounds tough. Based on this description I would expect to meet a man who is down hearted, negative and uninspirational. Hardly a role model for positivity...

Working with Mr Half Full

Every morning Mr Half Full gets to work at 5a.m. He greets his colleagues warmly and with a smile, collects his fresh fruit and vegetables from the stock room, takes them to the shop floor and proceeds to spend several hours building the most glorious, en-

ting and creative food display you have every seen. He does this in full knowledge that within a few hours of opening, customers will have decimated the display, yet every morning he comes back and does it again to the same incredibly high standards.

At 2pm he completes his day's work and goes home to enjoy the communion of his family. He spends exceptional quality time with his children.

I learnt about Mr Half Full from one of the supermarket's most senior directors. This man was humbled by the Grocer's commitment to outstanding performance, the pleasure with which he served customers, his constant pride in building an exceptional display day after day, just because "it looked nice". The director was inspired by him, learnt from him and found being around him amazingly motivational. As did all the staff that came into contact with him. He provided a positive force in the supermarket and his positive energy rubbed off on those around him.

What was the impact of Mr Half Full's Philosophy?

- Sales in his section beat all company targets as the displays quite literally looked "good enough to eat"!
- The standards of display far exceeded the best efforts of the company's marketing department
- Other staff were constantly inspired to improve their performance and take outstanding pride in their work
- Senior staff were inspired by him
- Customers enjoyed great service and were loyal to the store
- There was a noticeable positive energy in the store
- Staff were more proactive in helping each other

And all this positivity generated by one of the more 'junior' members of the company.

Don't Worry, Be Happy

The cynics amongst you may compare the complexity of the successful entrepreneurs life with the simplicity of the Grocer's (are you being 'glass half empty?!') and summarise that it's

easier to be positive when your life is straightforward. But, consider the stress of raising a large family with limited means in this modern world and you will quickly recognise the ease with which those with the least can quickly become glass half empty.

The point to take away from the stories of these 2 gentlemen is that positivity is not reserved for the rich and successful or for those in positions of power. We all have the choice, whatever our positions in life and business, to choose our attitude and to have a positive impact on our own lives and the lives of those we impact. Yes, if we are fortunate enough to be in leadership positions then a positive attitude can have a wide influence, but don't underestimate the knock-on impact that an outwardly positive attitude can have at any level within your organisation. It is as simple as making the decision to think differently. It costs nothing except the commitment to change.

When I said at the beginning of this article "by the time I have finished this article I will feel great" I genuinely felt my spirits lift.

Just changing my language changed my mood and my mindset. Simultaneously I also changed my body language, I felt myself sit up straighter and type faster, with more enthusiasm. All these positive changes from one simple statement!

At the extremes, people have used positive thinking to beat cancers, motivate underdogs, defeat huge armies, and overcome the worst of personal tragedies – take the example set to us by Superman himself Christopher Reid who rededicated himself to working for children after his terrible spinal injury.

We can convince ourselves that life is all doom and gloom as easily as we can convince ourselves that things are going to work out and be fantastic. So why would you ever choose the half empty option?

So what are you going to choose to do?

Mr Half Empty's success is short lived and superficial. His business is not sustainable, his marriage is strained and he rarely spends time with his

children. What sort of role model is he?

Many of us aspire to be wealthy – I applaud this. So be wealthy AND have a positive attitude. Be wealthy in all areas of your life, not just in your bank balance.

Remember, you are what you think!

Next steps – taking Action

It's time to be honest with yourself and think of three examples when you could have been more positive.

1. Next time when you are in the same situation what could you do differently to be Mr Half Full?
2. How might you change your actions?
3. What language would you use to be more positive?
4. How might this impact those around you?
5. How might the outcome change for the better?
6. How good would you feel if you made these changes?

Positive and Negative Energies are BOTH contagious – so choose to be Positive!

Coaching Corner

Q: I have a member of my team who is never receptive to suggestions or new ideas. He is always looking for faults and is a demotivating force to the rest of the team. Any ideas of how I can change his behaviour?

Commercial Director

A: Whilst it is your job to 'manage' him, only HE can change his behaviour and he has to do so willingly. It is therefore important to start by understanding WHY he currently behaves this way and to find out if he is aware of the impact his behaviour has on others. Thus you will in turn learn what would motivate him to change. This is a simple process and requires an honest 1-2-1 conversation. Ask him lots of open questions, learn what he 'gets' from his current style.

It may be that he fears failure and feels safer in his comfort zone. If he was to learn that trying something new that didn't work was a 'success' (because it contributes to the learning process for his next attempt) then he may become more open to change. It is also likely that if he was to become more AWARE of the impact he has on others he would be more motivated to change.

He needs to know that he has your support to try new things. You may also want to look at your language and what signals you are giving him that may be influencing his behaviour too. Are you quick to criticise? Do you praise and encourage new ideas? Are you leading by example?

Don't forget that for readers of Total Licensing Laura is offering a completely FREE no obligation 30 minute coaching consultation.

So go on and pick up the phone, what have you got to lose? Your only risk is spending half an hour talking about yourself...Contact Laura Ashley-Timms at Notion Limited. Tel (UK) 0845 4568217 (Int) +44 (0) 1926 840078 Mobile +44 (0) 7968 164083 laura@notionltd.com www.notionltd.com