

It's Not Rocket Science!!

Dave's Top 10 Characteristics Of Sales Professionals.

Dave Brock, Partners In EXCELLENCE

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For more information on our products and services, contact:

Partners In EXCELLENCE
2268 Coventry Road
Cleveland, OH 44118
PH: 216-371-9846
Fax: 216-371-7066
Email: info@excellenc.com
www.excellenc.com

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When you look at the proliferation of business books that purport to “help” sales professionals, you start to become overwhelmed with the variety of approaches. There are all sorts of clever titles promising the sales person to become better at cold calling, to manage the complex sale, to become more consultative, to call on important people, and the list goes on.

Let's face it, there is nothing new in sales! Outstanding sales professionals have had the same characteristics for years. The same principles apply globally.

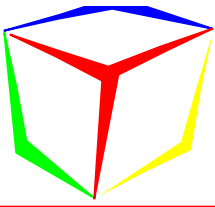
Professional selling is not rocket science. Let's look at the top 10 areas in which true sales professionals distinguish themselves.

Dave's Top 10 Characteristics Of Effective Sales Professionals:

Borrowing shamelessly from David Letterman's top 10, top sale professionals excel in the following:

10. **Effective sales professionals are very disciplined:** Effective sales professionals have a systematic approach to producing results. They know what it takes to be successful and repeat that process in every sales engagement. They plan everything they do in advance and execute the plan. They know the selling is a process and focus on executing the process well.
9. **They are intensely focused:** They have specific goals. Not only their quota, but they have goals for every situation they are involved in, whether it is a sales call, a new sales opportunity, a key account, territory, or a problem that needs to be solved. The best sales professionals have a purposefulness in every action they take. They concentrate their attention on the most effective and efficient means of accomplishing their goals.
8. **They seek simplicity:** The best sales professionals are very simple their approach. They know tricks and techniques don't fool the customer or produce results. They are direct and straightforward in providing value to their customers. Professionals seek to understand the critical issues and not cloud the situation with fluff. They work on clarity in their actions and communications. There is an absence of pretense or affectation in what they do.
7. **They are interested, not necessarily interesting:** Sales professionals are genuinely curious about their customers and business. They are concerned about their customers' businesses, their challenges and seek to learn. Sales professionals are interested in people. They continually ask questions to understand. They listen to learn.
6. **Professionals are persistence:** They refuse to give up. They believe in themselves, their company, their products, and their customers. With their persistence they are enthusiastic. They are excited by what they do.
5. **Professionals continually learn, seeking knowledge to improve:** They constantly seek to learn and to improve. They learn their customers' businesses; sometimes they are more knowledgeable about the business than their customers are. They understand their company. They know how to get things done for





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their customers in the company. They understand their products and solutions. They know how their products create value to their customers. They understand their competition. They know how to differentiate their offerings from those of the competition. They continually learn about their profession-selling, seeking to continually improve.

4. **They value time:** Time is one of the most important things sales professionals manage. First, they value their customers' time. In every interchange with customers, they seek to create real value, using their time well. Sales professionals set time-based goals. They set deadlines for achieving all their goals. They seek to be more efficient and effective in how they use their own time. They refuse to waste time on useless efforts. They focus their activities on those that produce real results.
3. **The best sales professionals are ruthlessly fact focused:** Sales professionals do not confuse wish-ful thinking with the real facts of situations. Regardless of how bad the news is, they focus on facts. They know they can only develop appropriate action plans based on what is really going on. They also are careful about assumptions. They ask questions to determine what the customer really wants and needs. Real professionals never guess, they ask their customer and listen to the facts.
2. **They are action oriented:** Sales professionals are dedicated to producing results. They want to produce results for their customers, their company, and themselves. Professionals are problem solvers. They don't make excuses, but rather determine the actions they need to execute to accomplish their goals. They know that talk is talk, and actions speak louder than words.
1. **Their highest value is integrity:** They will never compromise themselves just to "get the order." Sales professionals know their reputations are dependent on their integrity and honesty. They know their success is based on their ability to meet their commitments—to their customers, their company, and themselves.

Becoming a true professional:

Professional sales is not rocket science! The principles are very clear, but very demanding. Executing these principles everyday is what separate true sales professionals from "peddlers."

Forget all the hype, dedicate yourself to being a professional. Build your abilities in each of the areas outlined above.

These characteristics are a roadmap for building yourself as a sales professional. Use them to develop your own plan for achieving sales excellence.

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