



How to Be a Successful Salesperson

Co-authored by Brett Baughman

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If you're new to sales, the whole process may be completely overwhelming. You may be constantly working and calling and negotiating, but you can't seem to get the sales figures you want. However, by studying the habits and qualities of successful salespeople, you can tweak your own sales process and start trending those sales numbers back up. Consider the following suggestions and implement them in your process where you can.

Part
1

Part 1 of 3:

Getting Into the Right Mindset

- 1 Love your job.** You'll never succeed in sales, or in any job, if you don't love what you do. The best salespeople love the struggle of gaining sales leads, talking and listening to prospects, and closing the sale. Only by truly wanting to be there can you put in the extra work and effort required to be the best of the best. If you don't already love your job or the product you are selling, quit and sell something else. You may not make money initially, but your hard work will pay off eventually.^[1]
- 2 Work on your assertiveness.** Salespeople walk a delicate line between making a prospect realize that they need a product and trying not to be overly forceful. By being assertive, rather than aggressive or passive, in your statements and questions to prospects, you can move the conversation forward without making them angry or defensive. Assertive statements get your point across directly and clearly without threatening the prospect. For example:
 - A passive question would be, "Is there any way you could let me know when we can meet again?"
 - An aggressive statement would be, "You've got five seconds to make a decision before I walk out."

- An assertive statement would be, "Let's meet again next week. Think about my offer and have a decision ready by then."^[2]

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3 Strive to improve. You should always be assessing what you're doing right and using that improving upon your sales process. The best thing you can do for yourself is to keep learning and improving over the years. You should read books related to sales, attend industry seminars, listen to podcasts, and follow famous salespeople who inspire you on social media. Immerse yourself in learning and your field and you will learn skills and new developments that you can use to further your own goals.^[3]

4 Model your behavior on other successful salespeople. Start by imitating the best salespeople at your company. What do they do? How do they talk to people? Ask them for tips and advice. Older salespeople, those close to retirement, are often very willing to help newcomers. You can also search for blog posts and seminars by highly successful salespeople and modify your behavior to match theirs.^[4]

5 Set ambitious goals for yourself. Even if the company you work for has set goals for you, set your own even higher. Work to be the best salesperson in your company. The competition will drive you to innovate and work harder. When you have success, set your goals even higher. Even when you think you've reached a plateau, you can always do at least a little bit better.^[5]

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Part
2

Part 2 of 3:

Holding the Customer's Interest

1 Introduce yourself briefly. There are several ways the beginning of a conversation with a prospect can go wrong. For one, many salespeople immediately launch into their "elevator pitch" without giving the prospect a chance at a real conversation. Others spend too long making small talk and force the prospect to ask why they are there. The sweet spot is right in the middle: tell your prospect in a few sentences who you are what business or company you represent. Don't talk about yourself or your product until you've had a chance to get to know the prospect.

2 Ask more than you answer. In recent years, salespeople have realized that the best way to draw a prospect into a sale is by asking questions rather than making statements or promises about a product. The truth is that people are resistant to being sold to. To make a sale, you instead have to ask your prospect questions until you can understand if and how you can help them. Start by asking them generic questions about their business or industry. Get to know what they care about.^[6]

3 Get to know your prospect's problems. Slowly direct your questions towards assessing your prospect's problems. Is there something they wished was better about their business? Look for opportunities to ask about a problem they are having with a product similar to your own that they are already using. Ask them what they think could be changed to make it better. Again, don't make any promises or explanations about your own product yet. You still haven't convinced them of the need for a change.

- Try forcing the prospect to think about the problem further by suggesting that they consider what might happen if they don't solve their problem. What would be the cost in lost sales? What would they not be able to do?^[7]

4 Stay attuned to your prospect's mood. During this whole process, you may find that your prospect is not responding adequately to your questions. Notice their behavior and body language. Are they looking away frequently or talking quickly? Do they seem upset in any way? If you see these signs, simply ask if a different meeting date would be more appropriate. Realize that your prospect may be having a busy or difficult day and respect that by giving them space.

5 Explain that you can solve their problems. Once you've assessed your prospect's problems, compare them to what your product offers. Can you actually help them? If not, move on; you can't make a sale when the customer doesn't want or need your product. If you can help them, ask them what they would do if you solved their problem. Formulate your questions such that you draw them into wanting to know about how you plan to solve their stated problems.

6 Don't mention your product until you've convinced your prospect that they need it. At this point, you can finally launch into an explanation of what exactly your product is, what it does, and how it can solve their problems. However, don't give them a full technical product description. Instead, focus on

the parts that relate to their problem and business. They can usually get full information on your company's website if they need it, so don't worry about giving it to them here.

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Part
3

Part 3 of 3:

Closing the Deal

1 Ask the prospect if they have any questions or concerns. When you've completed your explanation, ask the prospect if they have any questions. If so, answer them to the extent they demand. Once they are comfortable in their knowledge of the product and what it can do for them, ask them flat out if there is anything stopping them from moving forward with a purchase. At this point is where your true salesman tactics should kick in. Work to think critically about their situation and what kind of accommodations or solutions you could provide them.^[8]

2 Encourage your prospect to make decision. Don't ask them to decide directly, but rather coax them into making some sort of decision, whether that is meeting with you again for a demonstration or ordering a few units. If you need to, give them a few days to consider your offer and get back to you. Make sure you leave several different forms of contact information so that they can reach you easily.

3 Follow through on potential sales. If you think that you have even the slightest chance of convincing a prospect to buy, keep contacting them. If the prospect asked for a week to think about your offer, call them in a week's time and ask for their thoughts. Spend the time in between thinking of better ways you might be able to help them or how you can convince them to buy.^[9]

4 Stay in touch with clients. After a sale, your relationship with a client shouldn't just come to an end. Instead, you should work to maintain it so that you can gain return business from the client and also hopefully get referrals from them. Work on staying in touch by sending simple reminders to your clients, like birthday or anniversary cards or messages on social media. Other ideas include:

- Sending clients informative articles relevant to their industry.
- Crafting a newsletter to email to clients.

- Scheduling get-togethers for coffee or lunch.
- Finding creative ways to stay in touch that will stand out to clients.^[10]

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Expert Q&A

Question

How do you gain confidence in sales?

Brett Baughman

Life Coach

Expert Answer

You have to have a reason for why you're in sales! Your performance dips when you don't have a purpose behind what you're doing, because you're doing it based on your mood and stress levels.

Question

How do you connect and engage with customers?

Brett Baughman

Life Coach

Expert Answer

View yourself as customer support rather than as a salesperson. Nobody ever goes out and thinks "I want somebody to sell me something." They're looking for someone to grab their hand and guide them. It can help to think of yourself as a surgeon—rather than trying to sell someone on something, present yourself as an expert. If you make someone feel comforted and guided, they'll trust that the information you're giving them is right.

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Tips

Expert Interview



Thanks for reading our article! If you'd like to learn more about succeeding as a salesperson, check out our in-depth interview with Brett Baughman.

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