

The 4 Types of Sales Professional and Why Yours Need Training To Be the Best

There are four basic types of sales professional in any industry. Sure, the job description or the type of sales being made might be different from one another, but all sales people can be boiled down to one of four types: the rookie, the incompetent, the salesperson, and the problem solver.

➤ **The Rookie**

All sales professionals, of course, begin as rookies; the new guy or girl who's still wet behind the ears and knows little or nothing about the art of selling, but has taken all of the courses to learn the products. What they lack in knowledge and experience, they often make up for in enthusiasm and persistence. In the traditional makeup of most sales offices, the rookie is the main line selling force and most sales professionals are people with less than four years experience in their industry.

Most newcomers to sales will either wash out or get promoted within the first two or three years of their starting. The rookie often loses the status when he or she is promoted to Sales Manager. Despite a relative lack of experience, this promotion removes the "new guy" stigma and puts the rookie in charge of several, even newer sales professionals. It also often puts this newcomer in charge of those new sales professionals' training.

See the problems here? Luckily, the talented and persistent usually come through all of this and can become a great sales professional. If they don't become jaded or gain a lot of bad selling habits, that is.

➤ **The Incompetent**

Often, however, this system of throwing rookies out into the world without much knowledge backfires and creates the incompetent salesperson. We all know who the incompetent sales professionals are - they're the ones that we, as their colleagues, would never buy from. They may not realize that they are largely inept at their jobs, but their low sales figures and horrible retention rates speak for themselves.

The incompetent sales professional is often just someone who learned a lot of bad habits as a rookie, never really received good training (or enough training), and whose intentions are likely good, but overshadowed by his or her mistakes due to a lack of

knowledge.

➤ **The Salesperson**

This is the professional who closes sales like no tomorrow and could sell ice to Eskimos. Sadly, this salesperson will also have a dismal retention rate with customers who bought then changed their minds. The salesperson is really good at finding new customers and selling them, but has little ability (or regard) for follow up and relationship building.

The salesperson cares only about the commission and rarely sees past the initial signup bonus, let alone noticing the actual needs of the customer.

These sales professionals are the ones that politicians and comedians like to bring up to slander the industry. They may not be the majority of the people we work with every day, but there are enough of them that the cliché rings true.

➤ **The Problem Solver**

Ultimately, this is the salesperson that combines the good points of all three of the above. The problem solver has the energy and persistence of the rookie agent, finding customers and then sticking with them until the right solution is found. The problem solver has stuck it out through the rookie years and managed to avoid becoming incompetent or lazy.

Yet at the same time, the problem solver is a great salesperson. He or she can not only find as many prospects as required, but can get most of them to buy. Yet, unlike the salesperson, the problem solver doesn't just sell to sell, instead he or she spends the time with the client to find out what exactly is needed first. So while sales volumes may not be as high as the pure salesperson's, the problem solver will have excellent retention as he or she not only pinpointed the need to start with, but continues to follow up and build relationships and loyalty.

Conclusion

In the end, the goal of good sales training (and re-training) is to create problem solvers. Five problem solvers can take the place of scores of rookies, hundreds of incompetents, and with superior retention rates can beat salespeople three to one. Turning sales professionals into problem solvers takes time, dedication, and training. Lots of it. But it pays off in the long run and in a big way, creating not only sales professionals, but an entire company that people learn to trust and recommend.