

PROFESSIONAL SALESMANSHIP – LECTURE 2

CHAPTER 2 – The Foundation of Professional Selling

Objectives

After completing this module students should be able to:

- Discuss the important foundations for successful professional.
- Discuss the Characteristics of Sales Careers.
- Explain the Classification of Personal Selling Jobs.
- Elaborate the qualifications and skills required for success by salespersons.
- Explain the importance of trust.
- Discuss the distinguishing characteristics of trust-based selling.
- Discuss how to earn trust.

LESSON 1

The characteristics of sales careers

- job security
- advancement opportunities
- immediate feedback
- prestige
- job variety
- independence
- Compensation

Job Security

Salespersons function as revenue generators, thus experiencing comparatively favorable job security in contrast to other professions. While individual job security hinges on personal performance, salespeople typically endure layoffs as a last resort during personnel reductions. Proficient sales professionals also enjoy a degree of job security due to the broad applicability of their fundamental sales skills. Often, they can seamlessly transition to different employers or

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

even switch industries because of the transferability of these skills, which is particularly encouraging for those operating in industries experiencing decline or stagnation.

The period between 2004 and 2005 appears to witness a significant demand for salespeople. Projected overall job growth in the United States during this timeframe stands at approximately 13 percent, presenting above-average opportunities in technical sales, advertising, real estate, select service sectors, and sales management roles. Even within industries like life insurance, where overall job growth is expected to be below average from 2004 to 2014, strong prospects exist for individuals holding college degrees.

Advancement opportunities continue to serve as an appealing aspect of sales careers as the business landscape becomes increasingly competitive. In such environments, individuals and firms adept at identifying and satisfying customer needs are rewarded with avenues for advancement. Many successful salespeople ultimately ascend to top management positions because they exhibit key attributes essential for executive roles, as outlined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor.

Salespeople benefit from continuous, immediate feedback on their performance, which serves as a source of motivation and job satisfaction. Both salespeople and their managers can readily observe the outcomes of their efforts, while direct feedback from customers on a daily basis proves stimulating, challenging, and productive. The ability to promptly respond to customer feedback during sales presentations is a significant advantage of adaptive selling, setting it apart from other forms of marketing communications such as advertising and public relations. The spontaneity and creativity involved in responding to immediate feedback constitute one aspect of selling that renders it an intriguing profession.

Prestige

Traditionally, the occupation of sales has not held high prestige in the eyes of the general public. However, there are indications that as the public becomes more acquainted with the roles and

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

qualifications of professional salespeople, the perception of salespeople, and consequently the prestige associated with selling, is on the rise. An examination of popular media (excluding business publications) reveals a prevalence of positive mentions of noteworthy sales professionals. These individuals are often portrayed as knowledgeable, well-trained, educated, and adept at addressing customer needs.

Conversely, negative portrayals of salespeople typically revolve around themes of deception and the use of high-pressure tactics.

Moreover, a separate study suggests that salespeople have historically been depicted more negatively than positively in movies and television programs.

Nevertheless, the portrayal of the struggling, morally compromised salesperson, exemplified by Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's 1949 classic *Death of a Salesman*, is not representative of the modern professional salesperson. Contemporary sales professionals actively work to dispel such negative stereotypes and prioritize maintaining customer relationships over employing coercive sales tactics.

These perceptions hold particular weight in the business sphere, where interactions with professional salespeople are commonplace.

Job Variety

Salespeople rarely experience monotony in their work. Their roles are diverse and constantly evolving. For individuals who prefer a predictable routine, a career in sales may not be the best fit. Variability in daily tasks is commonplace in sales, where customers, products, and competitive landscapes frequently change.

The potential for immersion in the job and the ability to apply creativity is exemplified by General Mills, whose sales team has garnered recognition as one of the finest in America. John Maschuzik, the vice president of sales for the western United States, emphasizes the importance of

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

salespeople tailoring promotional efforts to individual customers for the company's success. Maschuzik notes that General Mills provides their sales team with significant autonomy and opportunities to exercise creativity in utilizing retail promotion funds.

Independence

Sales roles often provide a level of autonomy, stemming from decentralized sales operations where salespeople operate remotely from headquarters, often working from home and managing their own travel schedules. This autonomy and decision-making freedom are commonly touted as advantages of sales positions compared to closely supervised roles. Among college students considering sales careers, the ability to make decisions ranks second only to salary in terms of importance. Despite its appeal, independence can pose challenges. New hires working remotely may feel disoriented without a traditional office setting, especially if they are accustomed to regular office interactions from previous jobs.

The traditional independence enjoyed by salespeople is now facing increased scrutiny from sales managers. With a growing focus on sales productivity and cost containment, managers are taking a more active role in shaping travel plans and sales call schedules.

Compensation

Compensation is widely regarded as a significant benefit of pursuing a career in sales. Remuneration is directly linked to performance, particularly when commissions and bonuses are part of the compensation package. Starting salaries for entry-level sales professionals with a college degree typically hover around \$40,000. For those between the spectrum of novices and highly experienced salespersons, the average annual income ranges from \$50,000 to \$70,000. Seasoned sales professionals, particularly those handling major accounts, often command salaries ranging from \$85,000 to \$135,000. Exceptional sales performers have the potential to earn hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, with some surpassing the million-dollar mark in yearly earnings.

CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONAL SELLING JOBS

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

Given the wide array of distinct sales roles, the term "salesperson" lacks specificity on its own. A salesperson might range from a vendor selling flowers at a bustling city intersection to a high-level sales executive involved in negotiating the sale of Boeing aircraft to the People's Republic of China.

Six types of personal selling jobs:

- sales support
- new business
- existing business
- inside sales (nonretail)
- direct-to-consumer sales
- combination sales jobs

Sales Support

Sales support personnel typically do not engage directly in soliciting purchase orders. Instead, their main responsibility revolves around disseminating information and conducting activities aimed at boosting sales. They may focus on supporting sales efforts at the end-user level or within different levels of the distribution channel. These individuals may report to another salesperson responsible for handling purchase orders directly or to the sales manager.

There are two main categories of support salespeople: missionary or detail salespeople and technical support salespeople. Missionary salespeople, commonly employed by manufacturers but also found in roles with brokers and manufacturing representatives, particularly in the grocery industry, share similarities with religious missionaries. Like their counterparts, sales missionaries aim to "spread the word" and convert potential customers into loyal clients, providing ongoing reinforcement and support to strengthen buyer-seller relationships.

In the pharmaceutical industry, detailers play a significant role, primarily engaging with physicians to provide essential information about medications and encourage prescriptions. Another sales representative from the same pharmaceutical company handles sales to wholesalers or pharmacists, while the detailer supports the direct sales effort by visiting physicians.

Technical specialists are also considered part of sales support personnel. These individuals may assist in design processes, equipment installation, customer employee training, and technical service follow-up. They often collaborate with another salesperson specialized in identifying and meeting customer needs by recommending suitable products or services.

New Business

Generating new business for a selling firm involves acquiring new customers or introducing new products to the market. Two primary types of salespeople engaged in new-business endeavors are pioneers and order-getters.

Pioneers are constantly focused on either introducing new products, acquiring new customers, or both. Their role demands creative selling skills and the ability to overcome resistance to change often encountered in potential customers. Pioneers are commonly found in industries such as business franchising, where they travel extensively to different locations to seek out new franchisees.

On the other hand, order-getters are salespeople who actively pursue orders, typically operating in highly competitive environments. While all pioneers also function as order-getters, the reverse is not necessarily true. An order-getter may continue to serve existing customers regularly,

whereas a pioneer typically moves on to acquire new customers as soon as possible. Order-getters may seek new business opportunities by offering additional items from the product line to existing customers. A common tactic involves initiating a relationship with a customer by selling a single product, then following up with subsequent sales calls for other items in the product line.

Most companies prioritize sales growth, and salespeople functioning as pioneers and order-getters play a central role in achieving these objectives. The pressure to perform in these roles is considerable, and the outcomes are highly visible. Consequently, new-business salespeople are often regarded as among the top performers within a company's salesforce.

Existing Business

In direct contrast to new-business salespeople, there are others whose primary responsibility revolves around nurturing relationships with existing customers. Among these salespeople are order-takers, who are often employed by wholesalers and are primarily focused on processing orders rather than engaging in creative selling. Route salespeople, who maintain established customer bases and handle routine reorders of stock items, are a prime example of order-takers. They may occasionally take over accounts from pioneer salespeople after the initial sale has been made.

While these salespeople may not rely as heavily on creative selling skills as their counterparts in new-business roles, they are equally valuable to their firms. Their strengths lie more in reliability and competency, ensuring customer convenience and satisfaction. Customers often come to rely on the services provided by this type of salesperson, particularly as markets become increasingly competitive.

Recognizing the importance of retaining and nurturing profitable customers, many firms are bolstering their efforts toward existing customers. For instance, Frito-Lay employs around 18,000 route service salespeople who visit retail customers at least three times weekly, with larger customers receiving daily visits. These salespeople devote a significant amount of time to educating customers about the profitability of Frito-Lay's snack foods, leading to increased sales for both the retailer and Frito-Lay.

Inside Sales

In this context, "inside sales" refers to the activities of non-retail salespeople who conduct business from their employer's premises while interacting with customers. The practice of inside sales has gained significant attention in recent years, not only as a supplementary sales strategy but also as an alternative to field selling. Inside sales operations can be categorized into active or passive approaches.

Active inside sales involve actively soliciting complete orders, which can occur through telemarketing operations or when customers visit the seller's premises. On the other hand, passive inside sales involve accepting customer orders without actively soliciting them, although it's common practice to make additional sales attempts during these transactions. It's worth mentioning that customer service personnel may also function as inside sales representatives as part of their regular duties.

Direct-to-Consumer Sales

The largest category of salespeople is those engaged in direct-to-consumer sales. There are approximately 4.3 million individuals employed as retail salespeople in the country, with an additional estimated one million selling real estate, insurance, and securities directly to

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

consumers. Furthermore, several million more are engaged in direct sales to consumers for companies such as Tupperware, Mary Kay, and Avon. This diverse group of salespeople encompasses a wide range, from part-time, often temporary workers in retail stores to highly educated, professionally trained stockbrokers on Wall Street. Generally speaking, the more demanding direct-to-consumer sales roles involve selling intangible services like insurance and financial services.

Combination Sales Jobs

After examining various types of sales roles, let's explore the concept of a salesperson who performs multiple functions within a single position. We'll use the example of the territory manager's role at GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSK) to illustrate this combination sales job concept. GSK, known for products like Aqua-Fresh toothpaste, markets a diverse range of consumer healthcare products to various retailers including food, drug, variety, and mass merchandisers. The territory manager's role encompasses several responsibilities, including developing new business, maintaining existing business, and conducting sales support activities.

In a typical day, the GSK territory manager engages in sales support tasks such as merchandising and promoting products at individual retail stores. Additionally, they focus on maintaining positive relationships with store personnel. The territory manager also conducts sales calls with chain headquarters personnel to manage existing business and explore opportunities for new business. Furthermore, they are responsible for introducing new GSK products into the market.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

For Success by Salespersons

The sales field encompasses a wide range of roles, it's challenging to generalize the qualifications and skills necessary for success. The requirements for success vary depending on the specifics of each job, and it's reasonable to believe that individuals with diverse skills can excel in the same position. Decades of research attempting to correlate sales performance with physical attributes, cognitive abilities, personality traits, and professional backgrounds have led to these conclusions.

Increasingly, success in sales is viewed as a collaborative effort among strategic teams rather than being solely dependent on the attributes of individual salespeople. For instance, studies of numerous companies in the United States and Australia, employing a total of 25,000 salespersons, have highlighted the importance of being customer-oriented and functioning as a team player for sales success.

While acknowledging that sales success is influenced by various factors beyond individual traits, it's worthwhile to consider some skills and qualifications crucial for success in most sales positions. Five key factors that appear particularly significant for success in sales are empathy, ego drive, ego strength, verbal communication skills, and enthusiasm. These factors have been identified through a review of three primary sources of information.

- a study of more than 750,000 salespeople in 15,000 companies (Greenberg and Greenberg)
- two reviews of four decades of research on factors related to sales success (Comer and Dubinsky; and Brown, Leigh, and Haygood)
- surveys of sales executives

Empathy

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

In the sales domain, empathy, defined as the ability to understand others' perspectives, involves interpreting cues provided by customers to better grasp their viewpoint. According to Spiro and Weitz, empathy plays a critical role in facilitating successful interactions between buyers and sellers. An empathetic salesperson is presumed to be more effective in customizing the sales presentation to suit the customer's needs during the planning phase. Moreover, empathetic salespeople can adeptly adapt to feedback received during the presentation.

Research conducted by Greenberg and Greenberg identified empathy as a significant predictor of sales success. While Comer and Dubinsky's review partially supported this finding, noting empathy's importance in consumer and insurance sales but not in retail or industrial sales, Marshall, Goebel, and Moncrief's multi-industry study of 215 sales managers further supported the significance of empathy. These researchers found empathy to be among the top 25 percent of skills and personal attributes considered essential for sales success. Despite some studies not establishing direct links between salesperson empathy and success, empathy is generally recognized as a crucial trait for effective salespeople. As relationship-oriented selling continues to gain prominence, the importance of empathy in sales success is expected to further increase.

Ego Drive

In sales, ego drive, which reflects a person's determination to reach goals and overcome obstacles in pursuit of success, is demonstrated by an internal desire to persuade others for personal fulfillment. Greenberg and Greenberg highlight the interdependent nature of empathy and ego drive, emphasizing their complementary relationship essential for sales success. A highly empathetic salesperson lacking in ego drive may struggle to take assertive actions to secure a sale. Conversely, a salesperson with strong ego drive but limited empathy may disregard the customer's perspective in a misguided, overly aggressive attempt to secure commitment.

Ego Strength

Ego strength refers to the extent to which an individual can effectively manage their inner drives. Salespeople with high levels of ego strength tend to exhibit self-assurance and self-acceptance. Possessing a healthy ego equips salespeople to handle potential rejection throughout the sales process more adeptly. They are less likely to experience sales call reluctance and possess the resilience necessary to bounce back from inevitable lost sales.

Sales professionals with strong ego drives who are proficient in their roles are likely to demonstrate high self-efficacy, meaning they strongly believe in their ability to succeed in their jobs. When faced with resistance, rejection, or failure in their initial efforts, salespeople with high self-efficacy are inclined to persist in pursuing their objectives. In complex sales scenarios involving substantial monetary transactions and extended sales cycles, it is crucial to maintain focus on distant goals despite the likelihood of encountering setbacks along the way. For instance, airplane manufacturers vying for contracts with airlines often pursue such agreements for several years before a purchasing decision is reached. However, for those who persevere, the potential rewards can far outweigh the prolonged effort invested.

Interpersonal Communication Skills

Effective interpersonal communication skills, encompassing listening and questioning abilities, are fundamental for achieving success in sales. A comprehensive study involving 300 sales executives, salespersons, and customers from 24 leading sales companies across North America, Europe, and Japan revealed that proficient sales professionals are consistently striving to enhance their communication skills to effectively develop, articulate, and implement solutions tailored to customer needs. The companies included in this study represent some of the top performers in professional selling, such as Sony, Xerox, American Airlines, Fuji, and Scott Paper.

Another significant study spanning various industries identified three communication skills as being among the top 10 percent of success factors for professional salespeople. Listening skills emerged as the highest-rated success factor, closely followed by the ability to adapt

presentations according to the situation and verbal communication skills. To effectively address customer needs, salespeople must actively solicit opinions, attentively listen, and validate customer concerns. They should be proficient in employing both open- and closed-ended questions to explore customer expectations and adapt their responses flexibly to accommodate diverse personalities and business cultures, demonstrating respect for differences. This necessitates socially intelligent sales professionals, particularly when engaging with multicultural customers.

The importance of communication skills has been acknowledged by sales managers, recruiters, and researchers alike. These skills can be continuously honed throughout a sales career, offering both personal and professional development opportunities.

Enthusiasm

When sales executives and recruiters discuss the prerequisites for sales roles, they consistently emphasize the importance of enthusiasm. This enthusiasm typically encompasses two aspects— an overall enthusiastic attitude and a specific passion for the act of selling itself. Recruiters visiting college campuses often express their preference for students who exhibit more than just a casual interest in sales, but rather a genuine enthusiasm for pursuing career opportunities in the field. Recruiters tend to be cautious about promoting sales as a viable career path and instead appreciate applicants who authentically demonstrate enthusiasm for the profession.

Comments on Qualifications and Skills

The qualifications and skills required for success in sales have evolved over the past two decades, reflecting the growing prominence of relationship selling and the changing demands of the market. Greenberg and Greenberg's research has identified a key factor they term as an "emerging factor" for sales success: a strong motivation to provide excellent service to customers. They differentiate this service motivation from ego drive, which pertains to the desire to persuade others, by highlighting that service motivation stems from a desire for customer

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

approval. For instance, a salesperson might find great satisfaction in delighting a customer through exceptional post-sale service. Greenberg and Greenberg suggest that most successful salespeople will possess a combination of both service motivation and ego drive, although exceedingly high levels of both traits are unlikely to coexist in a single individual. Nevertheless, there is a growing interest in integrating service-oriented concepts and practices into professional selling.

While it may be challenging to recruit salespeople who prioritize service, it is feasible to provide appropriate training and reinforce desired service behaviors through effective sales management practices. Without significant emphasis on servicing existing customers, a company cannot truly embody relationship selling. Although our discussion of factors contributing to sales success is brief, a comprehensive understanding of this topic must be tailored to specific sales positions. Seasoned sales managers and recruiters can often delineate with remarkable precision the qualifications and skills necessary for success in particular sales roles, drawing on a blend of objective criteria and subjective assessments. For the right individual, professional selling offers virtually boundless career opportunities.

REFERENCES

- Ingram, Thomas (2020) Professional Salesmanship. C&E Publishing, Inc.
- Ingram, et. al. (2019) SELL 6th Edition. Cengage
- Ingram, et. al. (2018) Professional Selling 5th Edition. Cengage India
- Ingram, Thomas (2017) Professional Salesmanship. C&E Publishing, Inc.
- Rosenbloom, Bert (2016) Distribution Management. Cengage Learning
- Westra, Bryan (2015) Salesmanship. Indirect Knowledge Limited
- Iacobucci, Dawn (2015) Marketing Management. Cengage Learning Asia
- Sales Distribution and Supply Chain Management (2015). 3G ELearning FZ LLC
- Havaladar, Krishna K. (2011) Sales and Distribution Management. Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Ltd
- Havaladar, Krishna K. (2011) Sales and Distribution Management Text and Cases. McGraw - Hill
- David Jobber, Geoff Lancaster (2011) Selling and Sales Management Prentice Hall; 8 edition (October 23, 2011)
- David Jobber, Geoff Lancaster (2015) Selling and Sales Management 10th edition
- Ingram, et. al. (2008) Professional Selling 4th Edition. Thomsom South Western
- Long, M.M., Tellefsen, T. and Lichtenthal, J.D. (2007) 'Internet integration into the industrial selling process: A step-by-step approach', Industrial Marketing Management, 36, pp. 677–89.

Quiz 2

True or False

1. Salespeople generally enjoy relatively good job security compared to other occupational groups.
2. Sales skills are largely transferable, allowing salespeople to move to other employers or industries.
3. Overall U.S. job growth is expected to be approximately 13 percent between 2004 and 2005.
4. Even in industries with less than average job growth, such as life insurance, there are strong opportunities for those with college degrees.
5. Advancement opportunities for salespeople will continue to be attractive as the business world becomes more competitive.
6. Salespeople receive constant, immediate feedback on their job performance.
7. Sales is traditionally considered a prestigious occupation.
8. Salespeople have historically been depicted positively in movies and television programs.
9. The struggling, down-and-out huckster stereotype depicted in "Death of a Salesman" is typical of professional salespeople today.
10. Sales jobs are often monotonous and lack variety.
11. Sales jobs offer little independence of action.
12. Compensation for sales careers is generally low and not tied to performance.
13. Sales support personnel are primarily involved in the direct solicitation of purchase orders.
14. Pioneers are salespeople constantly involved with new products or new customers.
15. Existing business salespeople primarily focus on maintaining relationships with existing customers.
16. Inside sales refers to non-retail salespeople who remain in their employer's place of business while dealing with customers.

Professional Salesmanship

Chapter 2

The Foundation of Professional Selling

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

17. Direct-to-consumer sales is the least common type of sales position.
18. Combination sales jobs involve performing multiple types of sales jobs within a single position.
19. Empathy is not considered an important trait for successful salespeople.
20. Enthusiasm is generally not valued in sales positions.

Answer Key

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. True
7. False
8. False
9. False
10. False
11. False
12. False
13. False
14. True
15. True
16. True
17. False
18. True
19. False
20. False