

# 5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL SALES PERSON

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## **So, what does it take to be a successful salesperson?**

By the very nature of the work itself, successful salespeople possess a unique set of personality attributes that enable them to succeed. Mediocre sales performance cannot be disguised as a salesperson's success or failure is revealed immediately by the bottom line results. It takes a special kind of individual to succeed in sales. There are five key qualities that are essential for success:

### **Empathy**

Empathy is the ability to identify with customers, to feel what they are feeling and make customers feel respected. Empathy is NOT sympathy, which involves a feeling of loyalty with another individual. It is more than understanding their concerns from an objective standpoint. A salesperson showing empathy can gain trust and establish rapport with customers by being on their side and not appearing judgmental. Empathy allows the salesperson to read the customers, show concern, and clearly demonstrate his or her interest in providing a proper solution.

### **Focus**

A person with focus is internally driven to accomplish goals and can stay attentive to one topic. Focused individuals are more demanding of themselves than other people and they are self-motivated. They are able to organize themselves and recognize what needs to be done in order to achieve their goals.

In a salesperson, focus produces best results when it is balanced with empathy. You then see a person who listens and identifies with the customer while keeping focused on set goals, and who is able to translate these goals into solutions for the customer.

### **Responsibility**

A person with a strong sense of responsibility does not place blame on other people when placed in a difficult situation. This type of person, referred to as an "agent", gets things done and when obstacles arise, accepts any errors or omissions that have occurred. He or she does not get defensive nor do they try to blame the situation on circumstances or on other people by making statements such as, "It's not my fault boss that consumer confidence has declined due to terrorism and the war in Afghanistan." Sales managers should strive to hire agent-type representatives.

## **Optimism**

A salesperson with a healthy amount of optimism can be described as someone who is slow to learn helplessness. This person has persistence—a trait that is critical in the sales world because of the frequency of rejections salespeople experience. In the face of failure, some people throw their hands up in the air and resign themselves to the disappointment because they feel helpless to change the situation. Others, however, see themselves as being more resilient and that a customer's refusal is NOT a rejection of themselves personally, but of the opportunity being offered. Salespeople who possess a large amount of optimism like themselves and when they encounter failure, although disappointed, it does not destroy their positive view of themselves. They consider themselves still in the running and able to turn the situation around. They believe that they can make things better by using a different approach, or by trying again.

## **Ego-drive**

Ego-drive is similar to optimism in that both traits require persistence. But ego-drive is persistence for the purpose of succeeding and above all winning. It's all about competitiveness. When a person hangs in there with fists clenched and a tooth gritting appetite to succeed at his or her goal, you see a powerful ego-drive. This person is self-motivated and a self-starter with clear ideas of what he or she wants to achieve.

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