

What Makes a Salesman Successful

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Abstract

This paper's main focus is to evaluate different suggestions as to what a salesman should keep in mind while being a part of the sales world. There will always be an opportunity to make a sale as the economy has grown exponentially over the years. Having an effective approach allows the customer to feel like he or she matters. The sales person is willing to do whatever it takes possible prior to what the customer wants. While conducting my research, I chose to narrow my focus directly on three primary points: being unbiased, making the product and package equal, and showing a customer fewer options. Fortunately, these specific topics had a many of useful sources to accommodate into my paper. During the research phase, it was effective to spend my time finding quotes and paraphrases that would directly show the relationship pertaining to a salesman and a customer. I found that snap judgments are a key factor into whether or not a salesman will have success in his career. Not only does the mindset and personality matter, but also considering the options a customer would most likely choose from correlates to knowing each customer. In sum, this paper attempts to go into detail on the ways a salesman should approach a customer, as well as giving them a comfortable guideline to achieve success.

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Employment in sales and related occupations is expected to rise by three percent from the years 2016 to 2026 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Although this specific work field is predicted to rise less than the average of other jobs, it is still worth considering all the factors that help to make a salesman successful. Having basic skills in sales, will ultimately give someone an advantage to learn a life skill. One of the first things that pop into one's mind when someone brings up modern day sales could be how that person develops a mindset to create a sale. Not only is the connection between the people and sale important, but also how that product is presented to an individual. A salesman can be successful with key components consisting of being unbiased, taking the time to make the package and product equal, and last but not least, presenting fewer options.

There are many ways for a salesman to experience success in the marketing and business world; acting without bias towards another is a key component. The concept of bias expressed in Merriam-Webster indicates that it is, "the favoring of or against one thing, person, or group compared to another, usually in a way to be considered unfair" (Bias, 2018) In this case, Bob Golomb is considered an effective salesman because he doesn't judge people based on first impressions. He treats the people who enter his car dealership in a fair manner. He does not judge nor compare his customers, consequently he remains bias free. To add, he offers all of his customers consistent pricing that does not vary on their outward appearance. Consequently, Bob lives by a sense of fairness which ultimately brings him great success.

As an illustration to being unbiased, Ian Ayres puts together a team of 38 people - eighteen white men, seven white women, eight black women, and five black men for the purpose of understanding bias while purchasing a car (Gladwell, 2005, P. 93). The constant variable among this group is their profession and professional appearance. All 38 people are professors, similar in age, and are wearing professional clothing. Even though they are competent and capable of purchasing the same type of car, Ayre's shows

the cracks in perception of others. Ironically, the experiment indicates that the black men received an offer of eight hundred dollars more than the white men. These startling results exist in the business world; having an awareness helps to minimize bias which is necessary when focusing on a fair way to do an occupation.

Certainly, the media has a role in people's perceptions. Today's society has become focused on quick information, shared information, and an acceptance of what is put into the media. In fact, media influences attitudes (Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001). The study portrays bias in the media, they write, "...if media representations were to become more balanced, reminding people of both admired member of out groups and less-than-stellar members of in-groups, the combined effect may be able to implicit bias and stereotypes." All members of society experience the business and marketing world, even though the media has implied bias.

One factor that occurs throughout workplaces is on a person's height. A person's height may not seem like a bias area, but it is. Varying heights has a direct impact on personal income. Research has shown that someone with a height of seventy two inches is predicted to have a salary of a hundred sixty six dollars higher than a person who is only sixty five inches tall (Judge and Cable, 2004). Height cannot be controlled; therefore, a salesman can find success through other alternatives.

Bias not only has an impact in the workfield, but is evident in today's politics. In the book *Blink*, Gladwell discusses a specific event of a man named Warren Harding who led supporters to believe that he would be a good president because he appeared stately and presidential. As a result of this decision, historians believe that Harding has been one of the worst presidents. Bias plays an important role to what led him to become president. The power of one's appearance has a strong impact on society; this can lead society to make decisions that are impressions instead of knowledge.

What people don't know is the influence a product's package may have when a customer is making a purchase. As a matter of fact, it could be argued that the packaging is as important as the

product itself because it is a critical marketing and communication tool for someone in sales. Not only does the package make a statement, but it also must be able to travel to destination A to B with minimal damage. A package appearance can not be more important than practicality. A customer's buying choices will reflect this dilemma. Packaging of a product takes time and thought to grab one's attention. As mentioned in *The Total Package*, packaging performs a series of tasks including: getting the product to the destination safely, contents from contamination, making advertising meaningful, and most importantly; selling the product. The appearance of packages are used for simplifying and speeding decisions. With that being said, most people do not consider the product itself when making a purchase. People who focus directly on the image can consider that (Hines, 2001, p.22) "Packages have personality. They create confidence and trust." To add, if someone is inbetween two different products, they will choose the item with the better outward appearance. It would be smart to make the product equal to the package.

Louis Cheskin investigated how design elements of packaging impact people's perceptions of relevance, value, and appeal. During the 1940's, butter was more commonly used than margarine. To add, Cheskin decided to change the style of margarine and what it was presented in, with the goal of increasing sales. His experiment consisted of coloring the margarine yellow so it looked like butter. After making adjustments to the margarine, he conducted a series of luncheons with homeowners. Louis invited a group of women to an event, where they were served food and had an option of using yellow margarine, which was ultimately acting like regular butter. The women thoroughly enjoyed the margarine. Cheskin believed that the true product is the package combined with the product. His results support the idea of people's unconscious making decisions, because our unawareness takes over; most people do not make a distinction with what they are already familiar.

Making a purchase can be a difficult task when there are more options available. Also, having too many options can leave a customer feeling so wildly erratic that they end up not making a decision at all.

By controlling what is being shown in front of a customer gives an advantage to salesmen; customers will more likely feel confident in the purchase they have made. In fact, “Choice overload can leave you dissatisfied with the choice you made, what is often described as buyer’s remorse” (Waikar, 2007). When a customer is confident in knowing what they are seeking for, the chance of a salesman making a sale is much greater. However, once that customer is exposed to options that they were not intended to see, that is when decision making becomes much more difficult.

Choice is an act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more selections. Studies have shown that there are four factors that predict when choice overload might occur: choice set complexity, decision task difficulty, preference uncertainty, and decision goal. It is argued that, “Complexity is not so much about the absolute number of options but rather how complex choosing among them is” (Waikar, 2007). Complexity is not based on the amount of choices, but rather the differences in quality that comes with each product. Additionally, time has an influence on what a customer might do when they are purchasing something. If there are multiple options in front of them with little time, most likely they will make a quick decision. To add, the more someone knows what they want, the easier it will be for them to make a commitment.

Successful business owner’s create a positive culture in their place of business. By doing so, their employees feel empowered to

do whatever it takes to make the customers feel confident about

their products (Mayer and

Greenberg, 2006). When

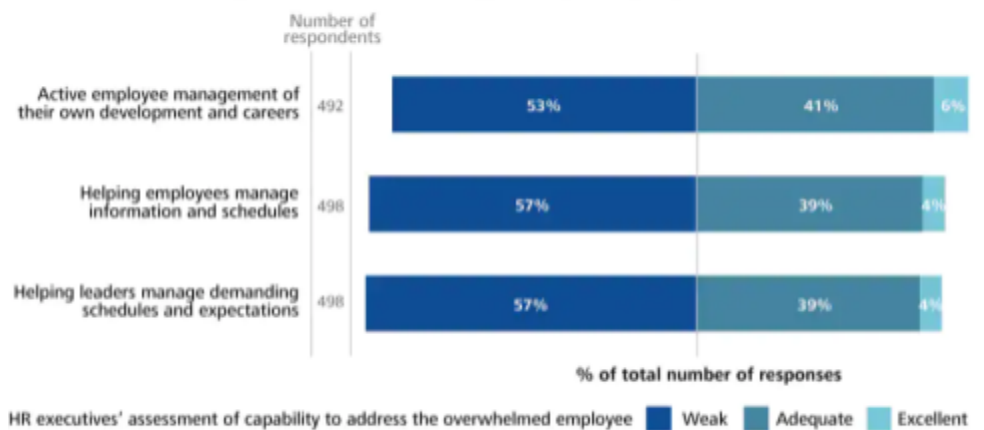
employees are emotionally

invested, they want to

contribute. Figure one shows

Figure 1: Factors that impact a work environment

Figure 1. An underwhelming response to today’s overloaded employee



the responses of employees who are in working environments that do not have vision or a supportive business environment. Communicating visions and missions is key to having a healthy working environment. Think about if a person bowled into a curtain, what will be heard are the pins falling; there will be no indication of how many are falling. By taking that curtain (communicating) away, employees will feel empowered.

Being unbiased, making the product and package equal, and showing a customer fewer options are very important to keep in mind for companies. As business in sales continue to prosper, a salesman who is confident and can read a customer will find success easier. Having the basic social skills to make someone feel comfortable as well as knowing how to treat people equally will give an individual the results that they want. Not only does the actions of the salesman matter, but showing the customer the right options that pertain to what they are looking for are key to the sale. To summarize, it isn't about who can make the most sales, but rather the techniques that person uses during the process of a sale.

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