

Master the triangle of success

ATTITUDE MATTERS Knowledge, skills and attitude make up the three most important ingredients of career success. While knowledge and skills can be gained, can one be trained to have the right 'attitude'? **V Pradeep Kumar** explains

Where do you think you will be career-wise after a decade, as compared to your classmates? Do you think only top-ranking students become successful in life? What do you feel might happen to that classmate of yours who is the butt

of jokes and ridicule?

If you believe only academic brilliance leads to success, you must revalidate your opinion; or read books such as, *'Think and Grow Rich'* by Napoleon Hill, which is the summation of hundreds of success stories.

The key questions in your mind should be: How do people become successful in their chosen professions? What's the secret of their success?

Evaluation of success stories of statesmen, business-persons, actors, writers, educationists, is a revelation and one can come up with several concepts behind their success. A proven concept is the 'Triangle of Success', representing the three success ingredients: Knowledge, Skills and Attitude.

The magic triangle

Which success ingredient is more important? Even though difficult to generalise, in the work environment, the stress is more on 'attitude', with the belief that 'knowledge' and 'skills' required for the job can be imparted. However, in general, the Triangle of Success is equilateral, affirming that all three aspects are equally vital.

Knowledge: In an academic environment, knowledge represents the core curriculum, irrespective of the courses. To illustrate, in a Management course, to make learning more comprehensive, the curriculum includes such diverse subjects as Economics, Finance, Human Resources, Organisational Behaviour, apart from Management. Knowledge can be said to be the foundation for success.

Skills: Our educational system focuses on imparting knowledge for a career and not on essential soft skills. For example, any career requires skills such as planning, time management, logical reasoning, inter-personal relations, presentation skills etc. to apply knowledge in a practical situation.

Attitude: While knowledge and skills are essential, they are

not adequate for success. A study attributed to Harvard University found that people are employed, 85 per cent of the time because of their attitude, and only 15 per cent of the time because of how smart they are and how many facts and figures they know. Surprisingly, almost 100 per cent of educational money goes into teaching facts and figures which account for only 15 per cent of success at work!

Attitude includes key aspects like honesty, integrity, self-confidence, cooperative attitude, expectations, energy levels, optimism and so on, which are critical for career success.

Interdependency of ingredients

The desire to be successful in a chosen profession is widespread. This desire, which is more an intention, should evolve into a plan of action. The interdependency

of knowledge, skills and attitude, must be clear before translating your desire into an action plan.

Knowledge from an academic environment is the foundation for the chosen field. Degrees in Management or Engineering, may prepare you with fundamental knowledge for management and technical careers.

Communication, analytical and presentation skills make you competent and ahead of others in these professions. Depending on professional requirements, you must acquire complementary skills to be effective.

Remember the adage, 'a Ferrari never wins any race while it is in the garage'. Similarly, the knowledge that you possess and the skills that you acquire, govern your potential. However, your productivity depends on how positive your attitude is. Lou Holtz, the famous football coach

said this most appropriately, "Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it".

Success is more an attitude

The vision: Vision is the art of seeing the invisible through the power of imagination. For example, your vision may be to become a scientist to research on the causes and treatment of dreadful diseases affecting humanity, such as Alzheimer's. This can only happen with consistent and persistent efforts in this direction, over a long period.

Further, success parameters are dynamic in nature, demanding continuous evaluation of your research, as you keep progressing across stages to ultimate success. Indeed, success is a journey and not a destination.

Continued on page 4



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Continued from page 1

Learning is continuous: Secondly, learning is a continuous process. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” Updating yourself with new concepts and technologies, keeps

you well informed, in a knowledge economy like India.

Sharpen your skills: The example of a woodcutter sharpening his axe to retain productivity, demonstrates the universal applicability of the principle. In a globalised world, sharpening your

skills especially of communication and inter personal skills etc. is mandatory.

Think positive: Norman Vincent Peale, author of several books on motivation and attitude said, “Our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but by how we react to what happens; not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life”.

Trust — in the organisation and your own ability — is a crucial aspect for success. Further, to achieve work objectives and progress in your career, you must be highly self-motivated. These factors like trust, energy, self-motivation are aspects of an individual’s attitude in the same way as honesty, integrity and ethics are.

Developing a positive attitude

It’s common to find friends, classmates, and employees in organisations, cribbing about studying, market challenges, demanding bosses etc., spreading negativity and discord, in their surroundings. However, organisations are stern and quick in dealing with negativity and indiscipline.

Working with people in teams, is a key aspect of organisations. Therefore, empathetically understanding people and using a positive attitude to influence

is essential for success. Such an attitude is intrinsic. If you don’t have it you must transform yourself and get positive. Read books, watch videos on the power of a positive attitude, and learn from people who radiate a positive energy. A positive attitude is contagious; be a carrier and spread it around.

Nevertheless, a positive attitude isn’t something that will last perpetually. Every challenge and difficulty that you encounter tests your mental toughness; keep reinforcing your positive attitude after every challenging situation.

To recapitulate, ‘knowledge’ defines your profession — Engineering, Medicine, Management, Law, Sports, Music etc. and ‘skills’, the extent of your potential, while ‘attitude’ governs the efficiency you achieve. Therefore, ‘knowledge’, ‘skills’ and ‘attitude’ represent the Triangle of Success.

Champions in any field, business, profession or sports, are never content with their achievements; rather they consider achievements as stepping-stones, for a new benchmark for excellence.

Master the Triangle of Success and become a true champion in the profession you choose.
(The author is a management and career consultant.)

