

# Beating the *bad days*

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What makes a "Bad Day" for you in recruitment? Maybe you've just placed a candidate who your client isn't satisfied with; maybe you haven't been able to place the candidate at all; maybe you are suffering from call reluctance, you just don't want to pick up that phone and do your daily quota of cold calls; maybe you have personal problems on your mind; maybe you feel as though you just can't deal with the pressure...

I can't tell you how many times I've been delivering a workshop and seminar, and someone has asked: "Gaynor, how do you go about staying motivated when you have a bad day?" Everyone else in the room nods, it's a question on everyone's mind.

It sounds like a simple, almost trivial question, but being able to answer the question in a way that works for you is essential to your success, and indeed survival, in a demanding industry such as ours.

Let me share with you the points that I believe are most important to remember, if you are to stay motivated and work productively in spite of the "Bad Days":

- Firstly, remember that you can't escape bad days. Bad days are a part of life, and everyone, repeat everyone, has them. Our focus here isn't to stop bad days from happening, but to learn to deal with them, and minimise their impact on our productivity.
- If it is a personal issue that is troubling you, just remember where you are: You are at work. It is often said that you shouldn't bring your work issues home, but the inverse is also true: Do not bring your issues from home, to work. Remember, you are simply unable to deal with these issues while you are working. Therefore, just "Let them go" until you are able to deal with them, outside of work hours. This will enable you to focus productively on the tasks at hand.
- If work-related problems are causing your "Bad Day," change the way you think about them. For every negative, there is a positive. Everything depends on your attitude. Here are some negative/positive points to remember:

**A mistake can be seen as a learning experience. Fear can be seen as Excitement. Pressure can be seen as Energy.** Let's look at each of these negative/positive points:

## Mistakes as Learning Experiences:

If, for example, you are having a bad day because you have received two angry phone calls from clients who are unhappy with candidates you recently placed, rather than getting discouraged and demotivated, decide that you are going to view this mistake as a positive learning experience, an opportunity for you to improve your candidate sourcing.

Once you have decided to see this mistake as a learning opportunity, rather than a failure, the next step is to put your positive thinking into action. Sit down with a sheet of paper and write down both immediate and long-term solutions, for you to put into action:

Immediate solutions: Make things right with your clients, to save your relationships. Meet with them, discuss the situation and offer the solution.

Long-term solutions: Look at your screening and interviewing processes, and make them more thorough so that the inappropriate candidates can be identified as early as possible.

Even though you may still feel somewhat discouraged about what has occurred, you have made your "Bad Day" productive and certainly more positive, by learning from and finding solutions to the problems that have caused it.

## Fear as Excitement:

I haven't met a recruiter yet who hasn't experienced cold call reluctance at some stage of their career. My personal method of overcoming call reluctance came as something of a revelation, when I'd been in the industry for about a year and a half, suffering from quite strong call reluctance the whole time.

At the time, I came to realise the true nature of fear: Fear is a driving force. This seemed true enough, as fear was the very powerful driving force behind my call reluctance. If fear is such a powerful driver for negative emotions, I thought, could it be "Diverted" to work the opposite way: As a driving force for positive emotions?

This might seem paradoxical at first, but think about it: Is there much difference between the feeling of being afraid (Fear), and the intense "Buzz" feeling of anticipation (Excitement)? No, fear and excitement are the same powerful driving force. We just call this force "Fear" when it drives negative emotions, and "Excitement" when it drives positive emotions.

So, what can we do with this powerful driving force called Fear or Excitement? We can direct it towards positive emotions, rather than negative emotions. Next time you suffer from call reluctance, re-direct your Fear/Excitement force to drive positive feelings of anticipation ("I'm looking forward to seizing the marketing opportunities out there"), self-belief ("I'm going to show my prospects what excellent service I can provide") and self-affirmation ("If they reject my services, it's their loss, and therefore their problem, not mine"). Once again, this process will allow you to make your "Bad Day" more positive and productive.

## Pressure as Energy:

This concept is rather similar to the Fear/Excitement concept. When your agency environment gets absolutely frantic (as any successful agency will) what is your attitude? What do you sense? Is it this overwhelming heaviness of pressure that just makes you want to hide in the bathroom, so that you don't have to face it all, or is it an excited "Buzz" that is so contagious that you want to just jump right into the rush.

Once again, it is about your attitude. You can experience extreme pressure and stress, or you can experience extreme energy and motivation. The situation and atmosphere stays the same, but your attitude governs whether, despite the stress and difficulty, you can become motivated and energised to do what needs to be done.

Bad days will always be with us. There will always be those days where we feel particularly stressed, discouraged, or even frightened. While we can't change this, we can put thought processes in place that allow us to minimise the "Damage" a bad day can cause. Always remember, the situation stays the same, it's your attitude towards it that makes the difference. ■



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