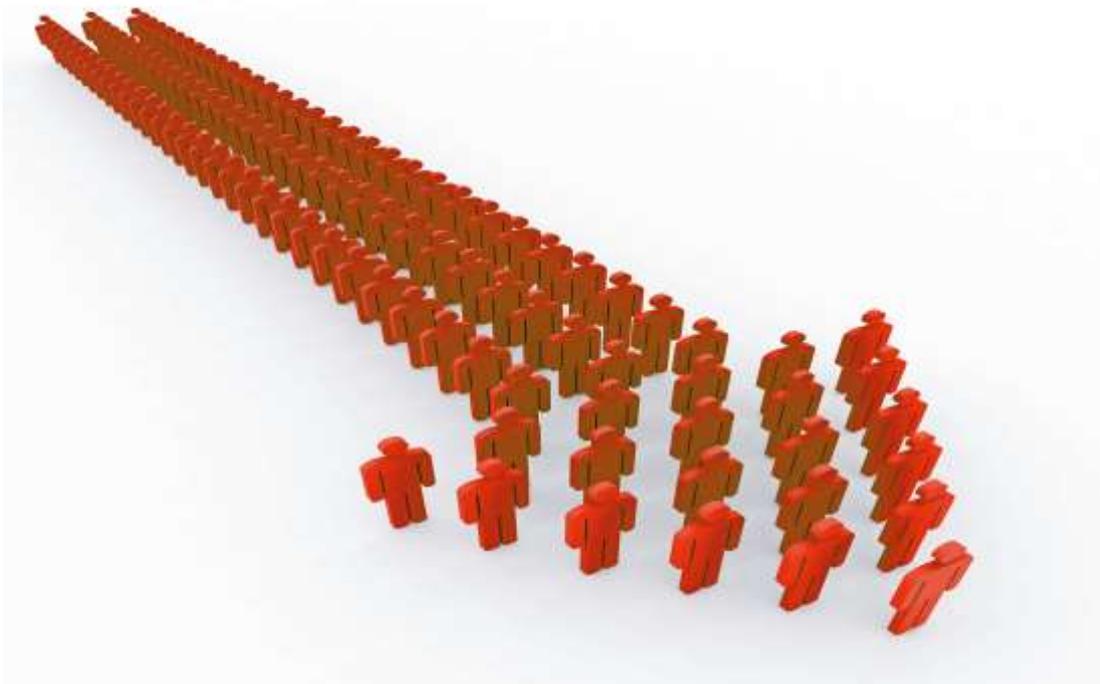


Sales Competencies

How to Improve Your Selling Style and Skills



Talent Development

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TIPS: HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SELLING STYE AND SKILLS

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Strategy and Business Focus

PROSPECTING

1.1	Develop the capacity to engage in broad, complex, analytical, and strategic thinking about the environment you are selling in.
1.2	Show that you possess a good understanding of the market your company is operating in and how it is likely to impact on sales.
1.3	Do your own personal market research with existing customers to develop your understanding of what existing and potential clients in the sector are looking for.
1.4	Build strong relationships with customers so that you can work with them to identify new opportunities for value co-creation.
1.5	Get online and exploit the potential of social media channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to look for new leads and send direct messages to potential customers.
1.6	Use people from technical support to help identify sales opportunities as they are often the best people to do this with existing customers.
1.7	Be selective about which sales opportunities you chase being strategic in your sales efforts. Find out quickly if you can win the business so that you don't waste energy and resources.
1.8	Ensure that you have the technology and expertise to respond to web-generated queries and leads swiftly and effectively.

COMPETITOR AWARENESS

2.1	Look at the world through your competitors' eyes to understand what sets you apart and why customers tend to buy your offerings.
2.2	Identify which of your product features and your company capabilities are distinctly better than those of your competitors and what you can do that they can't do.
2.3	Concentrate on creating excellent value for the customers that choose your company because you can't meet every potential customer's needs.
2.4	Analyze competitors' offerings to understand whether your competitive advantage stems from offering lower costs or a better product or service.
2.5	Think about how to create barriers to competitors such as superior execution, ongoing continuous improvement, and innovation.
2.6	Assess your opponents' strengths, weaknesses, and past behavior, to help you predict their actions and help you outsmart them.
2.7	Think about how to outperform competitors by leveraging what your company does best and using your company's capabilities such as its people, systems, and business processes.
2.8	Review whether you have, and, are using, the right information and data to help keep customers and create new products and services.

Strategy and Business Focus

NEGOTIATING AND INFLUENCING

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| 3.1 | Learn how sales decisions are made in the customer's organization, and help customers to navigate the requirements of their internal buying process. |
| 3.2 | Help customers to justify the decision to buy from you—for example, building a strong business case that considers costs-benefits, risk, strategic fit, and compliance. |
| 3.3 | Find out about and pay close attention to the politics of the organization, and arrange to meet key decision-makers as well as stakeholders who can influence the outcome. |
| 3.4 | Look for a sponsor(s) in the customer's organization to interface with procurement and to access and engage with those who influence or make the decision. |
| 3.5 | Learn how to be consultative in nature and move the customer/buyer along the sales/procurement process at the same time. |
| 3.6 | Ask open-ended questions to learn about the customer's views, positions, and the issues that are important to them. |
| 3.7 | Present your business case with logic and data addressing issues that are critical to the customer and make sure that any claims you make can be corroborated. |
| 3.8 | Challenge yourself and colleagues involved in negotiations to focus on achieving win-win outcomes. |

ADAPTING AND INNOVATING

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 4.1 | Be curious and open to learning and change in order to stay at the forefront of industry knowledge and demonstrate credibility. |
| 4.2 | Learn to think like your customers so that you can relate to them and understand their business priorities. |
| 4.3 | Listen to and challenge your customers to help them define their needs and create possible solutions in partnership with them. |
| 4.4 | Show that you can adapt your style and tactics to fit different customers and different circumstances. |
| 4.5 | Respond constructively to other people's views, ideas, and suggestions--for example, using "yes and" rather than "no but." |
| 4.6 | Be prepared to bend the rules, challenge traditional thinking, and take considered risks in order to innovate. |
| 4.7 | Transcend the customer-facing role of a salesperson and become an internal change agent in your organization as well. |
| 4.8 | Use creative thinking techniques such as brainstorming to help generate incremental and novel ideas for change. |

Work Ethic and Resilience

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

5.1	Develop a long-term, big picture view of what you want to achieve in and outside your sales career and how you want your life to be judged.
5.2	Fixate on achieving your sales and career goals and continuously measure your performance against them.
5.3	Think, evaluate, and re-evaluate the way you handle your customers and suppliers and pursue business.
5.4	Invite feedback from customers and co-workers on any things you might be doing that could be inhibiting your sales performance and effectiveness.
5.5	Concentrate on building on your selling strengths rather than working on areas that do not come naturally to you.
5.6	Demonstrate a thirst for knowledge and desire to learn new things about the business you are working in and about sales processes and selling.
5.7	Show that you have energy, drive, and can work for long periods of time without being distracted or needing rest.
5.8	Develop a strategy for learning and development across your whole life, not just your current job in sales.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

6.1	Show that you take your job very seriously and feel deeply responsible for achieving targets and outcomes.
6.2	Build trust with customers, bosses, and team workers by being reliable, dependable, and genuine.
6.3	Demonstrate tenacity and resolve pursuing your sales goals when you face obstacles and setbacks.
6.4	Work in an organized, methodical, and well thought-out manner and deliver on your promises and commitments.
6.5	Ensure that you act and sell in an ethical manner to your customers and confront unethical actions in others.
6.6	Admit and accept responsibility for any slip-ups, oversights, or mistakes you or your team make and take corrective action quickly.
6.7	Be prepared to take tough, principled stands in business and selling even if they are unpopular with colleagues.
6.8	Be prepared to act altruistically and sacrifice personal and/or team goals to meet big, collective, organizational goals.

Work Ethic and Resilience

RESILIENCE AND SELF-CONTROL

7.1	Manage your impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well so that you are able to stay composed, positive, and unflappable even in difficult moments.
7.2	When you lose a sale, accept that rejection is part of the game, try to figure out what went wrong, and move onto the next challenge.
7.3	Endeavour to take command of the sales and procurement process in order to exert control over what happens.
7.4	Show that you possess the determination to fight for difficult goals in the face of obstacles and challenges, and that you have the ability to bounce back from adversity.
7.5	Try to get plenty of sleep, make sure you have a good diet, and take exercise to help stay alert and keep physically fit.
7.6	Present yourself with self-assurance and show that you are able to make sound decisions when you are under pressure.
7.7	Learn to use stress and anxiety management techniques such as positive self-talk, muscle-relaxation, and visualization to help manage your emotions before important events.
7.8	Observe and learn from colleagues who handle their own and other people's feelings and emotions skilfully.

SELF-AWARENESS

8.1	Practice openness and mindfulness by staying in the present, actively noticing new things, and paying attention to the context you are operating in.
8.2	Pay attention to your own and the customer's feelings and emotions, and recognize the links between feelings/ emotions and behaviors/actions.
8.3	Ask other people for feedback on your selling style and skills and whether you have achieved the right balance between being too pushy and not pushy enough.
8.4	Reflect on your strengths and shortcomings, and take time out to gain perspective on what you are doing in your work and other aspects of your life.
8.5	When things don't go to plan, take away the positives from the situation, and think about what you might do differently next time.
8.6	Develop your EQ skills by playing in your own and other people's feelings and emotions into creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making.
8.7	Think about whether you have successfully integrated work with other aspects of your life and how learning in one part of your life can be transferred to the other.
8.8	Express your feelings and emotions, but be careful when and how and with whom you express negative feelings and emotions.

Interpersonal Skills

COMMUNICATING AND PRESENTING

9.1	Exhibit a degree of humility and modesty because salespeople who are pushy and egotistical alienate more customers than they win over.
9.2	Try to present yourself as a business consultant with a broad strategic understanding of your customer's organization.
9.3	Concentrate on building trust with your customers because trust is cited by customers as very important in their selection of suppliers.
9.4	Create collaborative, two-way relationships with your customers and with co-workers within the area of the organization that you work in.
9.5	Be prepared to fight your case, and don't be afraid of questioning and challenging your customers.
9.6	Use emotion and logic in order to engage and connect with customers, and present a persuasive case for using the products and services you are selling.
9.7	Look for relationships that are mutually advantageous, and cultivate and maintain informal networks.
9.8	Improve your presenting and public speaking skills by accepting every opportunity to speak to groups and present at conferences.

LISTENING AND SUPPORTING

10.1	Focus on connecting with customers, identifying their needs and problems, and offering possible solutions.
10.2	Avoid personal celebrity, and aim for a combination of extreme professional determination and outward personality modesty.
10.3	Learn how to be a good listener because without excellent listening skills you will not discover what the customer really needs.
10.4	Learn to ask the right questions so that you can give clients the relevant information and facts to help them make decisions.
10.5	In meetings and conversations, look like you care, and ask questions to show that you are following and are interested in what people are saying.
10.6	Learn to read your customers' feelings and emotions in order to understand and address their needs and build strong, lasting relationships.
10.7	When you encounter difficult and demanding customers, deploy discretion, diplomacy, and emotional intelligence.
10.8	In order to operate in a global marketplace, understand diverse worldviews and be sensitive to cultural differences.

Interpersonal Skills

TEAM WORKING

11.1	Develop team working skills because business-to-business selling is now done in teams and cross-functionally.
11.2	Establish the team rather than yourself as the focal point for identifying business opportunities and winning accounts.
11.3	Show that you have the ability to collaborate with people, sharing plans, information, and resources.
11.4	Model personal qualities like sensitivity, respect, helpfulness, and cooperation which are key to effective team working.
11.5	Share success stories with team members, and credit team members for their contributions and accomplishments.
11.6	Balance a focus on the sales task and processes with attention to people and relationship issues.
11.7	Review and ask for feedback on whether you are doing the right things to promote a friendly and cooperative climate in the team.
11.8	Acknowledge cultural differences among people, and recognize and exploit the value in those differences.

SERVICE FOCUS

12.1	Learn about the people you are selling to and how the products or services you are selling fit into their organization.
12.2	Act as if you 'own' your customers' problems and needs, and show that you want to be part of the solution.
12.3	Learn to think like your customers to help you understand their perspectives and to help you anticipate and meet their needs.
12.4	Prepare for continually-increasing customer expectations and a much greater emphasis on return on investment and value.
12.5	Establish effective methods of keeping in touch with your customers, but avoid unnecessary interactions because they are also busy people.
12.6	Aim to consistently deliver more than you are asked, and build a reputation for reliability, consistency, and excellence.
12.7	Look for ways to continually improve the service you provide and thereby increase your customers' satisfaction and loyalty.
12.8	Work on the basis that when customers find a good salesperson, they keep going back for their support, and they keep placing orders.

Interpersonal Skills

PRODUCT EXPERTISE

13.1	Show that you have good knowledge of your product line and that you are knowledgeable about the field you are selling in.
13.2	Do your homework on the people you are selling to and influence them by acknowledging their issues and concerns.
13.3	Communicate the functional and emotional value of your products and services expressing what it does for customers, and how it will make them feel.
13.4	When you are selling a new product category, present a loose product definition allowing customers to identify new uses and benefits of the product.
13.5	Before you make a pitch, remember that buyers are more likely to buy from a salesperson who is professional, well-prepared, and knows their stuff.
13.6	Find a one-word description of your product/business to enable you to get straight to the point of what you are offering and why customers should deal with you.
13.7	Increase your chances of landing sales by talking to customers about the benefits customers will get by using your products and services.
13.8	Line up technical specialists to answer detailed technical questions about the operation and benefits of your products and services.

Reading



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Personal Development Plan

LIFE DIMENSION	STRATEGY/GOAL	LEARNING ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	REVIEW NOTES
CAREER				
SPORT AND PHYSICAL FITNESS				
FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS				
LEISURE				
COMMUNITY				