

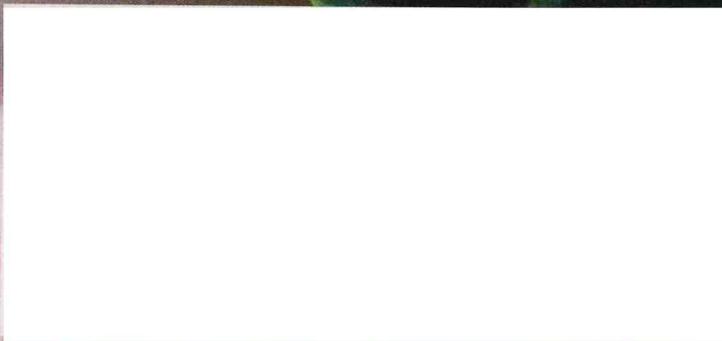
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## Attitude is Everything



BY MARIA ZAMPINI

I've been wondering how some companies—or people—manage to stay so positive in the face of all the negativity. I believe if you look at those who find success and happiness, you'll also find a direct correlation to one thing: attitude.

*Maria Zampini is president of Lake County New Plants LLC, Madison, Ohio. She co-founded the company with her father, Jim Zampini. Their focus is sales and marketing of LCN Selections, along with research and development of new plant introductions. She can be reached at maria.zampini@yahoo.com.*

**M**ost recently I asked a friend how business was going. His reply was, "It's a dog-eat-dog world out there, and I'm wearing Milk-Bone underwear!" I'd never heard that particular saying before, so I'll admit it took me a minute before it sank in. It gave me a good laugh, which was certainly welcome given the ways things are going in this economy.

A lot of people I talk to are singing the sales blues. Many—but not all.

Last spring, I took a quick trip to Oregon as I was asked to speak about LCN Selections at Van Essen Nursery's national sales meeting in Lebanon. I even brought them one of my homemade gooey cakes to enjoy after lunch. (In secret, it was to provide a sugar rush to help ensure they'd stay awake during my presentation!) There was engaging conversation about plants, production, customers and the end consumer. There was a contagious enthusiasm for what they are trying to achieve together. It was well worth making the flight—with a toothache, no less!

While on this trip I stayed with my good friend, John Lewis, of JLPN, Inc. in Salem. As always, his family generously opened their home to me. Plus his staff at the nursery ... well, they make me feel like one of the gang. The best part of hanging with the Lewis's and the JLPN clan is the upbeat, emotional atmosphere they create even though they, too, have had their fair share of streamlining production and personnel and tightening of purse strings.

The day of my arrival, JLPN's new catalog arrived. If you've never seen a copy, I highly recommend it. It is a full-color catalog just chock full of kick-butt plant photos—all taken by John himself. The best part is the last page, which is dedicated to his two "favorite sprouts," his children Trystan and Marley.

I went with John to see several of his local customers, where he proudly hand-delivered copies. One of our stops was the Leo Gentry Wholesale Nursery site in Canby, where we visited with

production manager Darrell Massung. Little did I know that Darrell is originally from Ohio, thus, a Buckeye! While we were there, a little older lady from down the street brought them a basket of fresh-picked strawberries to enjoy. This woman spoke a mile a minute, which made her even harder to understand because of her Eastern European accent. She rapidly told us about all her health problems, her debts and so on. Despite her ills, this had to be one of the happiest people I've ever met. I thought I came from a huggy-kissy family, but man, she took the cake! She just about squeezed the stuffing out of poor Darrell! You couldn't help but feel good in her presence.

I've been wondering how some companies—or people—manage to stay so positive in the face of all the negativity. I believe if you look at those who find success and happiness, you'll also find a direct correlation to one thing: attitude. I just went to one of my favorite Web sites, [www.brainyquote.com](http://www.brainyquote.com), and called up "attitude." Here is just a little smidge of what I found:

*"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." Winston Churchill*

*"Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude." Zig Ziglar*

**In conjunction with the right attitude, I think faith and patience are required.**

50 hours minimum. Volunteers then give back to Extension through a variety of programs, with the main emphasis on educating the public, thus broadening Extension's outreach. Many of the garden writers I know—those who haven't come from a horticultural background—have fostered their love of gardening through a Master Gardener program.

I met a really neat garden writer at another GWA event, a regional meeting in Cincinnati this past May. Her gardening blog/online newsletter, *www.peggystclair.com*, offers a unique perspective of how healing and healthy gardening can be for our bodies and soul. I told Peggy her writing style and theory are so parallel to the recent best-selling book (and hit movie) that maybe her blog should be retitled, "Eat, Pray, Love, Garden."

The other day I was visiting Peggy's blog, "The Garden as Muse." In her Entry 38 posted on July 12, Peggy wrote about attending the OFA Short Course in Columbus, Ohio, and hearing marketing consultant Holly Buchanan talk on "Marketing to Women in the 21st Century." She chose to attend this talk because, as she understands it, 80 percent of the customers who buy plants and garden supplies are women. The main thing I took away from her OFA post was a reminder that women are our biggest target demographic. The funny thing is, the majority of Master Gardeners and garden writers as well are ... you guessed it! Women. Just one more reason we need to know these groups better.

You know, they say the best advertising is word of mouth. I believe that in today's world we, as growers, garden centers and landscapers, must consider marketing avenues we haven't in the past. We have an out-of-the box opportunity with garden writers and Master Gardeners to help tell our story, help educate and mentor and in return have a direct conduit to the end consumer. Perhaps we can learn a few things ourselves and be inspired by the energy and excitement of these garden lovers.

Ironically, right after GWA, I got tapped to lead a panel discussion at the National Green Centre Show this January on this exact topic. So if you're planning on being in St. Louis, I invite you to join me at "Improving the Communication Loop to Increase Sales: Media, Master Gardeners, Garden Centers and Growers." Together we'll explore further how all parties can work better together to close the communication gap and ensure higher profits and successful, happy customers who will continue to come back again and again for more plants!



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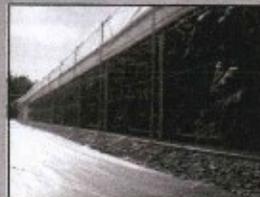
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