

20 Essential Traits Needed For All Sales Executives

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It has long been my conviction that the dominant factor in success is the set of mental habits possessed by the individual. Of no vocation is this truer than that of the salesman. "As a man thinketh . . ." applies to him in an all-important way. The techniques and skills, methods of approach, demonstration and closing are matters of demanding study and practice., These things are cold, mechanical, wooden and ineffective except as they are warmed, energized and implemented by the dynamics of a positive personality. A positive personality is never found apart from deep conviction, genuine belief in the fundamentals, the "copybook virtues" known and honored by men and women of character in all generations.

This conviction was strengthened in me some time ago when there came to hand a report of a questionnaire circulated among the members of a Sales Executives Club. These men and women are "top brass" in the sales departments of big business. They have responsibility for the distribution of their firm's product; have in some cases hundreds, even thousands, of sales managers and salesmen under their guidance and direction. The recruitment, training and management of these forces are their daily concern.

The question asked these sales executives was: What are the qualities or traits of character you value most in salesmen? This is the list they offered, the traits being stated in the order of importance attached to them by these sales executives. There is food for thought here. Note for instance that "persuasiveness" is toward the end of the list. Most people would list the art of persuasion as perhaps synonymous with salesmanship but according to these sales executives there are other more important traits, they are listed below.

Dependability was chosen as the most important.

Integrity was next. With this trait the salesman is incapable either of being false to the trust his company places in him or to the real interests of his customer.

Knowledge of product is one of the three fundamentals of success in the field of selling.

Self Time-management Perhaps no vocation gives a man a greater degree of latitude. He must be a good "boss" for himself and exact a high degree of self-discipline for selling.

Work organization is efficiency in self-management. Much of a salesman's time is wasted by the prospect. He must guard the balance jealously and make every minute count.

Sincerity excludes falsification of every shade. It must be real, few can "pretend" with success.

Initiative is the salesman's spark plug.

Industriousness is devotion to the job, never being unemployed during work hours

Acceptance of responsibility for the car, for the sales material, records, samples and above all for the company's good name and the customer's good will.

Understanding of buyer motives this being another of the big three fundamentals of selling.

Sales ethics No longer is the slogan caveat emptorâ(let the buyer beware) but caveat vendator (let the seller beware).

Judgment is not inherited. It can be developed as a habit. Logic is a subject that should be a "must" for sales people.

Care of health, mental, physical, spiritual, financial.

Courtesy is more than politeness. It is consideration for others, deference to their opinions, their rank, their sex, their age.

Determination is a dogged adherence to a carefully worked out and settled program and purpose. The will to carry through . Unwillingness to compromise with anything less than your best performance .

Aggressiveness requires self-confidence and the language of assurance in all interviews. It is pressure applied without offensiveness.

Friendliness involves warmth of feeling, a positive type of cordiality that does not involve back-slapping or wise-cracking.

Resourcefulness Wide knowledge, curiosity, retentive memory, wide-awakeness. Quick thinking in the clinches.

Persuasiveness goes beyond the realm of reasoning, an appeal to feelings, desires, and emotions.

Appreciation of selling as a profession and as the road to personal success. Awareness of the fact that the field of "distribution" offers more in money, satisfaction, opportunity for service, and personal growth in all of the inner virtues and faculties than any other calling, especially more than anything in the field of "production."

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