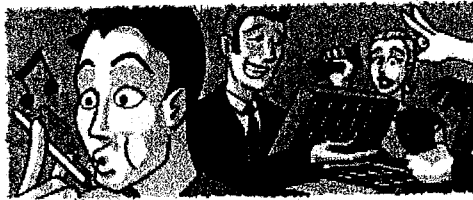


Smooth Sales Professionals Have a Promising Future



Positive attitude? Check. Willingness to learn? Check. Congratulations! Now that you've passed this test, thousands of companies want to take you on as a salesperson. These two qualities are the two most important for someone getting into sales.

"There isn't a company right now that isn't looking for young, bright, intelligent people that they can mold into the type of person required to take that company in that industry forward," says Paul Shearstone. "What industries are looking for good salespeople? All of them, every one of them."

Shearstone says there are two basic kinds of salespeople. The first kind he calls the "hunter-gatherer." They have lots of energy and a need to win, control and dominate. They tend to seek out jobs that are highly performance-based.

That means they get paid a high commission if they make a sale. Their base salary is low or nonexistent, but that's a risk they're willing to take.

"They are a unique breed," Shearstone says. "There's fewer of them than the other type, which are more the 'servicing sales' type. These are the people who move into established accounts and manage them.

"It is a far less challenging position in that the customer will be doing business with them one way or the other. It's up to them to take the business and make it better and larger within a more comfortable, less competitive environment."

Of course, these two types are extremes on a spectrum. Most salespeople fall somewhere in the middle. They like the economic opportunity that comes with risk, but they still want the stability of a guaranteed base income.

Veteran salespeople like Shearstone acknowledge that salespeople don't have a very good reputation in general. Stereotypes abound of the fast-talking, obnoxious and pushy salesperson. But that image is changing, they say. And people are starting to recognize the important role of sales in society.

"Selling these days is much, much more about trust building and matching up client needs with what the salesperson is selling," Frare says. "There is, I believe, a great deal more integrity connected with selling than ever before."

Since all industries are looking for salespeople, the two most important things to consider are your risk-reward ratio and your own interests. How much risk can you tolerate? How important is the chance to make big bucks? And what types of products or services excite you?

"Whatever it is, look at whatever you are already passionate about. If you're not passionate about it, no matter how much they're offering for you to do computer sales, you're going to be bored to death.

"Even if they pay less commission on something you love, you're going to be selling a lot more of it, and you're going to be so much happier doing it."

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