



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **HALF-EMPTY OR HALF-FULL – WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?**

I’m working from my local Barnes & Noble, sipping a Starbuck’s decaf tall Pike’s Peak coffee. (I’ve already consumed a pot of the high-octane stuff and any more would have me bouncing off the walls.) I had to leave my home office as my realtor is holding a second “realtor open house.”

I could say that the realtors are disrupting our morning. That would be viewing the glass as half-empty. On the other hand, this open house is vital as each realtor that walks through my home has buyers. The more realtors exposed to my home then the more potential buyers we reach. It's growing the market of buyers for our home. My perspective is seeing the glass half-full.

This brings me to musing on marketing regarding the difference between seeing things as half-empty versus half-full. What’s the difference between the two? After all, there is still the same amount of liquid in the glass regardless of whether it is half-empty or half-full. There's still the same quantity of fluid in the glass irrespective if it's water, milk, a soft drink or scotch. Take your pick. It's all the same. (I prefer the scotch, single-malt. However, it’s not the time nor place for it at present.)

Actually, there's a big difference between half-empty and half-full. It's all in our perspective. When we perceive things as half-empty, we are approaching the subject matter from a negative outlook. Namely, we see what's wrong or incorrect. Most of us do not enjoy being around, no less working, with people who see the world around them as half-empty. The same goes for your resource teams, such as your ad agency, particularly the creatives.

However, when we perceive things as half-full, we are approaching this same subject matter, whatever it may be, from a positive perspective. We see what we like. It is a recognition that there's something inherently of value in what we are appraising or considering. We are intrigued by the possibilities and open to working with it to realize its potential.

There's another big difference between half-empty and half-full that takes us beyond perception into action. When we view things as half-empty our response is to dismiss them, drop them from further consideration. Yet, when we consider things as half-full, we have a ready-made invitation to collaborate. We present ourselves with the opportunity to provide direction that could help to fill the glass and make it whole, not half.

I recall a company group chairman, who was a featured speaker at one of our workshops, sharing his perspectives on working with agencies and assessing creative work. Basically, he stated, “with so many smart and talented people here, I just know there must be something that is of value in what they are sharing.” He was, undeniably, a half-full thinker.

Half-empty thinking and outlook leads to missed opportunities and undercutting the value of others or things. A half-full attitude and approach leads to realizing full value from others and things. The choice is ours whether we will be half-empty or half-full marketing managers. I know which one whom I prefer to be and work. How about you?

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