

Great Salespeople Top 5 Characteristics

-by Shamus Brown



I am a big believer that great salespeople generally realize their greatness, rather than being borne that way. OK, sure we've all heard somebody in sales who told us that they've been in sales all their life. It all started when they were a kid, selling lemonade from their lemonade stand for a dime, or selling magazines door to door. But this is really more a reflection of the family environment that they grew up in that may have encouraged or necessitated this than

anything else. Even if you didn't sell seeds or magazine subscriptions door to door as a kid, you still have a chance at greatness in sales.

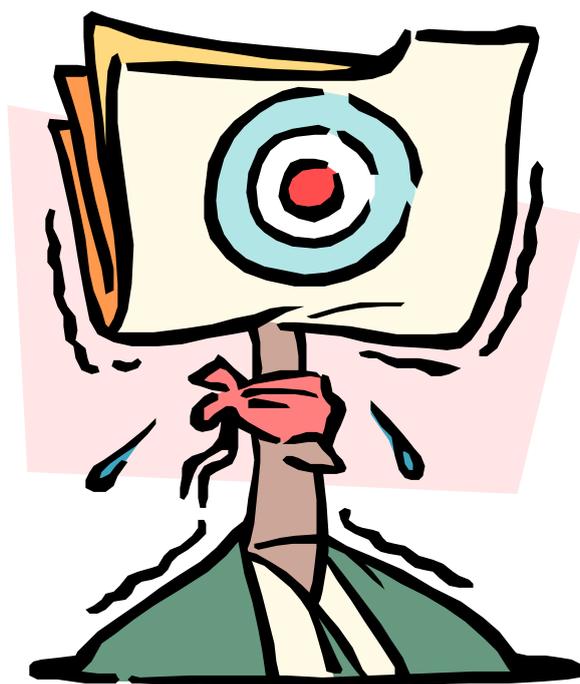
I gave this topic some thought because of a call I received today from one of my readers. She mentioned how the perception she had of salespeople growing up, was different than what she felt were her own personal strengths. So I thought today, that I'd share with you what I believe to be the primary characteristics of outstanding salespeople.

#1 - Results Focused

If you are selling for someone else, what they care about most is whether or not you get the sales that they ask for (i.e. did you make your quota or not). One of the best things about being a salesperson is you have a tremendous amount of freedom and discretion in how you use your time. In return, you must be able to stay focused on the big picture and not let small problems or dramas distract you. If you sell for yourself and you are not focused on results, then you are not in business.

#2 - Courageous

We all experience fear at one time or another. Great salespeople are courageous in that they are able to act and move forward even in the presence of their own fears. Fear is the reaction we have when you know that you need to do something or



that something is going to happen soon that you are not prepared for. This could be making cold calls or making a major decision that you believe to be right when you know that your management will not agree with you.



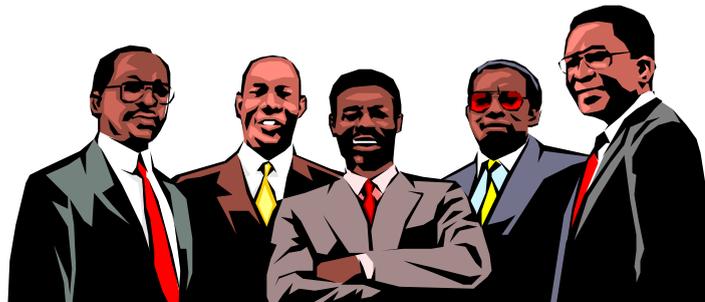
#3 - High Energy

This one is really simple. Despite all the lame jokes about salespeople being out on the golf course all the time, top performers work their asses off. Being able to kick-back and work 30 hours a week while making quota may sound great. But the true top-performers got that way by working long and

hard to beat out their competition while the other guys were boozin' it on the golf course. In short, you must be able to do "Whatever It Takes" to get to the top.

#4 - Knows People

Of all the characteristics that people attribute to salespeople, this is the one the one that people are most often talking about when they describe a "natural". The ability to



establish rapport and maintain rapport is probably the single most powerful skill a salesperson can have. The most flexible people can adapt and establish rapport with others from a multitude of backgrounds and cultures. The longer you can maintain rapport with more people, the more chances you will have to ask questions, uncover opportunities, and present solutions that make sales. And as with everything else in sales, this skill can actually be learned.

#5 - Committed To Growth

Great salespeople got that way by always looking for a better way. They are always improving their approach, their techniques, and their attitude. There are many philosophies on what the *best* approach to sales is. Some work better than others depending on one's own personal style, the product you're selling, and the customers that you sell to. Great salespeople know that they must look for the best examples of excellence, and adopt the individual aspects of this that they can use.



So what got left out of this list? The two words we've probably heard more often than others to describe salespeople are "aggressive" and "enthusiastic". The first definition in my dictionary for aggressive includes the word hostile in it. I don't know anyone these days who can effectively sell in a hostile manner to their customers. Customers are not enemy territory to be "taken". As for enthusiasm, I believe it has a time and a place. If you run around like a cheer-leader for your company all the time, you'll annoy people, and you probably won't be listening very well. Bottom line is both of these words describe behavior that can be destructive to the lifeblood of sales, building and maintaining rapport.

Originally published in the EGOPOWER [sales newsletter](#).