

Creation vs. Competition

By Bob Burg

One of my favorite quotes is by the late, Ayn Rand, an escapee from the communist Soviet Union, author of books including *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*, and proponent of free-market Capitalism:

"A creative {person} is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others."

This was certainly not an original thought, nor need it been. However, I do believe it is a thought and philosophy that, when heeded, results in huge success. Perhaps it is the thought that results in every breakthrough both minor and major an individual (and, as a result, society as a whole) accomplishes.

From the many inventions of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison to Otto Frederick Rohwedder's sliced bread machine (you know, "the greatest things since sliced bread"); from Amar Bose's much improved speakers to Art Frey's Post-it® notes and all the many advances in technology – including a few of the many cool tech devises from Steve Jobs' little company called Apple – the progenitors were typically focused, not on their competitors but rather on solving a problem or creating additional advantages for themselves and/or society.

What Rand was really talking about – as I first learned while studying Wallace D. Wattles' 1910 classic, *The Science of Getting Rich* – living on "the creative rather than the competitive plane."

Sometimes, the above phrases by Rand and Wattles are misinterpreted to mean that you simply refuse to compete, and that you should even completely ignore your competition in the marketplace.

That Wouldn't Be Productive

In my opinion, neither author meant any such thing, nor would such advice be advisable.

It's good business to be *aware* of your competition and even to know their products/services and their strengths and weaknesses. It is also good, at times, to be inspired by them. Absolutely, understanding your competition is very helpful and is something the pros do without fail.

However, like so much else, the key is in the *focus*.

If you are focused on beating your competition, you are likely not going to be as successful as if you are focused on being the best *you* can be, and *achieving*. And, in a free enterprise based economy, you achieve via serving your customers.

You achieve by creating an absolutely exceptional experience for your customer with every touch and in every aspect of the process. You deliver value in such a way that

they *know* they received much more than their money's worth and cannot imagine doing business with anyone *but* you.

In other words, focus on creation rather than your competition, and you won't have to be as concerned about your competition.