

## ARE YOU ASHAMED OF YOUR PROFESSION?

Some people in sales might say yes because salespeople are sometimes associated with negative words like: liar, overly aggressive, arrogant, or cheat. Who would want to be associated with these descriptors? Surprisingly, 12% of the population. Roughly 1 in 8 jobs are sales jobs. In certain cases, salespeople are viewed negatively by their companies, their prospects, and themselves.

Some organizations consider their salespeople a pain when they challenge the status quo, policies and procedures, or other members of the organization. Some customers won't return calls, e-mails, or meet with you. Others might throw away literature, curse you behind your back, intimidate you, and threaten to buy from your competition. Why is there such animosity towards salespeople? Salespeople often consider themselves a hindrance. Why do salespeople begin their pitch with an apology? "Sorry to drop-in" or "Didn't mean to bother you." We show up unannounced and unenthusiastic and wonder, "Why are we given a bad rap?"

The business world is a mirror. We are responsible for determining what we see. If we want others to see us as professionals, we must first view ourselves professionally. If we want others to view us as helpful, we must genuinely help others.

Salespeople work hard. We have spouses, children and pets. At the end of the day, we are all working to support ourselves, our families, and our missions. Salespeople have the same priorities as any other professional. We want to make a living and we want to help others.

Salespeople are in a challenging and competitive profession. We make 100 phone calls a day, send countless e-mails, and make dozens of cold calls, hoping that we can help someone. Financial planners help families prepare for the future. Insurance agents help protect families from the worst. Industrial salespeople help their customers work efficiently and safer. Real estate agents help families find their home. The key is we help. We do this despite countless rejections. The best salespeople are those who truly care for their customers and want to help.

Organizations count on salespeople. Every department of an organization ceases to exist without sales. If there are no customers, there is no need for customer service. If there is no one to bring in new customers, there is no need for a credit department. If there are no customers, there is no need for managers, executives, engineering, or operations. Think about the importance of your position. One salesperson supports 12 other positions within a company.

Whether or not your customer says it, your manager says it, or your fellow employees say it, I'll say it, "Salespeople are the second most important part of any organization; customers are the first." Salespeople should feel proud of what they do. Salespeople should stand up and be recognized for what they do. We help our customers, and we breathe life into our organizations.

So, the next time you are asked, "What you do?" Proudly say, "I am in sales." There is no need to soften your title with the following: account manager, account executive, territory manager, producer, advisor, or consultant. Stand up and be proud to call yourself a salesperson. You define your profession.

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