

Five success factors of elite salespeople

Are you an elite salesperson? Are you one of the 4 percent who bring in 94 percent of new business – consistently? If you are, do not bother reading this article. You are doing fine and should not change a thing. But if you are not an elite salesperson and want to be one, I invite you to keep reading.

In my Navy submarine career, I learned to sell. We are all in sales of some sort every day of our lives. I learned that an essential component of leadership was selling your ideas and strategies to others.

After I retired from the Navy and started my business career, I looked for ways to help my engineering staff with robust, repeatable sales processes. Finding none that worked in all sales cycles and with all customers, I decided to develop my own.

My “five factors for sales success” system set our company on a course of growing at 42 percent every year for 14 straight years. After that, I established Asher Strategies to share my sales success system with other business people. Here they are:

(1) Product knowledge (must be learned)

Elite salespeople really do know what they are talking about. Knowledge is power. And it can be binary. If you have a lot of it and the other four factors are in alignment, you have a chance to make a sale. But if you lack knowledge, you’ll almost never make the sale. Practical application: know everything you can about your products/services, your customers, and their customers and competitors.

(2) Sales aptitude (part of our innate personality)

Of the five factors, this alone accounts for 50 percent of sales results. It’s based on our nature and does not change much over time. Some 20 percent of us are well-suited for sales (elite salesperson profile), 60 percent of us can “stretch” our sales potential by learning emotional intelligence techniques, and 20 percent of us should never be put in front of customers. You cannot guess this on your own. You need a tool to help you learn what your specific strengths and blind spots are. Your sales success is directly related to how well you use or compensate for them. Many personality assessment tools are available. My company partners with CraftMetrics International in using the Advanced Personality Questionnaire (APQ) that reveals nine basic sales personality traits and provides self-coaching materials. Practical application: find out what your basic personality traits are and “stretch” for success in sales.

(3) Selling skills (must be learned)

Selling skills rarely come naturally. But everybody in sales can benefit from skills training. Over time I developed a Top Ten Selling Skills seminar and the staff and I have now trained over 80,000 people all over the world. These Top Ten are both a list of skills and a logical sales process:

- focus on a few top prospects;
- thoroughly research prospects and their organizations prior to first contact;
- use insiders to fully understand prospects and their requirements;
- sell yourself by building rapport;
- ask the right questions, listen, and guide the conversation;



- use powerful marketing messages;
- act as a business consultant and expertly handle objections;
- recognize when the buyer is ready to buy and know how to close the sale;
- build long-term relationships with the new customers; and
- ask for referrals.

One important thing for salespeople to remind themselves is that sales skills are not just something to invest in when there's extra time and extra money. Effective sales skills are essential to your sales success. No sales, no sales job. Practical application: take a sales training course. Even elite athletes train frequently.

(4) Self-motivation (up to us)

Some people have more grit than others. It can come from personality or circumstance. All elite salespeople share this trait – they're self-motivated. Successful companies foster motivation by providing their salespeople with the right tools to get the job done. Those wanting to become elite salespeople should take action on their own and seek out mentors and sales associations. Asher Strategies, for example, is a sponsor of the Institute for Excellence in Sales in the Washington, DC area sharing sales presentations and expert advice. Practical application: join a sales enablement organization to boost your sales motivation.

(5) Sales and marketing processes (provided by the company)

Some companies have processes for everything but sales and marketing. The minimum necessary processes are branding, marketing, sales, and account management. At the very least you have to generate name recognition, gain attention for your products/services, turn leads into sales and keep your customers happy and coming back. Our website – www.asherstrategies.com – offers many sales and marketing process templates and other materials that you can download at no cost. Practical application: help your company build effective sales and marketing processes.

I have used these very same five factors to lead my company to sales success and have helped thousands of salespeople bring in new clients faster. If you apply them I guarantee, you will make a positive difference in your company's growth and you will be well on your way to becoming an elite salesperson.

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About the author

John Asher is the CEO of Asher Strategies, a sales advisory consulting firm focused on improving sales for business-to-business companies. Asher is the No. 1 rated Speaker on sales for Vistage, a worldwide network of CEOs. Over the last two decades, he has mentored a large cadre of speakers and trainers that has fueled the growth of ASHER. Learn more about John Asher at www.asherstrategies.com, and connect with him on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. *Close Deals Faster* by John Asher is available for pre-order Amazon and wherever books are sold. Release date: October 24, 2017. John Asher can be contacted at: dpotts@asherstrategies.com