



XV. ADVERSITY TESTS CHARACTER AND PREPARATION

Age: 20

The moment of truth had arrived. Was this an isolated incident or part of the MGR culture? Either way did it really matter? Although I had many reservations about staying in Massachusetts I had grown accustomed to it and was making it work. Fortunately I had become very familiar with my competitors in the mall. The evaluations of their businesses I conducted while searching for answers to the challenges I inherited with MGR prepared me for what I was about to do.

I knew their inventory, their marketing, their personnel, their customers, and their sales volume. I not only knew how to compete with them, I also knew what I could do for them if I were to move on. And the time had come to do just that. At this point I realized I had to stay, even if it meant only long enough to transition the employees on my sales team wanting to leave MGR with new, secure employment. I decided to pursue my biggest competitor.

Their square footage and inventory was two and a half times that of MGR. They were locally owned and operated, which meant no corporate structure. What you saw was what you got and their product lines were exceptional in every fashion category. I was off to see if this would be my next retail adventure. Based on all of my evaluations I determined that I could increase this store's business **three-hundred percent (300%)**. My biggest concern was when I introduced myself to the owner and expressed that belief would he be offended or would he think I was crazy. Instead, he took me to lunch and asked me how.

By the end of the day I was his new store manager and the employees that wanted to leave MGR had new jobs in better surroundings. We were off to the races. Everything we did there clicked. Not having the obstacles or drama that had come with turning around the MGR store allowed us to soar. By month's end we had increased sales volume three-hundred and thirty percent (330%). This was amazing. My previous achievements were impressive, but the circumstances under which this one was accomplished set a new standard for me. Partially because the stage was larger and the need was greater.

I already possessed an unshakeable belief in what I thought I could do, but now I had gained the ability to produce the performance data I needed to back up my claims when I made them and support me in my future journeys. Now my next big decision was where would that journey take me?