

Part I:

Personal Development

Chapter I

Do You Have What it Takes to be Successful in Sales?

So you are thinking about embarking on a new career and you wonder, "why not sales?" You like people, you tend to be outgoing, and your uncle Ted is in sales – and he makes a ton of money. How hard can it be? The answer may surprise you. As many as 30 percent of people who enter the sales field leave in their first year and only 20 percent earn 80 percent of the total compensation paid to sales reps across the country. Getting a sales job is easy; being successful in the position is very difficult. If you are willing to learn and develop the following traits, abilities and skills, then you may have the potential to be successful in sales.

Having worked with thousands of sales people as a sales manager, consultant and trainer, the following attributes have been demonstrated as keys to success in selling. Not all top performers have all these qualities, but many of them seem to be present in successful reps.

1. Understand the Value of Selling as a Profession

Sales is an honorable profession and one to be proud of. Without sales there would be no free market or economy as we know it today. Selling is the spark that drives our economic system. Top perform-

ers are not ashamed of being in sales and understand that their role is to help people. The word “sale” has its origins from the word “service.”

2. Live With a Flexible Salary

Be prepared to set your own salary and have your pay be directly tied to your performance. Sales people are some of the highest paid people in the world, due to the nature of commission-based selling, with no ceilings and no floor. Very few of the top performers are working on salary. They realize that to reach high levels of success, their pay should be tied to how well they add value to their customers.

3. Leave Your Outgoing Personality at Home

One of the biggest mistakes people make in pursuing a sales career is taking a sales job because they get a charge from being around people. Outgoing people who love to talk and make new friends often burn out because of the rejection they experience and their inability to close sales because they are not listening. The best sales people are always listening, analyzing and asking questions so they can meet the needs of their customers. Relationship types can succeed in sales if they understand these laws and are able to deal with rejection by not taking it personally.

4. Learn to See Rejection as a Good Thing

There is so much rejection in sales, if taken personally, it will lead to unhappiness that will spill over into your personal life. Successful sales people see rejection as one step closer to a sale and a very powerful learning experience. They do not experience emotional side-effects from the loss of a sale. Rejection is a learning process and part of the selling cycle.

5. Become a Constant Learner

True sales people are not born, they are trained. There are no secrets or magic bullets that lead to success in selling. Successful sales people spend a portion of each day reading, listening to audio tapes and learning from the top sellers in their profession. You must become a full-time student and a constant learner to serve your customers effectively and stay ahead of your competition.

6. Believe in Your Product or Service

You must believe in your product and/or service with all your heart, soul, mind and body. If this is not possible, then do not sell that product or service. People will not buy from someone who does not believe 100 percent in what he or she is selling. This cannot be hidden; the customer will see through insincere intentions. One simply cannot effectively sell something one does not believe in.

7. Be Honest and Trustworthy

Customers want to buy from someone whom they can trust and who is honest. They want to buy from a friend. Learn to build relationships based on trust, honesty and integrity.

8. Learn Your Customer's Hot Buttons

Get inside the heads of your customers and learn why they buy. Push their hot buttons by meeting needs and adding value. This is where top performers excel and the most important area to be developed. It is the bottom line in sales.

Indeed, there are many more factors associated with sales success; however, these are eight of the most important. If you decide to pursue a sales career, utilize these traits and you are on the road to successful selling.

What is the Sales Manager Looking for in a Sales Rep?

If you are looking to get a job in sales, here are a few of the key areas that sales managers evaluate when selecting a new member for their sales team.

- A clone of the all-star sales people, or those in the top 20 percent who bring in 80 percent of the sales team's revenue.
- Commitment and loyalty to the company and product.
- A high degree of healthy competitiveness.
- Eagerness to earn high commissions.
- A proven track record in sales.
- Loyalty to the needs of the customer and an excellent listener.
- Goal-oriented individuals.
- Positive enthusiasm and a willingness to learn and grow on the job.

When interviewing for a sales job, ask the following questions:

- Can I see a job description?
- What is my compensation potential?
- What does your average performer make?
- What does your top seller make?
- How do I develop or find my leads?
- What is your average closing ratio?
- How much autonomy will I have?
- How many calls are expected per day or week?
- Is the job in the field or tele-sales?
- Can you explain the compensation plan?
- Who specifically is your target market?

These types of questions can help clarify the kind of sales job for which you have applied.

Action Steps:

- 1. How do you stack up against the eight areas mentioned above? Are there areas for improvement? Write down your thoughts on how you measure up in each area.**
- 2. When interviewing for a sales position, be prepared and ask questions to ensure a good fit between you and your new employer.**
- 3. What steps will you take to grow and/or improve in each area?**

Chapter 2

Everything Starts With Attitude

The most important decision we make in our lives is the attitude we choose to express each day when dealing either with people or circumstances. This critical choice determines success or failure in both sales and life. The key is the realization that we choose. That's right. You purposefully choose your attitude. Choosing a positive state of mind will lead to virtually unlimited success in your career – and your life. A negative attitude will lead to unhappiness, poor relationships, difficulty at work and ultimately, poor health. In fact, the most common causes of death in the United States are heart disease and cancer, which are related to stress. Stress is a result of a negative attitude, carried out via perceptions, choices and behaviors.

Where Does Attitude Come From?

One of the most powerful questions I ask during training sessions is: "Where does attitude come from?" Often the group will think collectively for a moment; many will respond with comments such as, "work," "people," "traffic" and other examples. Finally, a brave individual will announce, "Attitude comes from within us," which often leads to a chorus of "ah-has" as people begin to realize

the power in that statement. You alone determine your attitude. We may blame others, circumstances or events for our situations; however, the key is our response to those things or people.

As you read this chapter, think about your day. We usually have a series of encounters with things and people that we feel cause a reaction in us. In reality, we choose that reaction – we have the power to respond in a positive or negative way to these challenges. Your challenge, especially in sales, is always to respond with a positive attitude.

Consequences of a Negative Attitude

Plainly stated, a sustained negative attitude will kill you. By far the worst side-effect of a bad attitude is stress and the top fatal diseases in this country are caused, in large part, by stress. Stress turns quickly into anxiety, depression and ulcers. Now that you know you have the power to choose, why choose negative attitudes? Sales people with negative attitudes struggle and have difficulty closing sales. One common statement coming from negative sales people is, "I'm not negative, I am realistic." This is an excuse for being negative. Reality is what you make it. Make it positive.

Rewards of a Positive Attitude

People like to be around positive people. In sales, customers like to buy from positive people who have confidence in what they are selling and help their customers enjoy the buying process. People do not want to be sold, yet they love to buy and own. Having a positive attitude will improve your relationships, make you happier and lead to success. The rewards of a positive attitude are enormous, if you are willing to keep your spirits up over the long-term.

Everything is a Learning Experience

Everything that happens to you in your life is a learning experience. This is positive. We may have hoped for a different outcome, but we must learn to face the facts in a positive light and move on. Let yourself become stronger from the experience, rather than weaker, full of doubt and stressed. Experience is a positive word for mistakes and the school of experience is one of the best teachers. Learn from these experiences by choosing a positive attitude that prepares you for the next challenge in life, which is right around the corner.

Avoid Negative People

One of the tragic results of a negative attitude is that misery loves company. Negative people will search out others and attempt to bring them down to their level. Indeed, this is how negative attitudes spread. Their negative influence feels powerful and they use it as a self-esteem boost. People do this in an attempt to feel better about themselves, but the end result is short-lived and unproductive. In sales, it is hard enough dealing with rejection from your prospects and customers. Find positive people and let their attitudes stick to you.

Being Positive is Not Easy

In my work as a sales manager and trainer, I have found that there are basically two kinds of people – those who take responsibility for their lives and those who blame others. People who take responsibility for their situations are positive people who see the world as a good place. They have made the conscious decision to be this way. This is not easy; however, understanding these basic principles about attitude is a major step. **First, keep in mind, choosing your mental attitude is the only thing you can control in your life.** Second, learn and practice a positive mental attitude and enjoy the rewards.

Action Steps:

- 1. Realize you pull your own strings and choose your attitude. The most powerful decision we make is all about our attitude. Make it positive.**
- 2. Write down on a piece of paper three areas where you need to improve your attitude and make that change today. State specifically what your new attitude will be.**