

THE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT SALES PROFESSIONAL 5 TRAITS THAT GIVE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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This fall, Columbia Business School is launching a program of courses and extracurricular activities to enhance students' abilities as leaders throughout their careers. The Program on Social Intelligence (PSI) will impart techniques and frameworks for managing individuals, teams, organizations and networks. Additionally, executive coaching will help students sharpen their self-awareness, judgment and decision making and expand their practical capabilities in solving problems.

Universities are discovering, that preparing individuals for complex, dynamic and global business requires more than the understanding of a balance sheet.

Since Daniel Goleman's ground breaking work; Emotional Intelligence; Why it can matter more than IQ,* the case for understanding why people are successful has been fervent.

Consider the evidence that supports high EQ=great sales results:

* In a multinational consulting firm, partners who showed high emotional intelligence (EQ) competencies earned 139% more than the lower EQ partners (Boyatzis, 1999).

* American Express tested emotional competence training on Financial Advisors; trained advisors increased business 18.1% compared to 16.2%, and nearly 90% of those who took the training reported significant improvements in their sales performance. Now all incoming advisors receive four days of emotional competence training (Fastcompany "How Do You Feel," June 2000).

* Top performing sales clerks are 12 times more productive than those at the bottom and 85 percent more productive than an average performer. About one-third of this difference is due to technical skill and cognitive ability while two-thirds is due to emotional competence (Goleman, 1998).

* At L'Oreal, sales agents selected on the basis of certain emotional competencies significantly outsold salespeople selected using the company's old selection procedure by \$91,370, for a net revenue increase of \$2,558,360. Salespeople selected on the basis of emotional competence also had 63% less turnover during the first year (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Spencer, McClelland, & Kelner, 1997, cited in Cherniss, 2000).

Myths and Misnomers About Top Sales Performers

In the July issue of Sales and Marketing Manager Magazine**, Julia Chang tackled the relationship between high Emotional intelligence and sales force effectiveness. Interestingly, she uncovered that there is no one "perfect salesperson style". Rather, the top sellers she studied, indeed had different styles. A common misconception was that a salesperson had to be aggressive and overly persuasive to meet or beat targets. More often, the top sellers used their strengths; typically toward relationship building, sensitivity to others and networking to become the best performers in their league. Experts agree that EQ training doesn't involve a change in someone's fundamental personality, rather, it is learning to play to your strengths and to be flexible to interact successfully with others. Fundamental to EQ is awareness of yourself and how others see you.

5 Traits of Successful Salespeople

With differences in style and personality not discovered to be central to success, the experts did find the following 5 traits or competencies as most likely to predict top performance:

- Optimism
 - Ever notice that the best reps tend to look on the bright side? Mitch Anthony, author of *Selling with Emotional Intelligence**** says; "Most top sales professionals, who are at the top of every achievement chart, tend to be optimistic." Optimism will also tend to determine how resilient a rep will be.
- Resilience
 - The spinal column of emotional intelligence in sales. It's the ability to take fifteen no's before you get a yes.
- Self-Motivation
 - Most experts and managers believe this is a trait that cannot be taught. Whether it's being driven by money or recognition or simply pride, the best reps tend to have an inherent competitive drive.
- Personability
 - Being friendly and sociable is a hallmark of reps that network well and maintain long term customer relationships. Quite simply, the customers need to like you and feel comfortable with you, and the relationship grows.
- Empathy
 - This trait may underlie all other emotional intelligence skills, because it involves truly understanding the customer. It involves being intuitive and perceptive. It also requires superb listening and communication skills.

Call me at 973-492-1681 for information on how EQ assessment and education can work for your sales force.

*Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence; why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books, New York 1995. ISBN # 0-553-37506-7

** *Sales and Marketing Magazine*, Born to Sell July, 2003 Julia Chang, pages 35-38

***Mitch Anthony, *Selling With Emotional Intelligence*; Kaplan Publishing. April 2003, ISBN# 0793161282

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