

dents to get a sales education and become "Certified Sales Students". This program operates on a point basis where school courses and outside experience are equally regarded. For more details on this program, check out the **jobpostings** Mini-Guide to the sales industry.

Sales careers are far more challenging than I thought! You are probably asking yourself...

what does this mean for me?

Are there really cool sales jobs out there? Yes, and get excited because there is definitely no shortage of opportunities. There will always be a need for good sales people as almost every job has some component that involves making deals, negotiating, and selling goods and services to consumers. The sales jobs have always been there and there are positions for students from all academic backgrounds.

For example, someone with an Engineering background who is good with data and dealing with people could most definitely apply those skills to this career path and even sell HiTech equipment. It is not just Liberal Arts degrees who are in sales. Business and Computer Science backgrounds can apply more than you think to the industry. It is a hot market right now if you have the right aptitudes. "Good salespeople never arrive, they are always in the process of becoming," says Ayrer.

do i have the necessary skills?

Sales skills are transferable to any industry that you choose because "a sales person is like a conductor of an orchestra because they have to play a number of different instruments," says Reagan.

Here is a list of the 5 key characteristics a good sales person must possess. They are:

Empathy- A salesperson must have a genuine understanding for the customer's concerns and a desire to help them find solutions to their problems.

Focus- Salespeople must be attentive and goal-oriented.

Responsibility- One must exhibit a professional conduct of behaviour and take charge in tough situations.

Optimism- Salespeople know how to deal with rejection and remain motivated in their

drive to succeed.

Ego Drive- Salespeople must be self-starters who enjoy competition and taking the lead. People with an entrepreneurial flare tend to do well in sales.

Aside from these characteristics, you **MUST** be a good listener. "Good salespeople should be good communicators and that starts with good listening skills," says Ayrer. The job is 70% listening and 30% talking. One key quality is being able to take rejection. "You need the attitude of not accepting no as a personal insult and be able to control your emotions," says Reagan. A sales candidate must also enjoy meeting and communicating with new people on a daily basis to form new business relationships. An effective sales person must also have an innate desire to succeed and possess good time management skills. You need the competitive attitude that wants to win,

which is more important than the money, notes Ayrer. Sales careers are challenging, with many rewards and benefits when the job is done well.

Let's get to the good stuff now!

Where do I begin?!? The benefits and perks of sales careers alone are enough to make you join that Introductory Sales class right now! On top of everything, how does complete freedom sound to you? Sales people tend to create their own schedules and work the hours they choose. "The flexibility, the freedom and the self-use of your time can be very rewarding," says Ayrer. You will never have the same day twice and you are not chained to a desk all day. Sales people are constantly out meeting clients and giving presentations, which allows them to stay active and upbeat.

Ok, ok, so the biggest bonus to a sales career is the salary. That is definitely not a secret to anyone in the industry! NASP has identified the average salary for a junior sales representative to be between \$24,000 to \$30,000 plus benefits and commission. The best part is that there is no income cap! Sales people have the power to determine their own paycheck! It is not uncommon to receive a small car allowance adds Panzer. "Commercial salespeople have the potential to make \$70,000- \$125,000 down the road and up to \$200,000 for specialty companies," notes Ayrer. There is enormous potential for good salespeople to rapidly advance

their careers and income. Is a sales career starting to sound appealing to you yet? Salaries may vary by industry but generally, sales is a well-paid profession.

any advice or tips you can offer me?

From my research, I would most definitely suggest joining an association and getting certified to become a sales professional. NASP offers excellent certification programs that have strict standards of conduct, which help to maintain the high standards of the profession. Get certified and get the recognition you deserve! I would also advise that you confer with the **jobpostings** mini-guide to the Sales Industry, as there are many great resources that can provide you with even more information. Remember not to disregard any industries, because you may be closing potential career paths for yourself. Face it, sales careers are where it's at...who would have known!

tips from sales pros... (trust them...they know!)

"Learn how to be an exemplary employee and learn the skills to getting and keeping a good job"

- Michael Reagan, NASP, CEO

"Become a student of the process of selling as opposed to going with a company that teaches you strategies and techniques to sell their product. If you understand the process of selling, you can move into any sales arena"

- Bob Ayrer, REA Performance Consultants, President

"Read everything you possibly can and do not stop learning just because you have graduated and have your degree"

- Victoria Panzer, University of South Florida, sales professor

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Sneak Peek: Look out for next month's issue when Rina uncovers the truth about the exciting world of HiTech. This is a do-not-miss industry report!