

Top Five Traits You Gotta Have to Sell

From [Kimberly L. McCall](#)

Stellar sellers and entrepreneurs share great commonality, including personality traits. An entrepreneur will excel because she has such enthusiasm for her service, and her ebullience is embraced by prospects accustomed to the same-old, same-old hackneyed pitches. A great closer will possess an aura of competence and zeal that makes him top of the board each month.

To understand the valuable qualities in selling, I asked experts and business owners what characteristics allow a salesperson to transcend the trite.

1. Creativity. Having an appreciation for the non-obvious solution is a must if a sales pro is going to outpace the pack. While an average salesperson depends on business cards and leave-behinds, a true rainmaker brings a "unique vision to his work that makes him stand out," says Wendy Weiss, a.k.a. "The Queen of Cold-Calling" and president of Weiss Communications, a sales training and coaching company in New York City.

2. Passion. Genuine love for a product gets salespeople through the inevitable dark times, and it makes their offers all the more irresistible to their clients. Passion, like creativity, cannot be faked, so it has great weight with customers.

Paul R. DiModica is president of DigitalHatch Inc., a sales training business for high-tech firms in Peachtree City, Georgia. DiModica ranks passion as the number-one characteristic a salesperson needs. "You must believe in what you sell," he says. "This belief is communicated to the prospect invisibly."

3. Integrity. Why are used-car salesmen so poorly regarded? Because the perception is that they lack integrity and that they'll say anything to get the sale. Dave Condensa, CEO and founder of Helio Solutions, an IT consulting firm in Sunnyvale, California, thinks integrity tops the list of qualities salespeople need. "We're building a relationship, and it's imperative that the customer trusts the salesperson."

Feeling good about a purchase is a hallmark of buying from a salesperson with integrity. "Trust brings [customers] back, and that's a key factor to the success of any salesperson," adds Condensa. The importance of selling with integrity has been heightened by the recent poor ethical and financial performance of huge corporations. Says DiModica, "Customers still buy the salesperson."

4. Tenacity. Shelving feelings of rejection to keep plugging away is another essential requirement for sales success. "It takes personal courage to get up every morning and say 'I am going to be the best,'" says DiModica. It also requires a certain steely quality to persist in the wake of one dismissal after the next. Weiss agrees: "Sales requires someone who can always see possibilities, even in difficult situations."

5. Commitment. The sales cycle for any big deal can typically take months, even years. Keeping an eye on the prize, while continuing to sell to other prospects simultaneously, takes commitment. "Selling is never easy," explains DiModica. "You must have a burning desire." Weiss also believes that success is the result of a person's "willingness and intent to make things happen."

On the flip side, certain traits will surely doom any salesperson to the also-ran heap: lack of integrity, for instance. "Integrity means the person will always attempt to do the right thing for the company and the customers," says Weiss.

DiModica also points to not being prepared when trying to make a sale. "You can't just pick up the phone and call a prospect because your contact manager says it's time."

And, of course, there's the ultimate vice: dishonesty. Condensa warns: "You ruin the chance of repeat or referral business."