

PEAK PERFORMANCE

For the Technical Professional

Customer Service
Communication Skills
Sales Skills

Jim Johnson



escopress

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PEAK Performance for The Technical Professional

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PREFACE: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This book is designed especially for technical professionals who, in addition to handling the technical and hands-on tasks related to their jobs on a day-to-day basis, also provide front-line customer service.



Jim Johnson is nationally recognized as a writer, instructor, and workshop leader, and he has vast experience working with people he refers to as technical professionals.

His experience isn't just theory-based learning. He worked in the field as a technician before moving on to teaching full time in a technical and trade school, working closely with technicians from various fields. He also served as Director of Education, and as a community college instructor and administrator, before turning his attention full time to developing and presenting workshops for technicians in a wide variety of trades and crafts.

Jim's commitment in this book is to offer ideas on how you can learn, grow, and develop as a professional in your chosen field.

Understand in advance that Jim doesn't pull any punches.

He takes a straightforward, tell-it-like-it-is approach as he talks about subjects such as what it really means to be a professional, along with communication skills, sales skills, and other topics that are just as important to you as the technical side of your job.

This book is designed to benefit you, the technical professional. Which means that our focus is the development of your ability to provide top-notch service to customers. The theory behind this philosophy has **two fundamental components**. And here they are:

1. **A technical professional's ability to recognize the customer's needs.**
2. **Developing the skills to express solutions to those needs.**

And now that we've presented the "what" about this book, here's some information on the "how."

First, we want you to dismiss the idea that this book is purely academic in its style as though it were assigned reading for a class you're taking. Often, when we consider the idea of taking a class, it can conjure up images of what we may have encountered in our school experiences from elementary school on through high school.



And those experiences were ordinarily along the line of showing up, sitting quietly to listen to whatever a particular Wizard-At-The-Front-Of-The-Room had to say, then moving on to gain as much as possible from the next Wizard-At-The-Front-Of-The-Room.....Mostly a one-way exchange of ideas.

We want you to consider this book more like a do-it-yourself workshop. And, in a workshop, there's a two-way exchange of ideas, which means the person in the front of the room acts as a facilitator more than a teacher.

Obviously, a book can't directly provide an opportunity for immediate exchange of ideas, but you can still treat this experience like a workshop. To do that, be an active reader. When we present an idea, stop, and think about what it means to you personally.

Ask yourself "How can what I just read honestly be a benefit? How can I put this idea to work in my specific situation?"

And, by the way, when we talk about benefits, we mean benefits for you as well as your customer. Because after all, if you're a **professional** who's taking good care of your customer, then you're absolutely entitled to the benefits that result from providing excellent customer service. We'll talk more about that as we move on through this and the subsequent chapters of this book.

Before we get into that in more detail, we want to present a **fundamental** idea about learning. And here it is....

Taking this kind of reasonable, matter-of-fact approach to addressing concerns is an effective method of achieving success. Being paralyzed and unable to take the next step because of “information” and/or beliefs that may or may not be based on fact leads to the opposite result and robs you of not only enjoying the material and measurable benefits of your success, but also the personal satisfaction you have every right to enjoy when you have accomplished what you set out to do.



Your Personal Mission Statement

If you’ve ever been employed, the company that hired you, whether they were an international corporation with locations all around the world or a small business with less than 10 employees, they most likely had a **mission statement**. It’s a fundamental component of the philosophy of doing good business. Without a mission statement, mistakes, innocent as they may be, can be made. Decisions made can be inconsistent with past or future decisions, resulting in confusion (a main stressor in the workplace), and even chaos.

In short, confusion or chaos can ensue if a business doesn’t employ some fundamental method of policy and procedures that provides guidelines for employees. With a mission statement in place, employees can make decisions about the “right” thing to do in a given situation, whatever the specifics are relative to that situation. For example, if a component of a company’s mission statement focuses on the fundamental philosophy of honesty when it comes to customers, employees instantly know what to do, no matter how uncomfortable or difficult it may be for them or the customer. And, the reason this is true and simple, is because a company mission statement is based on values.

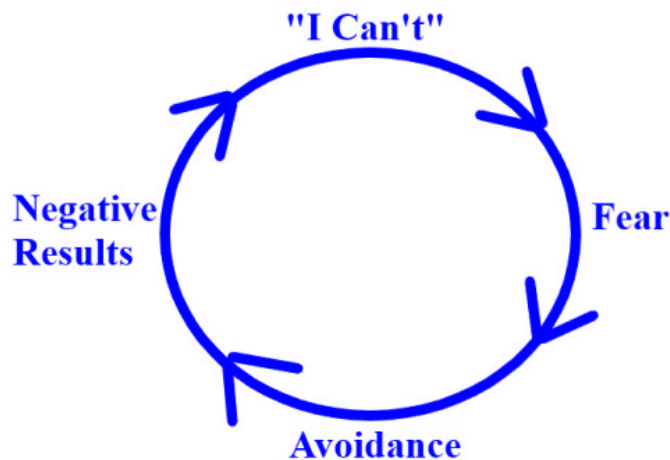
What are values? Simply the rules, or if you prefer, the principles, you live your life by when it comes to being honest, doing the right thing when interacting with other people. Most of us learned about values early on from our parents and Kindergarten teachers. Things like:

- ⇒ Don’t steal.
- ⇒ If you make a mistake that hurts somebody, say you’re sorry.
- ⇒ Always play fair.
- ⇒ Share with others.

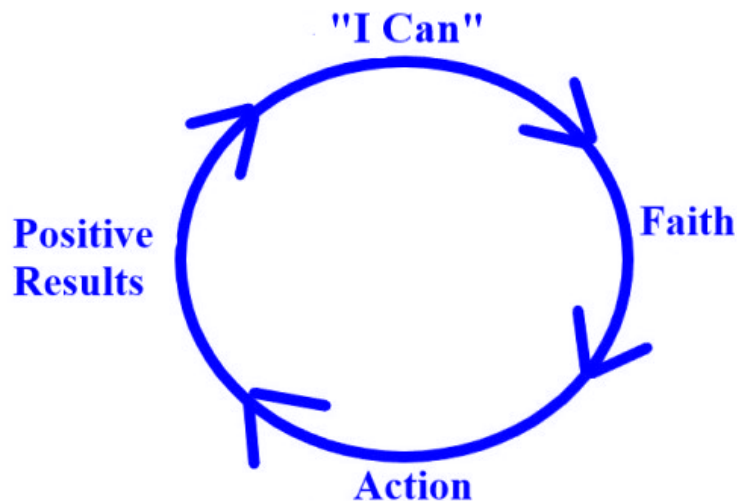


One way to make all this into a manageable idea is to consider something we like to call the two **Circles of Life**. The first circle shown below illustrates a cycle of events that begins with a limiting belief.

Note that an **"I can't" belief** leads someone to being crippled by **fear**, which means that they will avoid taking a chance, which results in **negative results**. And negative results leading to even more limiting beliefs. And, well, you get the idea.



In this case, going around in circles is certainly a bad thing. However, going around in circles can also be a good thing, as we're showing in our second circle of events.



Here, the **"I Can" belief** leads to **faith**. And a simple definition of faith is belief, or even "belief without evidence", which leads to **action**.

And when we pursue action, whether it's always right on the mark or not, which means we just line up and try again, we will experience **positive results**. Which contributes to an **"I Can" belief**, which, well As we said in regard to the **"I Can't" circle**, again, you get the idea.

Chapter Six: What Customers Really Want

In previous chapters we delved deeply into the idea of professionalism, discussing beliefs, habits and attitudes, communicating effectively with customers, and how all of those things can be considered in a pursuit of excellence... remember, a **Professional** in pursuit of **Excellence**, takes **Action** based on their **Knowledge** to do the best job they can do.

The action we're talking about here, of course, is providing outstanding customer service and using your own best judgment in any situation, along with using your technical skills to get your job done right. And one aspect of that is to have an above average understanding of what a customer wants from any business they buy from.

What Customers Want: By The Numbers

So here's what we're going to do. We're going to list the five things that are most important to a customer, *and* we're going to list them in their order of importance. Here they are:

1. Full Disclosure

Yes, that's right....**full disclosure**. The number one thing a customer wants from any company that they buy a product or service from is full disclosure. A customer wants to have all the information they need to make an intelligent buying decision, and being blind-sided after making a decision is the one thing they like the least about dealing with a company, and the people that represent that company... you.

We want to pause here for a moment to mention that, sometimes, when we begin this list in our workshops, we get some strange looks.

Somebody might even say, "Whoa there... that can't be right. That's not the number one thing on a person's mind when they're buying something."

Or they might say, "Well, that might be true in your business, or, it might be true where you come from....but you don't know how people are in my area. They're only interested in one thing."

And everybody in the workshop knows what they are talking about. And *you* know what we're talking about....but we're going to stick with the idea that customers, whether they can explain it to you or not, always have an underlying concern about trusting the companies they do business with, and they need to be comfortable about that.

Full disclosure is the number one thing a customer wants from a company, and we'll talk about that *other issue* when it comes up on the list.

That said, we'll move on the next thing that's most important to a customer.



Jim's Notes On Chapter Six

Imagine for a moment...

...you've just entered a room and found a group of four of your colleagues debating the three laws of business success:

- Credibility
- Clarity
- Price



This is your first exposure to this information presented just this way, so it's totally new to you when one of those in the group hands you the list of the three laws.

But the discussion has been going on long enough on the subject for these four people to form opinions... strong opinions... on the subject.

What comments do you think you'll hear from those who want to be heard and are anxious to tell you what they think about the information?

(You're scanning the one-word titles and the one-sentence explanations we've presented and trying to listen at the same time).

Since you know all of these people well, are you hearing what you would expect from them based on things they've said before and what you know about their 'attitude' toward their work to be?

Would one of them just be dismissing the idea as nonsense?

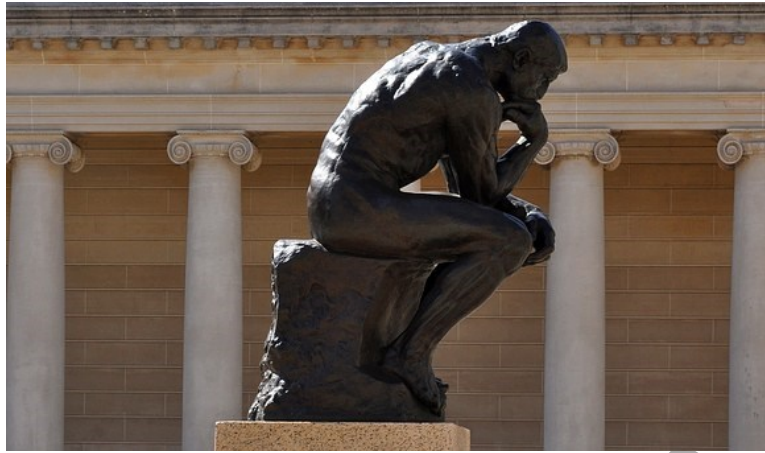
Would another person be excited about what they just learned?

Would one of them be puzzled, wondering if the idea really makes sense?

Would one of them be eager to know what you thought about the idea since they respect you and want to know your opinion?

My reason for setting up this imaginary situation for you is that I want you to recall a point we made on page 5 of this book, the idea that sometimes the largest part of learning isn't gathering new information, but rather letting go of things you have been sure are the "truth".





Points to Ponder



“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
~Theodore Roosevelt

Questions To Consider

How can I put the information in this chapter to use in my career as a technician?

The most important thing I learned about myself when I read this chapter is:
