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SALES CAREER: How to become a professional salesperson

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ABSTRACT

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<p>This bachelor's thesis was written in a purpose of giving an insight about sales career especially salespeople, at the same time providing knowledge, essentials for becoming a professional in sales path. The thesis started with comprehensive information about sales. The chapter gave readers a quick glance on how sales become a profession and the alteration in salespeople's role over time. In addition, the differences between two main selling schools in sales industry and the role of sales in both business and daily life contexts were also discussed in this chapter. Elements that generate a high-paid salesperson and expertise technique to succeed in the career were then, afterward clearly stated in the next chapter. Besides, methods for salespeople to stay motivated in sales as well as for organizations to motivate their sales force were also mentioned in the thesis.</p> <p>At the same time, a number of most common misconceptions about sales and salespeople was pointed out in the thesis. In addition, sales books, articles, and self-observation were used to conduct a related survey.</p> <p>A quantitative survey of 9 questions was carried out in order to collect people's assessment about sales career and salespeople among a limited number of respondents. The survey received 30 responses mostly from international students and salespeople. The result was then carefully analyzed based on the statistics gathered and the theories that were mentioned in the previous chapters of the thesis.</p>		
Key words Motivation, professional salespeople, sales, sales career.		

ABSTRACT
CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 SALES IN GENERAL.....	2
2.1 Evolution of Sales and Salespeople.....	2
2.2 Consultative selling and Normal selling.....	5
2.3 Roles of sales in business and life contexts.....	7
3 KEYS TO SUCCESS IN SALES.....	8
3.1 Attributes of successful salespeople.....	8
3.2 Understanding the prospect.....	10
3.2.1 Recognizing types of customers in sales.....	10
3.2.2 Approaches toward different types of customer.....	11
3.3 Understanding the obstacle of a sale.....	12
3.4 Closing a sale process.....	13
4 STAYING MOTIVATED IN SALES.....	16
4.1 Misconceptions about Sales.....	16
4.2 Research background.....	17
4.3 Research result and evaluation.....	18
4.4 Motivating sales force.....	20
5 CONCLUSION.....	24
REFERENCES.....	25
APPENDICES	
FIGURES	
FIGURE 1. History of sales practices.....	2
FIGURE 2. Sales focus in different sales models.....	4
FIGURE 3. Consultative selling process.....	6
FIGURE 4. Transactional selling process.....	6
FIGURE 5. Views of buyers and sellers on closing a sale.....	14
FIGURE 6. Components of 3 level of Rain Selling Consultative selling process.....	15
FIGURE 7. Sales force motivation.....	21
FIGURE 8. Factors affecting salespeople motivation.....	22

1 INTRODUCTION

Trading has occurred in human life and had its domination over all the exchange relations since the olden days. There, without the invention of currency, people traded their products with each other for the product that they wanted. At that time, salespeople were ones that had products to be exchanged. Although the role of salespeople was not emphasized back then, the exchange of goods was clearly making human life better and easier. According to Robert Louis Stevenson; a novelist and travel writer “Everyone lives by selling something.” Throughout the time, the sales constantly happened as an essential part of human life. However, as the economy developed, new products and sale approaches were introduced daily, there are nowadays misconceptions about sales and salespeople. It led to the decision of choosing sales career especially salespeople as the topic of this thesis.

Together with the development of the economy, the needs of people are higher day to day. Nowadays, people buy and sell both tangible and intangible products. At this stage, the sales industry was born. There is a sales department in every organization. Salespeople with the roles of approaching, consulting customers are now a profession. However, with the introduction of currency and information technology, customers these days are more cautious toward buying. When customers have various methods to find out about products on their own, it is where misconceptions about sales and salespeople occur. One of them is that sales is not profession and salespeople are just liars.

To begin with, the thesis will give a comprehensive glance about sales and salespeople so that readers can understand their roles and how they work over time. The next chapter will provide key elements and skills that salespeople should have in their tool kits to succeed in sales as professionals. In the fourth chapter, techniques to stay motivated in the career for both salesperson as an individual and sales force as a team will be presented. Lastly, the thesis will be ended with a survey which was conducted to gather people’s assessment about sales career and salespeople.

2 SALES IN GENERAL

Sales industry like other businesses has had its revolution over time. Over years, the operation of the industry has changed. This requires salespeople to orient themselves between two schools of selling in order to stay in the industry. Moreover, the evolution leads to the alteration in roles of salespeople and the industry in both business and life contexts.

2.1 Evolution of Sales and Salespeople

Sales had occurred in human life and had its domination over all exchange relation since there was not currency. At that time sales existed in the form of commodity exchange, yet the process was not easy as parties were not always having products that the other need and the calculation of equivalent values was also complicated. Without sales, people will have to seek for themselves when having demand on a product or service. With the introduction of currency and technology, humans trade both tangible and intangible products. At the same time, there is evolution in sales practice and role of salespeople. (Do 2015.)

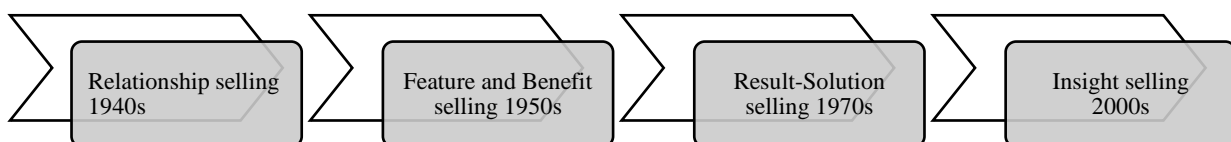


FIGURE 1. History of sales practices (Adapted from SalesCORE 2016)

Sales officially became a profession in the 1940s under the form of relationship selling. In this era, selling activities occurred based on the relationship between the customer and the salespeople rather than the price and the feature of the product. Customers prefer doing business with the same salespeople for certain products. This sales practice is nowadays prominent for companies those target repeat business from customers such as insurance policies, private instructors. Relationship selling end point is not the sales but the creation of a relationship with customers. These long-term relationships turn out to be the profitability for companies since it provides future customer interactions. Salespeople's personality and familiarity have great contribution to the level of customer loyalty in this sales era as these are

factors that create and keep a good relationship with customers. The success of sales activities in this period is measured by the relationship status between the sellers and the buyers. Successful relationship-selling salespeople can bring long-term profitability to themselves and to their organizations regardless price. (Carnrite.)

Since the 1950s when features and benefits started to be discussed, a new stage of selling was established. Although relationship, price, details and benefits are always critical for any sales activity, it is features and benefits of a product or service that especially a priority in this sales era. Besides prioritizing buying from familiar sellers, customers in this period prefer to know more about the benefits and features of what they are buying before making any purchasing decision. (SalesCORE 2016.) Therefore, the standard and the role of salespeople become more significant in this phase. This is compounded by the fact that there are questions from the customer that require both knowledge and speciality of the seller to answer. In a sense, feature and benefit selling shows that selling is a hard skill yet cultivable.

As the economy continuously growing, since the 1970s the selling market became a competitive marketplace. Selling firms as well as salespeople in order to compete in the market had to shift their selling focus from the product to the customer. In this period, customers preferred to pay for the results in use rather than features and benefits. The 1970s is the era of result-solution selling. Solution selling refers to a traditional competitive selling situation where superior value propositions are used to distinct suppliers from competition. On the other hand, result selling refers to a proactive, performance-based business model. This model allows within organizational knowledge teams from the suppliers to participate in solving problem and producing compelling selling propositions therefore result in positive follow up actions. Sales professionals in this era no longer just answering questions from the customers yet asking strategic questions to find out customer's service needs and expectations afterward consider if their solution fits. The seller no longer creates the value alone but in co-operation with the customer in the process of addressing customer's needs. Interaction and understanding customer's business are successful selling factors for sales professionals of this period. (Roune, Bristow & Terho 2011, 12-14.)

Products	Solutions	Results
Commodity competitive	Technical focus competitive	Productions and solutions pull through
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specification • Products • Price • Reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specification • Price • Reliability • Project skills • Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process • Knowledge • Financial Benefits • Business Value

FIGURE 2. Sales focus in different sales models (Roune, Bristow & Terho 2011, 34)

Replacing result-solution selling which was popular in the 1970s with the concept of less features, more benefits, less blind pitching, more connection between customer's needs and how products and services solve them, in the 2000s insight selling was born. With the introduction of the internet, customers have more information about everything including the offerings, markets, competitors, their problems and options for taking actions than ever before (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 1). Moreover, their choice grows years after years so that the value of the product or service is diminished. It is not because of the product or service no longer can value the customer, it is because they can get these products and services from many places. This mean they are replaceable. Insight selling is a new revolution and insight sellers are not replaceable. For insight selling, the salespeople no longer just present the value of their products or services to the customer, but they involve and become the value in helping customer solving their problems. This is insight. Schultz & Doerr (2014, 30) state that, "Insight selling is the process of creating and winning sales opportunities and driving change with ideas that matter". There are two applications of insight selling. The first is interaction insight. This application is useful when salespeople are driving demand to create sales opportunities and when customers come in with existing demand. Interaction insight focuses on providing values in the form of sparking ideas, shaping strategies through buyers and sellers' conversation. It differentiates the seller with others since it helps customers making better decisions and deepen the relationships. The second one is opportunity insight. The seller applies this insight when educate buyers to consider a strategy or course of action. Opportunity insight focuses on selling a particular idea or strategy that the buyer should go after yet have not known about. This application values the customers by growing their success through the introduced ideas. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 31.)

2.2 Consultative selling and Normal selling

Besides the evolution of sales practices, there is a divergence between the 2 schools of selling. There are transactional selling and consultative selling. It is important that sellers and people who aiming to join the selling industry can differentiate these selling schools. Consultative selling is nowadays a more competitive advantage since it is now the era of insight selling. This is compounded by the fact that only consultative selling that provide insight. Therefore, in order to penetrate and develop in the sales industry, sellers should be oriented toward the consultative selling school.

The main difference between a consultative salesperson and a transactional salesperson is their profession orientation. A consultative salesperson title themselves as a professional problem solver while a transactional salesperson appears as a sales maker. Transactional sellers are looking for customer needs and approach with whatever products or services that they have. In contrast, consultative sellers are looking for problems that their expertise can solve. Value is defined by the product and customers are short-term partners in transactional selling. On the other hand, value is defined on the customer which is insight and they are long-term partners in consultative selling. Moreover, professional consultative sellers seek for long-term cooperation with their customers where they can help improve these customers' life and work with their special qualifications. (Tracy 2015.)

It is not the price or the complexity of the product, service that define consultative selling. A consultative seller emphasizes the prospect and follows the 70% rule in their sales process. These professions spend 70% of the work asking questions and 30% listening. They aim to figure out the match between customer's problems and their solutions. Besides, consultative sellers guide the customer to the next steps during the sales process and focuses on selling the personalize solution that is co-generated with the customer. (Osman 2016; Halper 2016.)

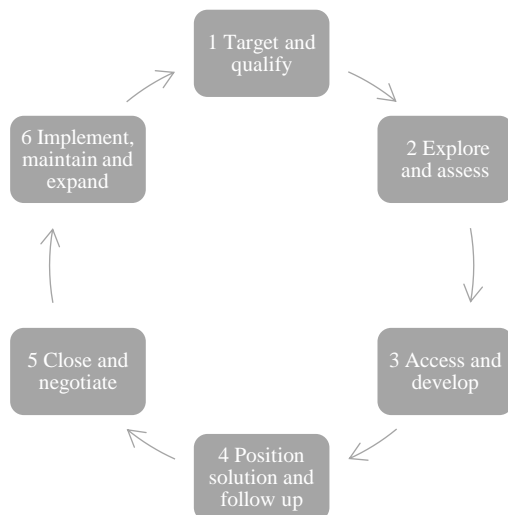


FIGURE 3. Consultative selling process (Osman 2016)

On the other hand, a transactional seller follows the 80% rule in their sales process. They spend 80% of the work talking on their products or services and 20% listening. Transactional sellers emphasize on features and assume that every client needs their offerings. The key of sales activity in this type of selling are the price and availability of the product. Moreover, sellers try to sell the product or service in every step of the selling process as well as the outcome of transactional selling are generic solutions. (Osman 2016; Halper 2016.)



FIGURE 4. Transactional selling process (Osman 2016)

2.3 Roles of sales in business and life contexts

Sales may not be the focus of everyone's business, yet it virtually affects many aspects of everyone's life. In fact, people's livelihood is derived either directly or indirectly from selling. People involve in selling either in their roles as sellers or consumers. Moreover, selling activity contributes to circulating money which directly affects the economy development and human life. Selling at the same time plays an important role in any organization. However, like other business functions, the roles of selling have changed over the years.

The natural role of selling is to make a sale. This can be an obvious statement yet disguises a highly complex process. The process requires the use of principals, techniques and substantial personal skills. Besides, it also includes a wide range of different types of selling tasks. (Jobber, Lancaster & FitzHugh 2019, 3-4.) Organizations attach special importance to the art of selling and spend large sums of money training sales personnel on it. The main reason for this attention is that in the most company, salespeople is the single most important link with customers. Their front-line roles mean that for many customers the salesperson is the company. In addition, ineffective salespeople can result the failure of the best designed and planned marketing efforts which result in losing potential customers. High performance sales team can convert more sales and profit the organizations. Besides, sales contribute to the development of a business. It is because sales personnel are in charge of making and maintaining customers in an organization. The relationship between salespeople and customers results in customer loyalty of a company. Also, it is proved that the cost for generating new customer is much higher than the cost of maintaining existing customers. By focusing on sales and sales department companies can achieve sustainable developments. (Levinson 2018.)

3 KEYS TO SUCCESS IN SALES

Successful salespeople are made not born. This chapter will focus on providing factors and techniques that contribute to the success of a salesperson. It includes identifying salespeople attributes, identifying and approaching ideal customers, understanding obstacles and closing a sale.

3.1 Attributes of successful salespeople

Attributes are qualities and characteristics. Together with knowledge and skills, attributes define a professional, successful salespeople. However, it is hard to learn attributes. Attributes can be developed and focused over time but normally, they come with the package. They are two categories of attributes which are tendencies and qualities. Tendencies are the motives that drive action whereas qualities are characteristics that lead people's behavior. Qualities are not only the entirety of one's experience, they are also the baseline of aptitude of whether one can be good at something. While tendencies can be considered the motive of behavior, qualities are the platform and the rudder. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 140-141.)

Successful salespeople are passionate about working and selling. It means that they have passion in success in selling rather than other work activities. They commit to sales career and to become excellent in the field by any effort. Besides, successful salespeople are those that have conceptual thinking. Conceptual thinking is often confused as a skill since it can be learnt and formed over time. However, there are reports show that, only people who have natural tendency to be good at conceptual thinking can see the difference after taking these classes. Conceptual thinking enables sellers to inspire with innovative ideas, inspire that ideas can result desire outcomes and craft compelling solutions for customers. Another tendency of salespeople those are success in their sales career is curiosity. These sellers focus on the buyer. They are naturally engage learning their prospects. They spend time on making client research and discovering their needs. For these sellers, it is important to educate, help the customers with their problems.

Sale is killed by delays. It is because the longer it takes for a customer to make a buying decision, the easier it is for a negative buyer behavior to be formed. This formed behavior as a result kills the sale. Sellers with the sense of urgency are less likely to become a victim of delays since they value the speed, as well as have the ability to drive the sales forward. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 141-145.)

In addition, successful salespeople tend to be assertive. Assertiveness drives salespeople to control and lead the sale, they take and defend a point of view with authority. Besides, they are willing to make disruptions for the change to be made, and to debate. Salespeople convert assertiveness into sales success by strong verbal reasoning skill. They use words for problem solving, persuasion and analysis. Money oriented is another tendency of a professional salesperson. It means that they strive to become a high-paid salesperson and are motivated to maximize personal income. These sellers understand how businesses making money at the same time understand their value. They are confident with the insight that they bring to the customer and that they desire to make money. It allows them to comfortably discuss money in both general and big-money situations. Without money orientation, sellers have difficulty in aspects such as negotiating, qualifying prospects, setting up investment and return case. The last tendency of a successful seller is performance orientation. Sellers with this tendency strive to be in the top of their career. They are winners who prefer to win and help others to win. They use time wisely, focus on results and are responsible for the result that they make. Performance orientation tendency drives sellers to manage their time and activities in order to get the best result and to be successful. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 145-148.)

Besides tendencies mentioned above, there are five qualities that can be found in successful salespeople. First, it is gravitas. Gravitas is showed through the seller's appearances and their interaction style with customers. Sellers who have gravitas are credible, substantive and confident. As sellers need customers to take their advice, gravitas is important since it attracts customers to take advise from a seller. The second quality of a successful salespeople is business acumen. Sellers with this quality have the keenness and quickness to understand customer's business situation. They understand the business, people, how they operate and the key drivers of their success. They consider themselves consultants whose duty is to give advice, make decisions that result in desire outcomes and to help customers make a good buying decision. Third, it is important that a salesperson is persevering in order to succeed in sales. As mentioned in the previous chapter, selling is hard yet learnable. Without perseverance, sellers tend to give up easily thus, they are easy to be distracted and not willing to pursue knowledge and skills needed to be success. On the other hand, sellers with perseverance willing make any effort to success. They work hard and stay on course also they are willing to pursue needed knowledge to become successful sellers. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 148-151.)

Another quality of a professional seller is integrity. Sellers with integrity aiming for sustainable success and long-term relationship with their customers. It can be seen from a successful salesperson that they

have strong moral value and are partners that consistently meet their commitments. Last but not least, the best salesperson apart from knowing how to sell, they have the best instincts. When it comes to selling especially in tension situations, it is necessary that sellers have emotional intelligence. It means that they are able to understand and manage both self and customer's emotions as well as to use emotional impacts when selling. It is also about seller's flexibility to include comfort with tension, adjust their style based on the customers that they are dealing with. A successful salesperson at the same time has to have a good attitude since a negative attitude can be noticed by the buyer and cause failure in selling. Successful sellers do not have excuse for lack of success in contrast they believe that they are responsible for their own success. With emotional intelligence, sellers can create success even in situations that require tension. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 152-153.)

3.2 Understanding the prospect

Customers play an important role in all trading activities. Without customers, trading would not be possible. Therefore, in order to succeed in the sales field, sellers should pay attention to customer aspects. In other words, besides gaining needed selling skill such as presentation, persuasion and needed knowledge about the sold product or service, it is understanding the customer that influence a salesperson's success. Understanding customer in this situation means that sellers are able to determine buyer's buying motive, buying criteria. This allows sellers to come up with the right strategies for the right customer to result in a successful sale.

3.2.1 Recognizing types of customers in sales

Similar to other businesses, customers of sales fall into two categories which is individual customers and collective customers such as organizations and households. For collective customers, purchase decision is usually made by a buying centre also called a decision-making unit. It means that a number of individuals will participate in and influence the purchase decision. Each person might assume one specific or multiple roles in the decision-making process. There are five roles in a buying centre including initiator, influencer, decider, buyer and user. Initiator is the person who starts the process of considering the purchase, thus initiator can be the one that collect information to help the buying decision. The influencer in a buying centre is the one that pursue to convince others considering the result of the decision. They also attempt to enforce their choice criteria on the decision. Besides, decider is the person that have the power or financial authority to make the final decision as to which product to purchase. While buyer

appears as the individual that makes the order, calls the manufacture, visit the shop and delivers the results, it is the user that actually use the product or service. In order save time and increase sales efficiency, it is important for salespeople to determine and approach the person that have the decision-making power of the buying centre when dealing with collective customers. (Jobber et al. 2019, 84.)

On the other hand, individual customers are those who can make purchase decision independently. When dealing with these customers, sellers need to pay attention to their buying criteria which group them into four main types of customer: the bargain hunter or cheap client, the difficult client, the sophisticated client and the affluent client. A bargain hunter customer buys based on price. They make buying decision based on the level of the markdown on price rather than on the actual value of a product or service. A difficult customer appears to do not have a particular need or desire for any product or service instead, they are looking for a sense of experience and community. These customers are usually difficult to manage and maintain. In the other hand, sophisticated customers are the one that make buying decision based on value. These customers have clear intentions to buy a product or service. Moreover, they are educated people who have knowledge about what they are buying. Another typical type of customer in sales is affluent customers. These customers are the one who have the financial power which allow them to buy based on feelings, emotions and convenience rather than functions of a product or service. Every customer can appear to be all these types depending on the product or service that being sold. (Lok 2019; Cardone 2016.)

3.2.2 Approaches toward different types of customer

The right selling approach and strategy play an importance role in the success of a sale. This is because it enables salespeople to drive the sale in the same manner of the buyer and result in desire out- comes. There are appropriate approaches for different types of customer mentioned above that salespeople can implement when selling. However, it is important that sellers are able to identify customer's buying criteria before applying these strategies.

When dealing with a bargain- hunter customer, sellers structure the offers to a product or service that is a profitable deal at the time in addition raising the urgency for buying of these customers. Although bargain- hunter are demanding customers, their satisfaction coming from chasing a discount on a product or service. Therefore, it is important for salespeople to create the feeling of achieving a profitable purchase decision for these customers. Difficult customers likewise are very demanding, yet they do not have a specific need or desire for any product or service. It is energy drainer dealing with these customers

if sellers cannot raise their demand on what being sold. However, sellers cannot ignore difficult customers since they have a tendency to share their buying experience with others. Sophisticated customers are those spend time doing research on their desire products or services beforehand. It is more appreciated for a seller not to drive a sale forward and allow these buyers make the purchase decision on their own. Moreover, sellers can discuss the downside of the product or service with sophisticated customers in order to gain their trust which can contribute to the success of a sale. The purchase decision of an affluent buyer is motivated by emotions, feelings and convenience. In other words, the actual product or service that the buy is convenience. The key to dealing with these customers is that sellers structure the offer to different value proposition which can make buyer's live easier. (Lok 2019.) As mentioned before that a customer can appear to be all four types at any given time, sellers likewise can maneuver in and out types of that customer by recognizing their model at each period and changing the selling approach, strategy (Cardone 2016).

3.3 Understanding the obstacle of a sale

The most difference between successful salespeople and others is that they do not fear of objections and rejections. In fact, there will be always objections from customers even when they purchased something. Moreover, objections are signals of interest. If a customer does not have any interest in a product or service, no objection will be made. A successful salesperson empathizes with their customers when there are objections. Empathy enable the salespeople to handle the objection since selling is also based on emotion. Sellers therefore can even become a part of the solution. Likewise, rejections happen when objections are not handled successfully. In this situation, it is important that a salesperson is able to determine and overcome obstacles of a sale which prevent a customer from buying. By recognizing these barriers, sellers can afterward find out the solution to move the sale forward. (McMaster 2010.) According to Zig Ziglar, there are five obstacles that need to be overcome to win a sale: No need, No money, No desire, No hurry, No trust.

Among these five obstacles, money is usually not considered an actual obstacle. In fact, the majority of customers always have money for a product or service. Customers justify the expense since they do not recognize the commensuration between the value and the price of what they are buying. In this situation, it is duty of a salesperson to increase the value of this product or service. (McMaster 2010.) Another barrier of a sale is no need. Customers do not buy unless they need a product or service. However, not every customer realizes their need for buying a certain thing. When dealing with these customers, it is

important that sellers raise their need by providing information, applicability of what being sold. (Antonio 2013.) On the other hand, sellers qualify and disqualify no-need customers shortly since it is complicated and time consuming to create customer's need. No desire is another obstacle of a sale. Desires mean that customers have emotional connections to a product or service that drive them to own it. Without desires, buyers may not purchase even when need and money are existing. It is the seller duty to raise customer's desire on what being sold by providing them compelling offers. (Lok 2018.) No hurry at the same time prevent customers from buying. Without a sense of urgency, customers will make buying decisions and delay the sale. As mentioned before, delays may kill the sale since it allows negative customer behaviors to be formed. Therefore, it is necessary for sellers to ensure that customers feel the sense of urgency. In other words, sellers show customers the pain of not making the decision which can be missing out profitable purchases. (Antonio 2013.) Lastly, customers do not buy because of no-trust. Customers may not believe either the seller or the outcome of what they are buying. In this situation, sellers showing the personal and company achievements to position both themselves and the company trustworthy. (Lok 2018.)

3.4 Closing a sale process

Prospects and salespeople have different views on a close. To a salesperson, a close is a final logical step in a business evaluation process. In contrast, a buyer who involved in every single step of the way believe that this evaluation is based on the required investment of resources that change the process within their organizations. Toward a close, customers evaluate the need to invest resources, money to change something. It is seen as a decision to a prospect whatever the size and scope of the effort it take to close a sale. Both sellers and buyers go through the same process when closing a deal but with different perspectives. In order to control the sale, own the deal, salespeople have to think from the buyer perspective toward a close and make them believe that it is just a final step of a natural buying process. (Miller 2003, 196-197.)

Seller	Buyer
Contract signed	Implement date
Cost	Return on investment
Price	Investment to get the return desired
Next step forward	Logical decision step
Ask for the order	Make a decision- yes or no
Get contract by end of the month	Make a decision-implementation date may be at risk

FIGURE 5. Views of buyers and sellers on closing a sale (Adapted from Miller 2003, 204)

Successful salespeople can do it easily, they are top sales winners that close almost every sale in their career. Their key is the three-step model by Mike Schultz and John E. Doerr. The model is the result of a study among 700 business-to-business purchases made by buyers who represented a total of \$3.1 billion in annual purchasing power. This selling model includes 3 levels that sellers can implement to win the sale at the same time distinguish themselves from other sellers that come in the second place.

The first level of the model is Connecting. It demonstrates how winners have a different approach to link customers, products and solutions. At this level, sellers at the same time connect the dots between customer needs and their company's products or services as solutions and listen, connect personally with buyers. When connecting, sellers do not need to diagnose yet just demonstrate the understanding of the customer by listening to them and talking about how to move forward with their situations based on a summary document provided beforehand by the customer. The document includes customer's understanding toward challenges that happen in their business, the reason why they exist. Besides, salespeople in order to discover prospect's need focus on the aspirations rather than the affliction. It means that at this level sellers focus on positive goals and the possibility of achieving these goals of the buyer. Finally, to craft a compelling solution for customers, sellers demonstrate a visible connection between customer needs and how their offering solves them. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 8-11.)

The second level of the model is Convince. It shows how sellers differentiate themselves from other salespeople, visualize return, handling customer's perceived risks. Buyers often ask themselves questions about needs, risks and return toward a product or service when considering any course of action. It shows that buyers simply want to apply their resources; money, people and time to get a worthwhile return. By presenting to the customer where to do it and building the confidence that it will work, sellers can win more sales. Sellers convince buyers on three things: the return on investment is worth, the risk is acceptable, and the seller is the best choice among the available options. To convince the prospect to accept the risk, seller have to thoroughly understand factors related to risk that show up to be important

to customer's buying decision. Besides, in order to make the customer believe on the return ability of the product or service, sellers prove their understanding both about the customer personally and their situations. Finally, when there is competition, sellers have to figure out what is believed to be important to work forward of each individual customer, also which product or service strengths are communicated to them to prove that seller's offers are superior value. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 12-15.)

The model's third level is Collaborate. It demonstrates how sellers educate buyers with new ideas and perspectives, set shared goals, involve in customer success and generate a customer perception of working as a team. At this level, sellers become components of the value proposition. It is their behavior and actions that make them the value of the sales. Sellers who collaborate with customers through behavior are responsive, proactive, and easy to buy from. Besides that, in order to collaborate, salespeople involve in buyer's buying process and work with them to achieve mutual goals. In other words, sellers are integral to buyer's success. By collaborating, sellers deepen the relationships, trust the understanding of need, strengthen the quality, applicability of solution. In addition, it helps customers to see the distinctions among sellers, increase psychological ownership in buyers. As the result, sellers win buyer's consideration and selection phases of the buying process. (Schultz & Doerr 2014, 118-119.)

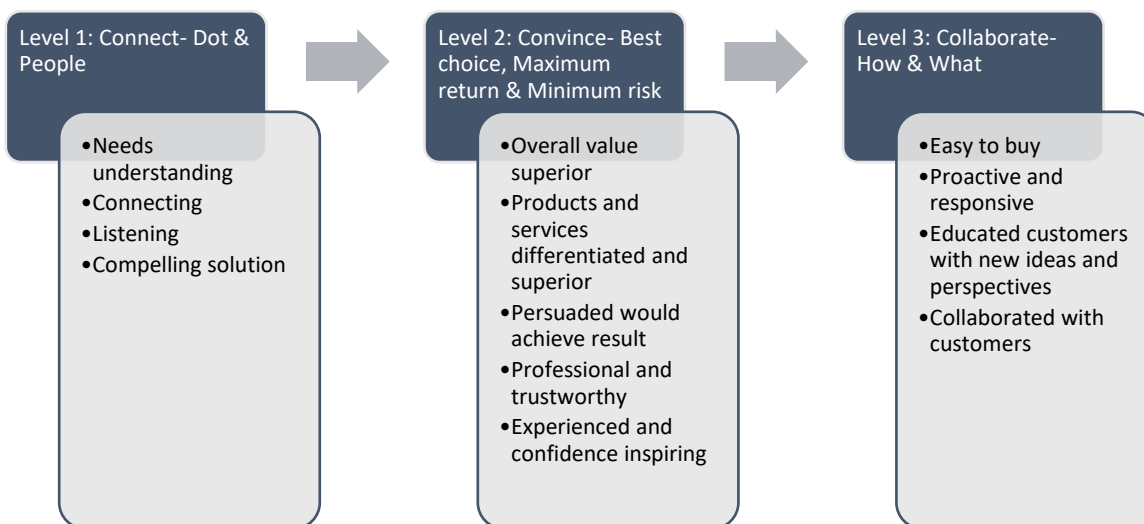


FIGURE 6. Components of 3 level of Rain Selling (Adapted from Schultz & Doerr 2014, 18)

4 STAYING MOTIVATED IN SALES

Due to the nature of the job frequently being rejected is inevitable for every salesperson. This is compounded by the fact that there are many misconceptions about sales and salespeople. It leads to a consequence that the confidence, positivity and work motivation of salespeople are constantly worn out. Therefore, motivating sales force is always the major problem in every business. This chapter will focus on analyzing salesperson's motivation and thereby offering solutions to help salespeople maintain motivation at work, as well as help businesses motivate their salespeople.

4.1 Misconceptions about Sales

In a sense, selling is a business activity that rise the most discussion among and between people that are both involved and not involved to it. The reason for this is because everyone is in contact with selling whether in their roles as sellers or consumers. Moreover, one's livelihood is derived either directly or indirectly from selling. This familiarity as a result may be the reason why there are many misconceptions about sale and salespeople. (Jobber et al. 2019, 3-4.)

The most common misconception about sales and salespeople is that selling is a profession for those who are unqualified. People believe that there is no needed knowledge and skill required to work in sales. In fact, sellers are the connectors between manufacturers and customers. Seller's job is to balance competing criteria and standards of success (Jobber et al. 2019, 351). This requires salespeople to have specialist knowledge and skills. Specifically, sellers have to understand their offerings at the same time be able to determine competitive factors and customer approaches. Besides, sales is considered a boring occupation. It is easy for people to assume that since sales is represented mostly by numbers. It is the amount of cold calls, customers, contracts made that counted in selling. However, selling is also about doing research, building relationship. It is more based on people and their behavior. Therefore, it can be said that selling is more of a psychological occupation. Similarly, sales is believed to be a career of no prospects. Selling as a job according to many people is lack of financial securities, opportunities and promotions. However, research showed that many company leaders, entrepreneur are once sellers. Steve Jobs at his iPhone launching in Mac World 2007 was actually selling his products. This appears the same for Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg in their product introduction events. It leads to a conclusion that by

gaining needed knowledge and skills sellers will be able achieve both secure income and career promotion. (AeroLeads 2019.)

In some circumstances, salespeople are also the topic of misconceptions. One of those is that salespeople are untrustworthy. The reason for this assumption is the fact that people do not want the feeling of being sold. Buyers believe that they can make their own buying decisions without the influence of others. As a result, they have the tendency to believe that sellers are trying take advantage of their purchasing rather than guide them to make good buying decisions. In addition, this misconception can be the result of an unsuccessful trust building. Sellers in this situation fail or even do not know how to discuss the downside of their offerings with their customers. Therefore, they do not gain customer's trust. (Tran 2016.) As mentioned before, people do not buy unless they trust. Professional salespeople understand the importance of gaining customer's trust and being trustworthy. Another distorted view about salespeople is that they talk too much. Professional salespeople spend time asking question and listening to buyers rather than talking. It is because this enable sellers to understand their customers as well as to determine their needs. Thereby sellers complete their frontline role which is to pair customers with the most suitable product or service rather than to win every sale. Sellers close the sale at all cost is also a common misconception about salespeople. In fact, not every salespeople are motivated winning orders and financial rewards. Salespeople who work the hardest state that they prefer winning customer trust and satisfying their customers. (Jobber et al. 2019, 345-346.) This is compounded by the fact that seller's role is to help their customers make better buying decision rather than to win every sale.

4.2 Research background

A quantitative research was carried out in order to collect people's assessment about sales career and salespeople among a limited number of respondents. Answers were collected through an online survey website. This survey was uploaded to a group of international students studying in Finland and to a group of salespeople working in Viet Nam. The result was then collected by the same method and then analyzed.

The questionnaire was developed by Webropol and was designed to be in English. The questions were uploaded to Webropol on 12th December 2019 and the results were then collected after 3 days. The survey consists of 9 multiple choices questions. Since these are all easy to understand, respondents are supposed to answer the whole survey which take less than 3 minutes. The survey starts with a question

to find out if the respondents have experienced any sales activity. The next questions dig deeper into participants' thought and assessment about sales career especially salesperson.

4.3 Research result and evaluation

A total number of 30 people joined to answer the survey. It turned out that only 4 respondents equal to 14% of them have not experienced selling before. It shows that selling is familiar with most of them. In other word, it can be understood that these respondents may not realize themselves as sellers since the offering of a trading activity as mentioned before can be both tangible and intangible products. Besides, there were 17% of the participants stated that selling was easy while the rest 83% thought that it was hard. From the free text explanation for this question, it was pointed out that there were negotiation skill, marketing, and passion for selling that were considered when answering this question. The result was expected since selling according to the finding in this thesis was a hard skill and was a course of actions. Moreover, there were internal and external factors that can affect the outcome of a sale. In order to win a sale, sellers had to combine professional skills and emotional elements. When asked for the assessment whether it is begging or giving value that can be used to describe salespeople's work, 77% of the respondent stated that it was giving value to the customer while 23% of them believed that salespeople are begging value from their customers. Although most of the respondent believed that sellers benefit them, it also shown that there were still people annoyed by salespeople. The remaining questions of the survey aimed to gather knowledge and assessment of the respondent about professional salespeople and their actual work

Question 4 was about respondent's evaluation on the importance of remaining customer relationship after sales. With the result of 54% of grade 6 which was the highest grade, 23% of grade 4 and 20% of grade 5, it can be concluded that maintaining customer relationship is definitely vital for a salesperson. This finding contributed to the conclusion that selling is an important activity of every business. The relationship between salespeople and customers determines the success of a company since it affects the customer loyalty level of that company. Similarly, maintaining a relationship with customers gives the seller a more sustainable success. This is because selling is not only about number but also about people and relationship. As a result, it can be said that the end point of a trading activity is not a close of a sale yet a successful build of a customer relationship.

Personalities determine not only salespeople's work tendencies but also their interaction styles with the customer. Personalities have a great influence on the success of a salesperson. Besides needed characteristics mentioned earlier, question 5 presented personalities that were expected for a salesperson to have. The purpose of this question was to evaluate customer expectations of salesperson performance based on the above criteria. With the average grade at 5.1 and 4.8 respectively, thoughtfulness and sympathy toward customer were the top qualities that were expected for a salesperson. The ability to work under pressure was still taken into account with the average point of 4.4. It can be concluded that customers value a thoughtful and sympathetic seller.

Question 6 aimed to evaluate respondents' assessment on salespeople's motivation in practice. The highest point can be attributed to high salary wage with 4.5 out of 6 point. Passion for selling accounted for 4.2 point and the lowest grade is 3.6 accounted for passion about benefiting customer. Surprisingly, respondents barely believe that salespeople really aim to deliver value to customers at the first place yet the high salary wage and passion for selling activity are the main intentions of choosing the job. This is easy to understand since successful salespeople are those who have high income. Their salary mostly comes from making sales for commission. However, according to the finding which will later be presented in the thesis, it is satisfying customer that motivated the most successful salespeople.

Question 7 was conducted to gather respondent's assessment on the job-related difficulty that salespeople have to deal with. With the average point of 5.2 dealing with customers was considered the most challenge for a salesperson. Graded 5, meeting sales targets was the second challenging problem that a great salesperson must face. Rejected and disrespected shared the same position with the grade of 4.4 out of 6. It can be seen that respondents considered dealing with many customers and working under the pressure of sales target two significant difficulties in sales industry. It is true since being rejected and disrespected are inevitable for salespeople. On the other hand, salespeople have to come up with different approach strategies for every type of customer. Moreover, the financial security of a salesperson in a sense depends on the commission they make from successful trading.

There was a remarkable difference between the number of respondents who wish to start their career as a salesperson and the others which is 17% and 83% respectively. It is understandable since in previous questions participants stated that sales is a challenging profession. However, the number of salespeople who would stay with the job was 20% higher than the number of those who would leave. Up to 60% of respondents stated that they would not when it comes to quitting their job as a salesperson whereas the

other 40% stated the opposite. It can be concluded that sales is a prospective job with a relatively high percentage of loyal employees.

4.4 Motivating sales force

Motivation explains why people behave in particular ways in different situations. Organizational psychologists have defined motivation as an individual's choice to begin working on a task or project; to spend time and effort on that task and to continue working on the task for an applicable period of time. Besides there are three basis factors that encouraging motivation which is credit for achievement obtained, encouragement or rewards for achievement, and guidance to facilitate achievement. However, motivators are more complicated than these basic elements when it comes to that of salespeople. Salespeople are usually assumed to be motivated by financial rewards. However, sellers that are the most professional, high-paid in the field state that they enjoy winning the sale and gaining the satisfaction of pleasing their customers. These are considered their achievement and intrinsic recognition. (Jobber et al. 2019, 345-346.)

Salespeople are identified as laggards, core performers and stars. Laggards are salespeople who need to be tightly inspired to attain targets. Core performers sellers are those who have good performance yet receive the least attention from their managers. If there are accurate incentives, core performers will become subjects that have greatest potential for improvement. Salespeople who recognized as stars attain and exceed their targets. Although stars often achieve greatest rewards, they have a tendency to stop working once the reward is limited. These types of salespeople are expanded to nine different characteristic types including the perfectionist, achiever, individualist, observer, and team player. The motivator selected will mainly depended on the type of the salesperson. The mechanism of action of motivation is based on the relationship between needs, drives and goals. The process starts with needs which set the drives in motion to achieve set goals. In sales circumstance the need for money drives sellers to work harder in order to obtain higher pay. To be well-motivated is important to succeed in sales. As research has shown, high level of motivation results in many positive improvements for salespeople such as increased creativity, smarter working strategies, higher self-esteem, strategic negotiation tactics. (Jobber et al. 2019, 346.)

Since selling is a difficult job where effort is not always in a direct relationship with success, it is important that organizations pay special attention to motivate their sales force. In fact, motivation has been

studied for many years. As a result, there are a number of theories that are pertinent to the motivation of salespeople. For example, according to Vroom's expectancy theory (1964), in order to effectively motivate a salesperson, managers have to have the accurate assessment of need and value system of that individual. It is because Vroom believes that people's motivation to make effort depends on their expectations for success. This also leads to the result that different salespeople will have different performance criteria and value toward the same rewards. It is managers' task to recognize these criteria of their sales force when motivating them. Besides, Likert (the '60s) in his sales management theory stated that the characteristic, style and behavior of the sales manager affect the behavior of their salespeople. According to Likert, high performance sales teams are usually led by high performance goals managers. Churchill, Ford and Walker also developed a sales force motivation model. The model comes as a circle explain how motivation work for a salesperson as well as how managers can motivate their salespeople. The model developers believe that higher motivation drive sellers to exert greater effort which lead to higher performance. The process then continued with greater rewards which bring higher job satisfaction to the salesperson. It then repeats the circle since enhanced satisfaction creating higher motivation. Sales managers follow the model by convincing sellers that they can sell more by working harder; that the reward is worth the effort. However, as mentioned before in Vroom's theory, when setting rewards for the sale force, it is important that sales managers are able to recognize their performance criteria and value systems. (Jobber et al. 2019, 347-350.)

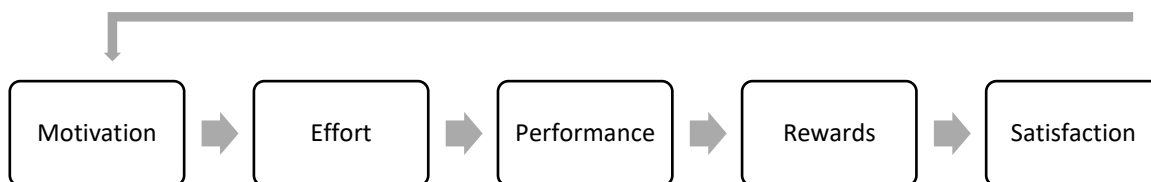


FIGURE 7. Sales force motivation (Adapted from Jobber et al. 2019, 350)

There are a number of studies that identify what motivates salespeople in practice. The result shows that these motivators change over time due to the improvement in sales management and in understanding salespeople motivation in practice. In fact, sales are motivated largely by the feeling of self-worth and by elements that are identified in Maslow's pyramid. (Jobber et al. 2019, 350.) The pyramid is a motivational theory in psychology including a five level of human needs. From the bottom upward, the hierarchy presents the basic to the complex needs of a human comprising safety, love or belonging, esteem and self-actualization. (McLeod 2018.) There are some problems that need to be considered when mo-

tivating sales force. Frequently salespeople work alone. As the result seller's motivators are partly identified and supported by their supervising managers. Besides, motivation of salespeople is usually undermined. This is compounded by the fact that effort not always direct to success in sales. Moreover, seller's duty is to play a boundary role between customers and the company where they have to reconcile competing criteria and standards of success. (Jobber et al. 2019, 351.)

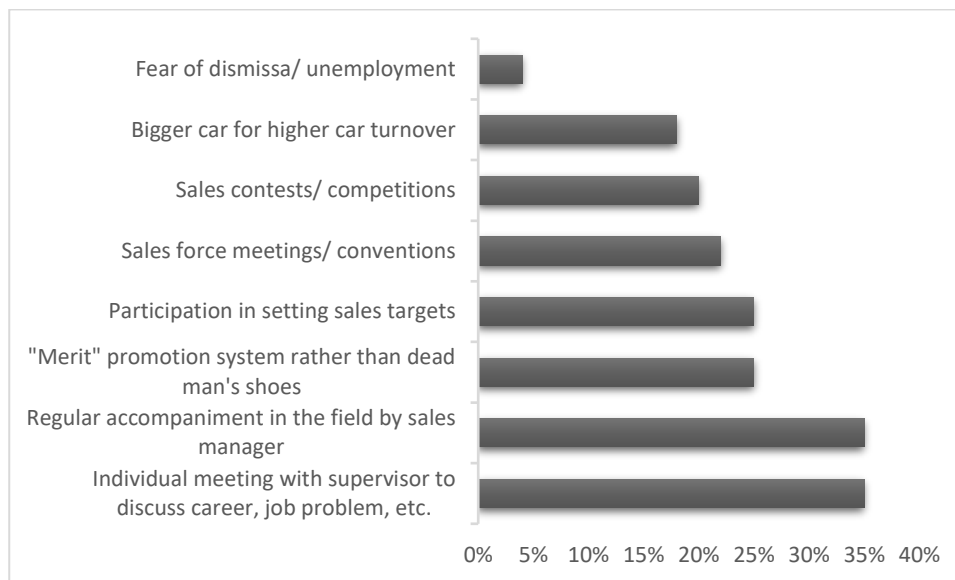


FIGURE 8. Factors affecting salespeople motivation (Adapted from Jobber et al. 2019, 351)

With these issues considered, there are many ways for sales managers to motivate their sales force in practice. Most companies combine a commission or bonus system with basic salary as form of payment for sales force. The system can be established based on the decision of the company. This approach at same time give sale force a sense of security on income and the incentives for achieving higher sales. Besides, sales targets or quotas can be effective in motivating salespeople. The reason is that it can be considered both the guideline and challenge to boost salespeople in their performance. However, the target should be fair, obtainable yet a challenge for sales force. A deep understanding of sales force as individual is vital for an effective motivation. Therefore, meetings where managers can meet, discuss and identify their salespeople personalities, value system is suggested when motivating sales force. A promotion system can also act as a motivator. This promotion system drives salespeople to increase their performance in order to achieve higher opportunities, positions in their job. Sales contests share the role of motivating sales force. Sales contests are more popular in consumer sales force. These contests appeal

the competitiveness between salespeople, their needs for attainment and recognition. However, it is important for managers to ensure that sales force is responding to the contest as well as it is fair to every salesperson. (Jobber et al. 2019, 352-355.)

In a sense, sales managers do not actually motivate their sales force yet create circumstances for those salespeople to motivate themselves. Therefore, it is important that sellers are able to stay motivated on their own. Brian Tracy a speaker, author and success expert in his lesson pointed out how salespeople can stay motivated in sale. First, sellers seek to identify target customers who they have the most win personality to deal with. An understanding of customers enables salespeople to customize the effort, approach and strategy to each individual customer. Thereby, sellers can control the customer conversation and drive the sale. Second, salespeople appeal to customer's needs. This interest allows sellers to connect with customers emotionally which is the key of selling. The responding to customer's need puts salespeople in the better position for offering suitable solutions to their customers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, people do not buy unless they trust. A salesperson in order to achieve higher sales have to be trustworthy. Customers have a tendency not to trust salespeople. It is the seller's job to change their minds. The author also mentioned that sellers should offer demonstrations on the operation of the product or service. It is salespeople's duty to generate a connection between customers and the offering. To make it possible, sellers visibilize how the products or service can benefit the customer. Listening to customer is another method to keep salespeople motivated in achieving higher sales. Most people believe that selling is talking however, successful salespeople know that it is listening. By listening, sellers are able to identify the customer's need, buying criteria. Thereby, they can tailor strategies to win the sale. This is compounded by the fact that sellers are then able to pair their customers with the most suitable product or service that they need. Finally, as a method to win more sale, the author emphasized the importance of asking question. The most effective way to recognize a customer's need is to ask a lot of questions. In order to do that, salespeople approach every customer with an open mind. It is also important that there are no assumptions before questions are made. Besides, sellers ensure using open ended questions when determining customer's needs. Sellers afterward response to customer's needs to win the sale. (Tracy 2018.)

5 CONCLUSION

Trading is an important activity which has its effect over all aspects of life. A person's livelihood is more or less derived from selling. Moreover, in the era of industrialization, when every company has a sales department, sales has officially become a profession that hold an important role. The sales department converts every idea, investment, and effort of a company into currency which allow the company to continue growing. Likewise, salespeople are those who hold a connection role. They are the people who connect manufacturers with customers. In other words, sellers are benefiting customers on the behalf of manufacturers by pairing them with appropriate products or services. However, when customers have many ways to approach and learn about the product or service that they need with the help of technology, misconceptions about sales and salespeople have emerged.

The aim of this thesis was to give an insight about sales career and salespeople. The nature, difficulty and requirement of the career will be presented. At the same time, needed skills, knowledge and methods to become a successful salesperson were also discussed in the thesis. The thesis starts with information on how sales become a profession, its evolution and the change in roles of salespeople over time. The thesis is continued by analyzing two main selling schools in sales and discussing sales role in both business and daily life circumstances. The third chapter is probably the most important chapter since it gives viewers key knowledge and technique to success in the career. There, view will find out information on attributes of professional salespeople, how to identify and approach ideal customers as well as how to overcome sale's obstacles and win every sale. In chapter four a number of common misconceptions about sales and salespeople will be presented and dined. Besides, methods to stay motivated in sales for both salespeople as an individual and sales force as a team is also stated in the chapter.

Last but not least, a survey with the aim of gathering people's assessments on sales career and salespeople is done within a group of international student and salespeople. According to the analyzed result, author has led to a conclusion that sales is a highly competitive yet promising industry. Although it is a difficult job, sales have a high percentage of loyal employees. Besides, in order to become a sales professional, it is required that the person has a passion for selling, is willing to pursue needed knowledge and skills and is motivated by satisfying their customers.

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THE SALES CAREER SURVEY

1. Have you ever sold a product or service? (Friends or relatives can be counted) *

- Yes
- No

2. Do you find it difficult to sell? (Further explanation is welcome) *

- Yes
- No

3. Are you agree if salespeople are begging or giving value? (Further explanation is welcome) *

- Begging
- Giving

4. How necessary it is to maintain customer relationship after sales? *

- 1 2 3 4 5 6
-
- Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely

5. How important it is for salespeople to have these characteristics?

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sympathy (Toward customer) | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 |
| Thoughtful (Toward customer) | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 |
| Under pressure (Toward sales target, competition.) | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 |

6. Why would people do sales? *

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Passionate about selling (Focusing more on making profit) | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 |
| Passionate about benefitting customer (Focusing more on the value delivered) | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 |

	1	2	3	4	5	6
High salary wage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. How challenging it is for salespeople toward these issues. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Dealing with customer	<input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>	6
Meeting sales target	<input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>	6
Receiving rejection	<input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>	6
Disrespected (it is waste of time talking to salespeople.)	<input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>	6

8. Would you become salespeople? *

- Yes
- No

9. Are you considering quitting your job? (only answer if you are or were a salesperson)

- Yes
- No

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULT

1. Have you ever sold a product or service? (friends or relatives can be counted)

Number of respondents: 30

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	86.67%
No	4	13.33%
Total	30	100%

2. Do you find it difficult to sell? (further explanation is welcome)

Number of respondents: 30

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	83.33%
No	5	16.67%
Total	30	100%

Answers given into free text field

Option names	Text
No	I just sold/gave away old but still useful items to people and however my items were suit to their need and budget they would contact me, and we made the deal
No	I have passion for selling
Yes	My negotiation skill is bad
Yes	Don't know how to market it well
Yes	If the price of the new one compares to your stuff is not highly different, people prefer to buy new one.

3. Are you agree if salespeople are begging or giving value? (further explanation is welcome)

Number of respondents: 30

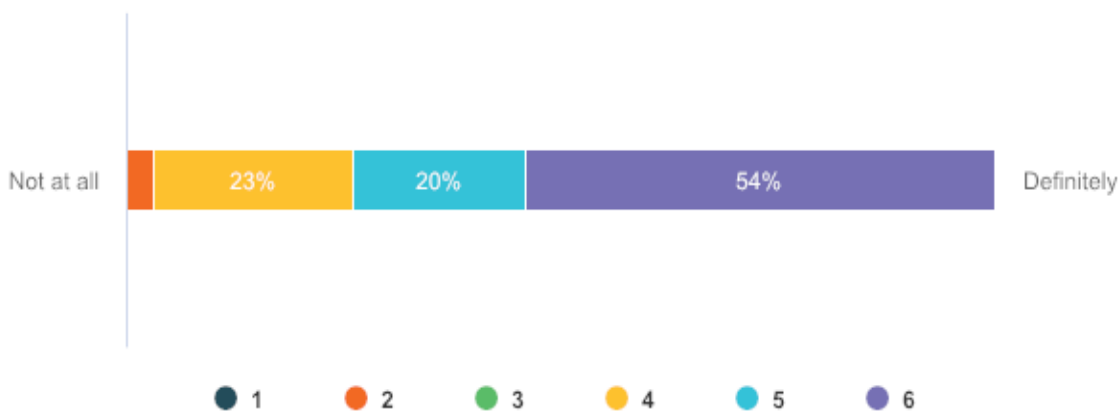
	Frequency	Percentage
Begging	7	23.33%
Giving	23	76.67%
Total	30	100%

Answers given into free text field

Option names	Text
Giving	It can be both, but I am more on this side
Giving	Bring the useful things to customers
Giving	For me, supply and demand are equal. Every product has its own value which will increase or decrease depend on how the marketing is and the introduction of sellers.
Giving	It's smarter and more effective way to get better price, however, depends on your communication skill and your knowledge to the product a lot to persuade people to buy

4. How necessary it is to maintain customer relationship after sales?

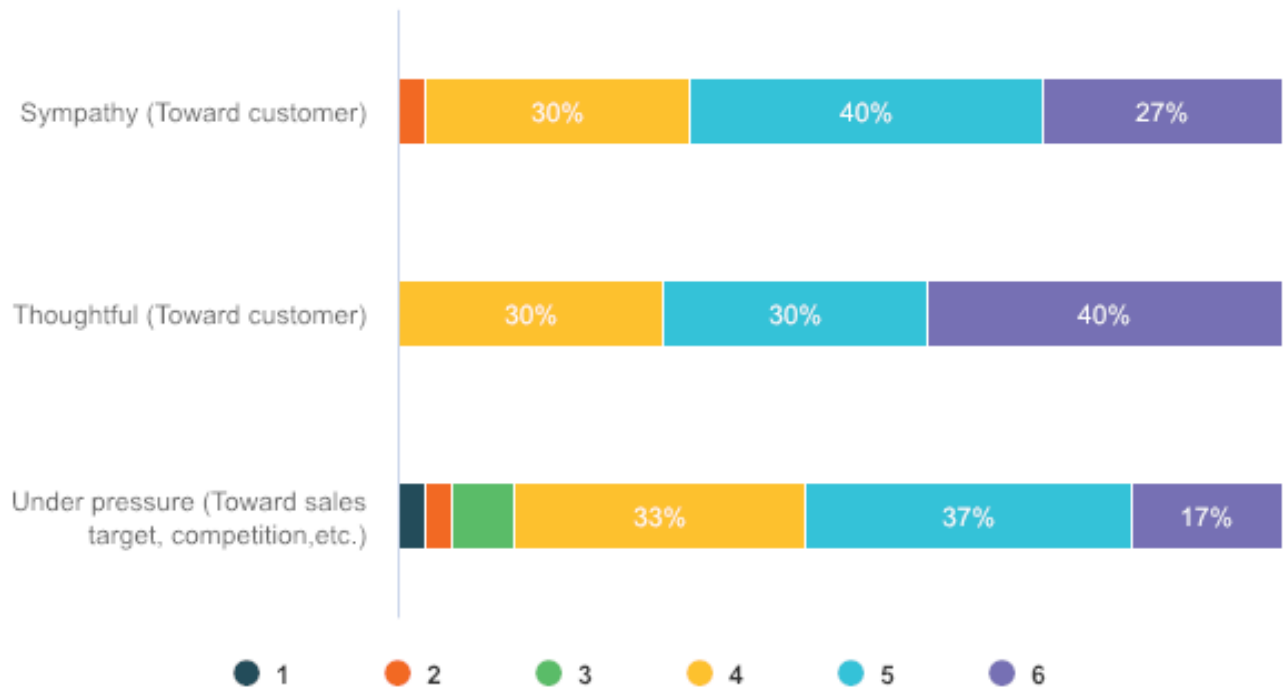
Number of respondents: 30



	1	2	3	4	5	6		Total	Average	Median
Not at all	0	1	0	7	6	16	Definitely	30	5.2	6
	0%	3.33%	0%	23.33%	20%	53.34%				
Total	0	1	0	7	6	16		30	5.2	6

5. How important it is for salespeople to have these characteristics?

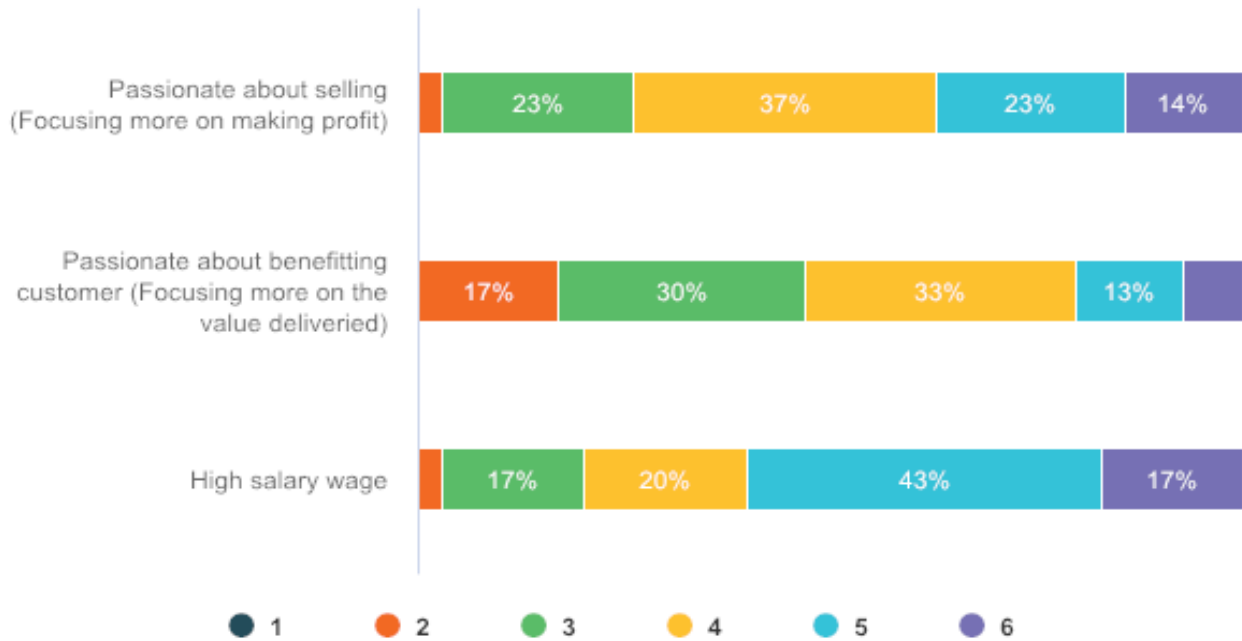
Number of respondents: 30



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Average	Median
Sympathy (Toward customer)	0	1	0	9	12	8	30	4.87	5
	0%	3.33%	0%	30%	40%	26.67%			
Thoughtful (Toward customer)	0	0	0	9	9	12	30	5.1	5
	0%	0%	0%	30%	30%	40%			
Under pressure (Toward sales target, competition.)	1	1	2	10	11	5	30	4.47	5
	3.33%	3.33%	6.67%	33.33%	36.67%	16.67%			
Total	1	2	2	28	32	25	90	4.81	5

6. Why would people do sales?

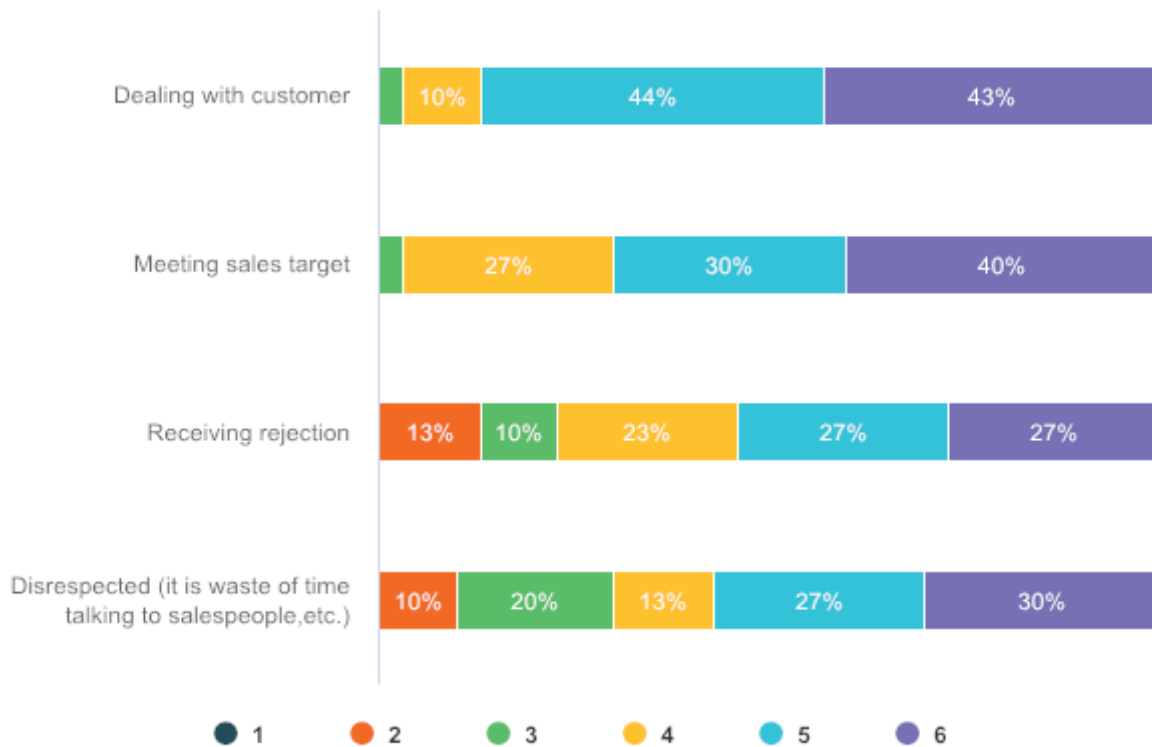
Number of respondents: 30



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Average	Median
Passionate about selling (Focusing more on making profit)	0	1	7	11	7	4	30	4.2	4
	0%	3.33%	23.34%	36.67%	23.33%	13.33%			
Passionate about benefitting customer (Focusing more on the value delivered)	0	5	9	10	4	2	30	3.63	4
	0%	16.67%	30%	33.33%	13.33%	6.67%			
High salary wage	0	1	5	6	13	5	30	4.53	5
	0%	3.33%	16.67%	20%	43.33%	16.67%			
Total	0	7	21	27	24	11	90	4.12	4

7. How challenging it is for salespeople toward these issues.

Number of respondents: 30



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Average	Median
Dealing with customer	0	0	1	3	13	13	30	5.27	5
	0%	0%	3.33%	10%	43.34%	43.33%			
Meeting sales target	0	0	1	8	9	12	30	5.07	5
	0%	0%	3.33%	26.67%	30%	40%			
Receiving rejection	0	4	3	7	8	8	30	4.43	5
	0%	13.33%	10%	23.33%	26.67%	26.67%			
Disrespected (it is waste of time talking to salespeople.)	0	3	6	4	8	9	30	4.47	5
	0%	10%	20%	13.33%	26.67%	30%			
Total	0	7	11	22	38	42	120	4.81	5

8. Would you become a salesperson?

Number of respondents: 30

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	16.67%
No	25	83.33%
Total	30	100%

9. Are you considering quitting your job? (only answer if you are or were a salesperson)

Number of respondents: 10

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	40%
No	6	60%
Total	10	100%