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## THE LIFE AND CAREER OF A PROFESSIONAL SALESPERSON

### **Developing Skills for Success**

#### ***Starting Point***

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Go to [www.wiley.com/college/hopkins](http://www.wiley.com/college/hopkins) to assess your knowledge of the characteristics of a professional salesperson and the needed skills.  
*Determine where you need to concentrate your effort.*

#### ***What You'll Learn in This Chapter***

- ▲ The universal need for sales
- ▲ The benefits of improving your sales skills
- ▲ The definition of selling
- ▲ The five primary approaches of a salesperson
- ▲ The definition and four phases of the learning curve
- ▲ The three sides of the sales triangle
- ▲ The 10 characteristics of a successful salesperson
- ▲ Characteristics you need to advance in your career

#### ***After Studying This Chapter, You'll Be Able To***

- ▲ Understand the foundational knowledge necessary to build a career in sales

## INTRODUCTION

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Sales are part of everyday life. Waiters, actors, politicians, mothers—we all practice sales in some form to get something we want or need. Some people, however, practice sales as their primary occupation. This chapter focuses on defining the profession of sales, characteristics of top sales professionals, and the skills necessary for success in this occupation. The chapter concludes with a look at ideas for continual improvement for the professional.

### **1.1 Understanding the Universal Need for Sales**

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Everyone sells something. Whether the sales pitch involves a refrigerator to a newly wed couple or an idea for a refrigeration improvement to a board of directors, selling occurs all around, everyday, in one form or another. Salespeople are everywhere. At some point nearly every day, you're involved in a selling situation of some kind.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, people working in sales number close to 12 million, or about 10 percent of the total workforce in the United States.

#### **1.1.1 Using Sales Skills**

In some form or another, we start selling at a very early age. In time, some of us become more attuned, either unconsciously or consciously, to the advantages of selling.

Selling skills can do for you what a way with words did for William Shakespeare. They can do for you what sex appeal did for Marilyn Monroe. They can do for you what powerful communication skills did for historical greats such

#### FOR EXAMPLE

##### **Saving Daylight**

Ten-year-old Jason knows his bedtime is 9 p.m. on weekdays. But when summer rolls around, it's still light at 9 p.m. He could use that extra hour of daylight for baseball practice. Jason wants to extend bedtime to 10 p.m. during the summer. He presents his case to his mother, including the fact that there is no school to attend, so he no longer has an early-morning schedule. In response, Jason's mother sees an opening to get something she wants—no more delaying tactics at bedtime. Jason's mother agrees to the bedtime extension as long as Jason will come quickly and quietly at the appointed hour. Both are using a sales skill to get something they want.

as Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Selling skills can make or break you in whatever endeavor you choose. They can mean the difference between obtaining your goal and needing to settle for less.

Having selling skills is like having an inside track on what the next batch of winning lottery numbers will be. All you have to do is invest a bit of your time and effort to understand and apply these tried-and-true, proven-effective skills to your everyday life. Before you know it, they'll be such a natural part of you that no one, including yourself, will even recognize them as selling skills.

Writers, actors, and politicians have used sales skills in a seemingly unconscious manner. These are people who recognize their art or idea as a product and set about to sell it to a segment of the population. Then there are people who choose to list “sales” as their primary occupation—professional salespeople.

### 1.1.2 The Concept of Selling

So what does *selling* mean? For our purposes, we'll concentrate on **personal selling**, which is defined as direct communications between paid representatives and prospects that lead to transactions, customer satisfaction, account development, and profitable relationships. Personal selling is critical to the sale of many goods and services, especially major commercial and industrial products and consumer durables.

Marketing programs are designed around four elements of the marketing mix:

- ▲ Products to be sold.
- ▲ Pricing.
- ▲ Promotion.
- ▲ Distribution channels.

The promotion component includes advertising, public relations, personal selling, and sales promotion (e.g., point-of-purchase displays, coupons, sweepstakes). Note that advertising and sales promotions are not personal communications. Whereas salespeople talk directly to customers, advertising and sales promotions “pull” merchandise through the channel, and personal selling provides the “push” needed to get orders signed. With public relations, the message is perceived as coming from the medium rather than directly from the organization. Personal selling involves two-way communication with prospects and customers that allows the salesperson to address the special needs of the customer.

It is often the job of a salesperson to uncover the special needs of the customer. When customers have questions or concerns, the salesperson is there to provide appropriate explanations. Plus, personal selling can be directed to qualified prospects. Perhaps the most important advantage of personal selling is that it is considerably more effective than advertising, public relations, and sales promotions in identifying opportunities to create value for the customer and gaining customer commitment.

**Professional selling** is the process of moving goods and services from the hands of those who produce them into the hands of those who benefit most from their use. Selling involves persuasive skills on the part of the person doing the talking. It's supported by print, audio, and video messages that sell the item, service, or idea as being desirable.

It's been said that nothing ever happens unless someone sells something to someone else. Without selling, products that have been manufactured would sit in warehouses for eternity, people working for those manufacturers would become unemployed, transportation and freight services wouldn't be needed, and we would all be living isolated little lives, striving to eke out livings from whatever bit of land we owned. Or would we even own the land if no one were there to sell it to us?



## SELF - CHECK

1. Explain how selling is a universal concept.
2. Define **selling** in a professional context.

### 1.2 Using the Approaches of the Trade

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The primary approaches used in sales today are:

- ▲ Person-to-person.
- ▲ Telemarketing.
- ▲ Direct mail.
- ▲ E-mail.
- ▲ The Internet.

Although these approaches can be as varied as the individuals using them, there are some important considerations in using each one. Each of these areas is explored in more depth in subsequent chapters, but here are some tips to introduce you to the life of a sales professional who works in one or all of these areas.

#### 1.2.1 Person-to-Person

**Person-to-person selling**, conducted worldwide, is the single largest type of selling. Retail stores abound with sales opportunities, and millions of salespeople sit at desk, conference table, or kitchen table, turning prospects into clients. The message in China may be presented differently than one in Germany, but the goal is the same—to make a sale.

A sales professional talking to a client in a face-to-face fashion has the advantage of being able to use many different senses. You can have the client possibly touch, taste, smell, and hear the product that is on sale. The person-to-person approach has the advantage of actively engaging the customer in the sales process.

### 1.2.2 Telemarketing

**Telemarketing** is an approach that a salesperson can use to contact a prospect by phone. The telephone can connect a salesperson with nearly any other person on the planet. That's a clear advantage. You can reach a much larger market in less time than by using the person-to-person approach. The primary disadvantage of telemarketing is that the prospect has to answer the phone, and you then have to quickly engage the prospect.

In some industries, you actually try to sell the product on the first call (referred to as a **one-time close**). In other industries, you're selling enough interest that the person to whom you speak gets out of her home and down to your store or lets you come visit her in her home or place of business. Either way, you're selling what your business is all about, leaving the person on the other end with a very distinct impression of you and your company—good or bad.

### 1.2.3 Direct Mail

Much of the mail you receive is designed to sell you something. This is referred to as **direct mail**. The following are some examples:

- ▲ A coupon for a local restaurant is designed to get you into the eatery, with the hope of you becoming a regular customer.
- ▲ A clothing catalog is sent to entice you to try shopping at home.
- ▲ A flyer from a politician encourages you to get out and vote.

Companies and individuals play the odds that enough people will respond to their direct mail pieces.

A 1 percent response rate for direct mail is considered average. Based on that percentage, only 1 out of 100 catalogs sent may actually produce an order. Companies are willing to spend the money on production and postage in the hope of obtaining regular customers who continue to place orders.

Another factor that affects the response rate is that a direct mail piece doesn't always reach the intended recipient. A well-intentioned secretary or spouse may consider the item junk mail and discard it.

### 1.2.4 E-Mail

Many companies have found the **e-mail approach** to work well because e-mail solicitations are more likely to reach the intended recipient than other telemarketing or direct mail pieces.

So far, business e-mail appears to be deemed personal territory. Secretaries and receptionists may receive copies of e-mails, but they aren't likely to delete e-mail messages from their bosses' computers.

### 1.2.5 The Internet

Like selling via the telephone, **the Internet approach**, or selling via Web sites, has global opportunities. Your headquarters could be located anywhere, and you could still reach millions who use the Internet every day. The primary advantages to having an Internet presence are immediacy and convenience. A prospect can visit a company's web site at any time to view a product. The customer doesn't even have to change out of his bathrobe, if he prefers. The sale may be only a click away.

A salesperson who knows how to use the Internet to his or her advantage has a wealth of global opportunities—not just those available locally.

## SELF - CHECK

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of person-to-person selling.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of telemarketing.
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of direct mail.
4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of selling via e-mail.
5. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of selling via the Internet.

## 1.3 Experiencing the Learning Curve

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Knowing the various sales approaches is part of the selling equation. In order to succeed, a professional salesperson passes through a **learning curve**—the time needed to progress from being a complete beginner to an expert. The learning curve consists of four major phases or levels of competency:

- ▲ Unconscious incompetence.
- ▲ Conscious incompetence.
- ▲ Conscious competence.
- ▲ Unconscious competence.

### 1.3.1 Unconscious Incompetence

During **unconscious incompetence**, the first stage of the learning curve, you are unaware of the amount of knowledge needed to accomplish a task. In this

most elementary phase, you may be a complete novice or someone with some product knowledge but still needing more knowledge in sales techniques.

You are at the unconscious incompetence level of learning when you first try something new. You could define this stage as the first part of the learning curve in which a person is unaware of the amount the knowledge needed to accomplish a task.

### 1.3.2 Conscious Incompetence

People abandon unconscious incompetence when they realize their incompetence. At this second stage, the **conscious incompetence** level, they may choose to move forward or not. If they move forward, they choose to learn more. This conscious acknowledgement leads to the next level, and you choose to learn the skills needed.

### 1.3.3 Conscious Competence

New challenges and new victories await a professional who chooses to move into the third level of the learning curve, **conscious competence**. In this phase of the learning curve, a person chooses to learn specific skills and knowledge. A professional in this third phase is growing and learning new material.

At this level, you are practicing and honing the skills you've decided you need. You might want to practice these skills with your friends and associates before testing new strategies on qualified clients.

### 1.3.4 Unconscious Competence

At the fourth and final level of competence, **unconscious competence**, you apply all your previous knowledge without making a conscious effort to do so. As an unconsciously competent salesperson, the strategies are now a natural part of your presentation.

#### FOR EXAMPLE

##### Taking Baby Steps

Think of how a baby learns to walk. The inexperienced toddler doesn't know he doesn't know how to walk. He just tries it because everyone else is doing it. When he learns, by falling, that it's not as easy as it looks, he reaches for helping hands. The instant he reaches for help, he moves to the next level of competency. The baby eventually moves through and completes the learning curve.



## SELF - CHECK

1. List and describe the four levels of the learning curve.

### 1.4 Describing the Ideal Sales Professional

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By taking this course and reading the assigned material, you are well on your way through the learning curve. You know you need to learn about sales skills. You want to learn more. You already possess one of the characteristics of the ideal sales professional: the desire to become one. In most surveys of successful sales professionals, they generally agree that the number-one factor in their success is that they enjoy their job. Studies have proven that attitude is one of the traits that separate so-so salespeople from their highly successful colleagues.

#### 1.4.1 Creating the Selling Triangle

Optimally, a sales professional is one who has mastered all three sides of a selling triangle consisting of

- ▲ Product knowledge.
- ▲ Selling tactics and strategies.
- ▲ Attitude and goal setting.

The three sides of the selling triangle are equally important. A professional who doesn't develop each side of the triangle fails to meet her full potential. If product knowledge were the only necessary element, then the product's designers or manufacturing team would be the best salespeople. Being able to describe the product doesn't necessarily mean being able to meet the client's needs. That's an important aspect of sales. Likewise, a professional salesperson must have an enthusiastic attitude for the job and set specific goals in terms of sales quotas.

#### 1.4.2 The 10 Characteristics of a Successful Sales Professional

Aside from the factors we've already discussed, what else do you need to be a good salesperson? People who are successful at persuading, convincing, or selling others on their ideas, products, or services, have 10 characteristics in common<sup>1</sup>:

- ▲ **Desire and passion to succeed:** A professional persuader has a strong reason for wanting to succeed.
- ▲ **Interest in others:** Top sales professionals show an interest in providing the right solution for a client's needs. They know how to engage people.



- ▲ **Confidence and strength:** Professional persuaders radiate confidence and strength, which become evident in their body language, speech, and overall presence.
- ▲ **Empathy:** A sincere interest in the prospects' needs creates a bond of trust and openness.
- ▲ **Goal setting:** Professional salespeople have set their goals and put them in writing. They know exactly what they're striving for and when they expect to accomplish it.
- ▲ **Persistence:** They know how to plan their time effectively and take steps toward achieving their goals. They rely on proven systems for planning their time and have discovered effective time-management strategies.
- ▲ **Enthusiasm through difficult situations:** Even with the most careful planning and preparation, your career path may have a few bumps along the journey. Top professionals recognize this and work through difficult times.
- ▲ **A positive attitude:** Professional persuaders keep themselves in a positive shell and avoid jealousy, gossip, anger, and negative thinking. They don't allow negativity to steal their energy or tempt them to stray from their chosen course.
- ▲ **An understanding that people come before money:** They understand the old adages that you have to spend money to make money and that persuasion is a people business. And they invest wisely in things for the good of the people they serve.
- ▲ **An investment in their minds:** Professional persuaders are lifelong learners. They know their product lines and prospects and remain up-to-date on the latest news affecting their business.

These traits are more than just sales skills. They are also people skills. A top sales professional recognizes that knowing how to get along well with others is vital. To be successful, top sales professionals:

- ▲ Know they must learn cooperation and good listening skills.
- ▲ Tend to be curious and interested in others.
- ▲ Take satisfaction in fulfilling someone's need and love meeting the challenge of serving the next customer.
- ▲ Make money doing something, or at least part of something, they enjoy.

In addition to having these characteristics, it is important to develop a mental image of who you want to become. You should visualize yourself as a person who uses selling skills effectively. Visualization is an effective technique used by many successful people, including professional athletes. For example, a basketball

## FOR EXAMPLE

### **My Passion for Selling**

A merging of passion and profession has occurred in my life with selling. For me, selling began as a career opportunity that would fulfill a need—the need to make money. When I failed miserably at first, I knew I needed help, and I started a journey of study. I knew that some people made huge incomes in sales, so I assumed that they must have known something I'd not yet discovered. It was at that point that I chose to turn selling into my hobby, my passion. When I started to educate myself—by watching everyday people and looking for little nuances of selling that worked for them and by reading up on the subject. I also started making a lot of money. Believe me when I say that, at first, money was my motivation for keeping up my selling hobby. But since then, I've managed to transform my job-turned-hobby into something much more: It has become a way of life. Selling now pervades every communication I have with others, and I thoroughly enjoy my life these days.

player develops a clear picture in his mind's eye of just how the basketball will leave his hands for a three-point shot. He pictures his fingers releasing the ball and sees nothing of the crowd—only the net. When he first begins visualizing this, his body may not be up to speed with the picture. If he plays the picture often enough, though, chances are good that his body will get the idea and soon perform accordingly.

Everyone can use this technique. When you act like the person you want to become, you try to say and do what you think this “new” person would say and do. Eventually, you begin having small success with the material, and soon you are that person.



## SELF - CHECK

1. Discuss the three-sided triangle and how each side is as important as the other two.
2. List and describe the 10 characteristics of a successful sales professional.

## 1.5 Shifting into High Gear: Professional Sales

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You've probably encountered professional salespeople. Being a professional salesperson means the person has learned how to:

- ▲ Sell more and in a more efficient manner.
- ▲ Find and qualify prospects quickly and smoothly.

How did this person achieve this status? What are the steps you need to learn to get there? You will examine these steps in detail throughout this book. This section discusses some of the general steps necessary in your journey toward becoming and remaining a sales professional.

### 1.5.1 Preparing Before the Sales Pitch

You need to prepare yourself both mentally and physically for the challenge of persuading others. In your sales approach, you need to:

- ▲ Dress appropriately.
- ▲ Maintain a positive attitude toward the product, yourself, and your client.
- ▲ Concentrate on the needs of your customer and the best presentation you can give.
- ▲ Review any notes or information that may be vital within a few hours of meeting with your prospects.

You need to particularly take note of the importance of a good first impression. You don't hear too many winning stories about people who overcame bad first impressions to go on to land a major account or persuade an important person to their way of thinking. Going in confident and handling the initial rapport-setting stage properly goes a long way toward winning.

Another aspect of preparation is learning the necessary skills and details to complete a specific task. Before you enter into any new experience, you should adopt an attitude of positive anticipation and enthusiasm. Remember that a master salesperson was once an excellent student. Here are some tips to help you obtain that attitude:

- ▲ **Discover your best learning environment:** You need to figure out where and how you can most effectively focus on learning. For some, sitting in the family room with the family as they watch football may be the appropriate place, while others require silence and isolation to best comprehend what they read. Whatever your personal needs, if you plan to study, memorize, and adopt the sales techniques in this book, you need to make the most of the time you set aside for that purpose.

- ▲ **Study at a pace that fits you:** Some people learn better when they read little bits of information and give themselves a chance to internalize what they've learned. Others like to take big clumps of information at one sitting so they can see the bigger picture and understand the full concept of what is being presented.
- ▲ **Limit your interruptions:** It's important to set up a regular time to study and limit interruptions. The average person needs about 10 minutes after being interrupted to regain the previous concentration. That's why staying in study mode when people interrupt you is so difficult. Getting 30 minutes of uninterrupted reading and studying time is better than patching together four or five interrupted periods that equal an hour of study time. If you can't hide out for a long period of time, you should cut your time or break it into two sessions in order to maximize your learning.

By analyzing your optimum learning patterns and working with them, your attitude about the material being studied will be positive. You'll be more relaxed and learn at a faster pace.

### **1.5.2 Maintaining Professionalism in Your Presentation**

By making every presentation as though it's the most important thing in your life at that moment, you show the decision makers that you're sincere about their needs and that they're important to you. Generally, people are whatever you expect them to be, so you should expect your prospects to be vital to your overall success in life and treat them with the proper respect.

Prospects also want to know that you believe in your product. If you believe in what you're doing, you must personally be a part of it. If you're selling Fords, you don't want to be seen driving a Chevy. If you sell home-security systems, you better have one in your home. If you market freelance graphic design, your business cards better be creative. If you can talk personally about your own experiences with your product, service, or idea, you'll win over a lot more people than if you can't.

As with any other endeavor, you need practice and critique to perfect your new skills. In addition to rehearsing your sales pitch, you also need to experiment with the nuances of body language and voice intonation and inflection. You should rehearse by yourself until you feel confident enough to practice in front of your family, friends, or peers who can give you some important pointers. You need to listen to their comments and incorporate them into your presentation.

When performing before a prospect, you need to give yourself permission to be a rookie, but be sure to follow the rookie rules:

- ▲ Find and use many opportunities to perfect your new selling techniques.
- ▲ Reflect on your presentations and examine how to improve.
- ▲ Persist until you become a polished sales professional.

### FOR EXAMPLE

#### Preparing for the First Client

Ted is a recently hired pharmaceutical sales representative. The company leads him through training that concentrates on product knowledge as well as tips on approaching his prospects. Ted studies all the manuals and then follows Bill, an experienced sales representative, on his sales calls. After a few days, armed with product and company knowledge, Ted begins to see how to incorporate the information into his own style. He practices his presentations before a mirror and then in front of his wife and then in front of Bill. Each notes the good and bad of his presentation. Ted assesses how to adjust and then approaches his first client.

Sometimes you may need to memorize concepts and specific words in a presentation. To succeed, you need to look like you don't have a canned message. The worst habit you can develop is to memorize phrases and then shut off your personality and resort to a robot imitation whenever you get desperate. Remember, as you sell, you need to be genuine and personable: Look for ways to make the memorization reflect your personality. Practice how you will say them. Think about how you will carry yourself and how you will stand or sit when you utter those words. Use your sense of humor, your previous knowledge, and your natural speech and mannerisms to make your new selling skills sound spontaneous.

### 1.5.3 Communicating Effectively

Selling is a two-way communication process. Here are some important steps in effective sales communication:

1. **Qualify the prospect:** By asking a few simple questions, you can determine quickly whether the person you're meeting with is right for your offering. By doing this, you maximize your efforts by continuing presentations only with someone who can make a decision. Making a quick determination also shows that you respect the prospect and extend the courtesy of not wasting time.
2. **Address the client's concerns:** If and when your prospect voices a concern about something, you shouldn't ever glide over it. Instead, you should let it stop you momentarily and think about what was said and what you may have said or done to trigger the comment. Then you can carefully and thoughtfully address the concern.

### FOR EXAMPLE

#### Shifting to Meet the Client's Needs

During a visit to a local auto dealer, Mr. Friedman revealed to John, the sales representative, many items he wanted for his new car. Mixed in among the list was Mr. Friedman's need for a large trunk, which he specified as needing to haul his sales samples. John understood that a large trunk was a major selling point for Mr. Friedman. "What I understand from your comment, Mr. Friedman," John said, "is that you're particularly concerned about the size of the trunk in your new vehicle, is that correct?" Mr. Friedman agreed that it was a major issue. John looked for a vehicle with a large trunk and made the sale.

- 3. Confirm everything:** Miscommunication costs people money, time, and effort every year. Missed appointments, flights, or phone calls can destroy in minutes what may have taken months to build. Inattention to details, wrong orders, and wrong people handling important tasks take their toll as well. It's important to take the time to confirm (and reconfirm) the details.
- 4. Ask for the decision:** You have nothing to lose by asking a prospect for a decision. The client may or may not be ready to make a decision, and you need to learn the right time to let go and try another time.

Few people want to be guinea pigs, so sharing the experiences of others who bought your product, use your service, or are committed to the same project is a good tactic. Your prospects will recognize that they're not going into uncharted waters. Overcoming their fears will take you far in convincing or persuading people, especially if you can use examples of people they know.

#### 1.5.4 Having Realistic Expectations

You are experiencing the learning curve now, and professionalism in sales takes some time and knowledge. You need to be patient with yourself and not expect to be a winner 100 percent of the time. On the other hand, you should be honest with yourself and recognize times when inadequate knowledge or an inaccurate application of new selling techniques has kept you from giving your best performance.

It's important to know your limitations but not be bound by them. You should do what you know you should do, do it the best way you know how, and stay on the lookout for ways to improve your selling skills.

You should also try to be flexible. Change isn't necessarily easy, and learning and adapting require change. Sometimes you may need to change some of your

habits. It's normal to feel anxiety and confusion during this period of change or improvement. As you become a more effective salesperson, you'll find yourself applying what you've discovered to your personal relationships and decisions. But there's lag time between the practice and the perfection, so you should allow yourself and others time to adjust to the new and improved version of you. Flexibility also applies to being aware of the new technology and practices that will improve your practice.

### 1.5.5 Maintaining Your Discipline and Commitment

One of the greatest pitfalls of great success in a short period of time is a failure to continue. People have a tendency to want to rest on their laurels when they know they're good. Slowing down after achieving success quickly is a dangerous mistake. The fact that you've tasted some success doesn't mean that you can stop and fall back into the same old methods that crippled your sales career. The real trick is to remain balanced during your successes.

You can think of every technique you read in this book as one link in the chain of your success in sales. If you have a weak chain, you may need to review a chapter or two. If you don't go back and make the weak link stronger, your career chain will never carry the weight it needs to carry in order to haul you up to top-producer status.

### 1.5.6 Evaluating Yourself

In order to accurately evaluate results, you need to know the point of origin. You should take time to record your journey with a success journal, starting with Day 1. You use a **success journal** to record specific instances and details of when you successfully used new selling techniques; by doing so, you not only immediately reinforce the benefits to your career but also provide encouragement when reviewing and reliving a positive selling experience.

In reviewing your success journal, you should compare what you did right in a given situation to what you did when you did not get a sale. When you

#### FOR EXAMPLE

##### Journaling for Success

Allison started a success journal the first day she became a salesperson for a real estate firm. First, she recorded her sales pitch. Then she wrote about her first sale, including the details that helped her land the deal. Two specifics were that she remembered to ask about her client's needs and wants and that she asked for the decision. Allison decided those were key points in making this particular sale, and she made a notation for future reference.

make such a comparison, the reasons for not getting the sale should become obvious. By comparing an unsuccessful experience to a successful one, you see what you left out or skimmed over and why you failed to convince the customer of the benefits of your offering. When such negatives occur, you can adjust your presentation or sales techniques.

Keeping a success journal is also a way to remain alert to various situations that may become sales opportunities. When you witness a good job of selling, you should make a note of it in your success journal. When a master sells you on something, you should jot down the details. Make specific notes of things the professional did that especially impressed or influenced you. Observe, listen, and take time to reflect on the situation. Observe the expressions and actions of the other party as a result of the selling methods being used. Indicate which techniques have negative or positive effects on the prospect. Sometimes the negative lessons have a stronger impact than those that look smooth and effortless.

The definition of *success* is as individual as you are. The definition could reflect a desire for financial gain, love and security, adventure, or a score of other goals. Here's a definition that could help you visualize a definition of *success* for yourself: Success is the continuous journey toward the achievement of predetermined, worthwhile goals. This encompasses the idea that the journey is never over and that it is part of human nature to continually strive toward a goal. You've made a choice and set a course. The commitment to follow through is up to you.



## SELF-CHECK

1. Outline and describe the habits or characteristics you must learn to become an effective sales professional.

### 1.6 Using Technology in Sales

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Computer literacy is no longer just a business skill—it's a life skill as important as knowing how to add, subtract, or drive a car. Using the Internet, mobile phones, handheld planning devices, and certain common computer software programs all fall under the umbrella of computer literacy.

If you're new to some of the technological tools that are available for you to use, you may think of all those gadgets as time-consuming things you have to spend hours figuring out. To some degree, you're right. Anytime you use a new product or service, you have to spend a little time up front, learning how to use it. But the reward is definitely worthwhile if you have the right tool for the job.



Gone are the days of 3-by-5 index cards with handwritten notes about clients. Also gone are the giant wheels of name and address information. In the 1990s, computers and the Internet took off to such a degree that if you didn't jump on that wave, you may have been left floating along, wondering how you missed it. But don't worry: It's never too late to use technology to your advantage. A salesperson has plenty of opportunities to do exactly that. Technology skills can make your daily life easier and your selling more efficient.

Let's look at some of the key technology tools that make a salesperson's work easier and more effective:

- ▲ **Laptop computers:** Giving presentations is a key element in selling, and Microsoft's PowerPoint software program makes it easy for you to tell your prospective clients about yourself, your product, or your service. You can also easily and quickly customize a slide presentation for each prospect. You can easily store and transport PowerPoint presentations via laptop computers. This is one reason some companies supply their salespeople with these portable computers. In addition to presentation software, these devices allow fast and easy access to a multitude of programs, including e-mail, shared files within the company, calendars, and address books.
- ▲ **Digital cameras:** Digital cameras have become more popular—with good reason. You can easily take a photo, review it immediately on the camera's screen, pop the disk into your computer, and add the photo to your presentation. Salespeople can include photos of the company buildings, staff, products, services in use, and, of course, the company logo. All these features can help create a truly customized sales training session.
- ▲ **Address book software:** Software designed specifically for maintaining your address book is extremely helpful. Simple address book programs are easy to find and accompany programs such as Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes. Your business may demand extra attention, however, and you might want to use contact management software, which includes a database of information about your present and future clients. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.
- ▲ **Personal digital assistants (PDAs):** A PDA is an electronic device that is smaller than a videocassette tape and works like a computer. It has a screen display and works using a touchpad system. A PDA is useful for keeping track of your contact lists, merging your personal and business calendars into one organized program, and getting connected to the Internet for current information. The downside of a PDA is that data entry is done primarily using a stylus, which means you hunt and peck on a keyboard display. However, some PDAs can be plugged into a standard keyboard for easy data entry.
- ▲ **Mobile phones:** Mobile phones have almost become miniature computers. Features that make your life easier vary in the vast number of phone

offerings. E-mail, Internet access, and more are available with the right mobile phone. All these services are available for a fee, and these fees vary widely, depending on the types of service you need.

- ▲ **The Internet:** The Internet has made it particularly easy to arrange travel plans. Most airlines have their own Web sites, where you can check availability and purchase tickets. Plus, many other web-based services help with travel plans. If you need to travel by car, you can find road maps online. Several sites give you estimated travel times, all the turns you need to take, and the total mileage of your trip. You can print out the information or download it into your computer or PDA. The directions are provided in step-by-step text form, along with maps of the area. You can also find the nearest hotels and restaurants along your route.



## SELF - CHECK

1. Describe how a laptop computer can improve the daily life of a salesperson.
2. Describe how a PDA can improve the daily life of a salesperson.
3. Describe how a mobile phone can improve the daily life of a salesperson.
4. Describe how the Internet can improve the daily life of a salesperson.

## SUMMARY

For a professional salesperson, selling is the process of moving goods and services from the hands of those who produce them into the hands of those who will benefit from their use. A successful salesperson understands the skills necessary to move these goods. This chapter provides a general overview of those skills and how and when to apply them.

Salespeople use five primary selling approaches: person-to-person, telemarketing, direct mail, e-mail, and the Internet. In using one or a combination of these approaches, they learn the skills they need to show sensitivity toward and respect for their customers. Selling success increases at a significant pace when satisfying the needs of their clients is a top priority. Top salespeople also know the importance of goal setting, professionalism in their presentation, effective communication, realistic expectations, flexibility, and discipline.

A vast array of technological aids, from laptop computers to online services, assist modern-day salespeople in achieving their goals.

## KEY TERMS

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<b>Conscious competence</b>	The third phase of the learning curve, in which a person realizes the skills he or she has acquired.
<b>Conscious incompetence</b>	The second phase of the learning curve, in which a person chooses to learn specific skills and knowledge.
<b>Direct mail</b>	Mail, such as catalogs and flyers, sent for sales purposes.
<b>E-mail approach</b>	An electronic sales approach for reaching prospects.
<b>Internet approach</b>	Use of Web sites to sell to a global audience.
<b>Learning curve</b>	The time needed to progress from being a complete beginner to an expert.
<b>One-time close</b>	A technique used in telemarketing to sell a product during the first call.
<b>Person-to-person selling</b>	A sales method in which the salesperson has face-to-face contact with the prospect.
<b>Personal selling</b>	The direct communications between paid representatives and prospects that lead to transactions, customer satisfaction, account development, and profitable relationships.
<b>Professional selling</b>	The process of moving goods and services from the hands of those who produce them into the hands of those who benefit from them.
<b>Success journal</b>	A tool in which a salesperson records specific instances and details of successfully using new selling techniques. A success journal reinforces successful sales habits.
<b>Telemarketing</b>	A sales method in which the salesperson contacts a prospect by phone.
<b>Unconscious competence</b>	The fourth stage of the learning curve, in which the person has learned specific skills and knowledge and applies them in an unconscious manner.
<b>Unconscious incompetence</b>	The first stage of the learning curve, in which a person is unaware of the amount of knowledge needed to accomplish a task.

## ASSESS YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Go to [www.wiley.com/college/hopkins](http://www.wiley.com/college/hopkins) to evaluate your knowledge of the elements necessary for the career of a professional salesperson.

*Measure your learning by comparing pre-test and post-test results.*

### Summary Questions

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1. Few people practice sales in their jobs. True or false?
2. One definition of selling is the process of moving goods and services from the hands of those who produce them into the hands of those who benefit from their use. True or false?
3. Which of the following is not considered a primary approach used in sales?
  - (a) direct mail
  - (b) person-to-person
  - (c) diplomacy
  - (d) telemarketing
4. The time needed to progress from being a complete beginner to an expert is referred to as the:
  - (a) learning compendium.
  - (b) learning curve.
  - (c) learning tree.
  - (d) learning experience.
5. When you are able to apply all your previous knowledge naturally and easily, you are experiencing:
  - (a) conscious incompetence.
  - (b) unconscious incompetence.
  - (c) unconscious competence.
  - (d) conscious competence.
6. The selling triangle consists of product knowledge, selling tactics and strategies, and:
  - (a) a high IQ and vocabulary.
  - (b) politics and referrals.
  - (c) risk taking and entrepreneurship.
  - (d) attitude and goal setting.
7. Professional salespeople recognize that their primary focus should be on making money. True or false?
8. Professional salespeople show confidence and strength in their body language, speech, and overall presence. True or false?

9. The optimal way to adopt an attitude of discovery is to:
  - (a) discover your best learning environment.
  - (b) study at a pace that fits you.
  - (c) limit your interruptions during study.
  - (d) incorporate all of the above.
10. A master salesperson does all the talk during a conference with a prospect. True or false?
11. The purpose of a success journal is to help you learn your strengths and adjust in order to overcome any weakness. True or false?
12. Computer literacy is an essential life skill in today's business environment. True or false?

### **Applying This Chapter**

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1. Describe how you've encountered sales techniques used by waiters, actors, politicians, doctors, and lawyers. Describe the benefits of improving sales skills in each of these professions.
2. Discuss the four phases of your own learning curve as you continue on your journey to becoming a professional salesperson. How should you progress from one stage to the next?
3. Think about the possibility of selling a large parcel of farm land. Outline and discuss the primary approaches of selling and how a sales professional might use each approach to sell this land.
4. List the characteristics of a professional salesperson that you currently have. What are some of the areas you need to improve? How could you adopt improvements in your routine?
5. Think about a recent experience with a sales representative. Did this person persuade you to make a decision? If so, what did the salesperson do to affect your decision? If the salesperson did not persuade you to make a decision, what might he or she have done differently?
6. Decide on a product that you would like to sell. Prepare a short sales pitch on the benefits of the product and present it to a friend or fellow student. What did you do or say during the sales pitch that you would qualify as one of your strengths? Describe this strength in your success journal.
7. Visualize yourself as a successful sales professional. Describe the characteristics you possess. What do you visualize as the environment where you work and where you live?
8. Describe the current technology that you use every day to assist in achieving your goals. Which device or system that you currently use could you visualize using in your role as a salesperson?

## ***YOU TRY IT***

### **Getting the Job**

You just made an appointment for a job interview, which is an opportunity for you to sell the benefits of hiring you. Based on the material in this chapter, outline

1. how you should prepare for the job.
2. how you should act and react during the interview.
3. what you should do after the interview.