

Characteristics of Successful Salespeople

What separates successful sales people from everyone else? I believe that most successful sales people, in virtually any industry, possess the following characteristics:

1. They are persistent. Selling or running a business for a living requires a tremendous amount of persistence. Obstacles loom in front of us on a regular basis. But it's what you do when faced with these barriers that will determine your level of success. I believe it was Brian Tracy who once said that a person will face the most challenging obstacle just before they achieve their goal. The most successful people in any industry have learned to face the obstacles that get in their way. They look for new solutions. They are tenacious. They refuse to give up.
2. Successful sales people are avid goal setters. They know what they want to accomplish and they plan their approach. They make sure their goals are specific, motivational, achievable yet challenging, relevant to their personal situation, and time-framed. They visualize their target, determine how they will achieve their goal, and take action on a daily basis.
3. Great sales people ask quality questions. The best sales people ask their clients and prospects plenty of quality questions to fully determine their situation and buying needs. They know that the most effective way to present their product or service is to uncover their customer's goals, objectives, concerns and hesitations. This allows them to effectively discuss the features and benefits of their product and service that most relate to each customer.
4. Successful sales people listen. Most sales people will ask a question then give their customer the answer, or continue to talk afterwards instead of waiting for their response. Great sales people know that customers will tell them everything they need to know if given the right opportunity. They ask questions and listen carefully to the responses, often taking notes and summarizing their understanding of the customers' comments. They have learned that silence is golden.
5. Successful sales people are passionate. They love their company and they exude this pride when talking about their products and services. The more passionate you are about your career, the greater the chance you will succeed. The reason for this is simple—when you love what you do you are going to put more effort into your work. When you are passionate about the products or services you sell, your enthusiasm will shine brightly in every conversation. If you aren't genuinely excited about selling your particular product or service, give serious consideration to making a change. You are not doing yourself, your company or your customers any favours by continuing to represent something you can't get excited about.
6. Successful sales people are enthusiastic. They are always in a positive mood - even during difficult times - and their enthusiasm is contagious. They seldom talk poorly of the company or the business. When faced with unpleasant or negative situations, they choose to focus on the positive elements instead of allowing themselves to be dragged down.
7. Successful sales people take responsibility for their results. They do not blame internal problems, the economy, tough competitors, or anything else if they fail to meet their sales quotas. They know that their actions alone will determine their results and they do what is necessary.
8. Successful sales people work hard. Most people want to be successful but they aren't prepared to work hard to achieve it. Sales superstars don't wait for business to come to them; they go after it. They usually start work earlier than their coworkers and stay later than everyone else. They make more calls, prospect more consistently, talk to more people, and give more sales presentations than their coworkers.
9. Successful sales people keep in touch with their clients. They know that constant contact helps keep clients so they use a variety of approaches to accomplish this. They send thank-you, birthday, and anniversary cards. They make phone calls and schedule regular 'keep in touch' breakfast and lunch meetings. They send articles of value to their customers and send an email newsletter. They are constantly on the lookout for new and creative ways to keep their name in their customers' minds.

10. Successful sales people show value. Today's business world is more competitive than ever before and most sales people think that price is the only motivating buying factor. Successful sales people recognize that price is a factor in every sale but it is seldom the primary reason someone chooses a particular product or supplier. They know that a well-informed buyer will usually base much of her decision on the value proposition presented by the sales person. They know how to create this value with each customer, prospect, or buyer they encounter.

We all have what it takes to become successful. Are you ready to make it happen?

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