

The Sales Soft Skills Required to Build Effective Sales Teams

Imagine the person on your team you wish you could clone: the best salesperson on your team.

What makes that salesperson so valuable to you?

What makes them so good?

Why do they always close big deals?

You have a supportive, communicative relationship with them and their customers, so are they a pleasure to work with?

Month after month, your top performers will be the ones with soft sales skills such as reading people and solving their problems.

What are Soft Sales Skills?

In sales, soft skills refer to the ability to cultivate relationships, promote productive communication, and deliver excellent customer service.

The great thing about soft skills is that there are no hard-and-fast rules about how they should be developed, and oftentimes, they are not taught in formal training sessions. So how can you develop soft skills in your team? Keep reading to find out.

Why Soft Skills Matter in Sales

Sales can be impacted by soft skills just as much as by hard skills. In many cases, even more so.

A salesperson who is liked and trusted is more likely to convert prospects into buyers. Therefore, you want your sales reps to build relationships with your prospects by making it enjoyable for them to talk to them. An expert salesperson who can sell anything to anybody has incredible soft skills sales training: they manage their relationships well, follow up when needed, and are a pleasure to work with.

Good soft skills go beyond meeting sales targets.

People with strong soft skills make workdays more enjoyable for their colleagues, and they are excellent ambassadors for their teams and companies. They also make their sales manager's life easier, and that's certainly something to strive for!

What are the Best Soft Skills for a Sales Team?

Companies are investing in training to develop top soft skills for their sales teams due to the benefits of doing so. In [a recent study](#), for instance, sales representatives who received just one hour per month of training increased their personal sales revenue by 6%.

Which soft selling skills should you focus on when training and developing your sales team? Here are some ideas.

Customer Relationships

Selling with emotional intelligence

The actual journeys of both buyers and sellers are ultimately driven by sales triggers that appeal to their emotions, but we tend to think that decisions are solely driven by logic.

There is an entire field of study devoted to how emotions, psychology, and culture impact economic decisions, known as Behavioral Economics. The buying experience remains an emotional one for both the buyer and seller. A salesperson's chances of making a sale are better if she understands the emotions invested in a sales interaction.

Active Listening and Empathy as Sales Tools

Engaging in active listening is the best way to understand where your clients are coming from, what their challenges are, and how you can effectively solve those challenges. Listening skills may hinder parts of the sales process, such as qualifying prospects and finding the right solution for customers.

Salespeople need empathy to succeed. By empathizing with their customers, sales staff can understand their pain points and share their feelings. Your sales team will be better positioned to assist your customers or prospects once they understand where they come from. Knowing where prospects come from will prevent frustration and conflict.

Confidence in Sales Decisions

When it comes to sales soft skills, decisiveness ranks right up there with active listening. This customers' problem has been identified by your sales rep. They must now confidently and decisively present the right solution or service to close the deal. The ability to act decisively in the moment makes all the difference between a final sale or a lost prospect.

Leadership skills development and negotiation skills training go hand in hand with practicing decisiveness. It is not surprising that salespeople replicate this lack of decisiveness in their

approach to selling, when nearly 60% of organizations lack a structured and standardized sales training process.

If management is willing to lead with effective sales soft skills training, your sales team can beat the competition.

Developing Relationships

A salesperson's workflow will often require them to engage other people positively, build long-term relationships, and form mutually beneficial relationships. The ability to build relationships enables a salesperson to accomplish tasks more easily and make better-informed decisions, from gathering referrals to soliciting advice and achieving team objectives. Trust, rapport, and the genuine desire to help other people are essential to building relationships.

The Importance of Storytelling in Sales

The goal of selling is not only to show the benefits of your product but also to convince customers that these benefits will solve their problems or benefit them in some way. Telling a story that resonates deeply with your target audience is the most effective way to convey your message.

Effective Team Collaboration

Team members are assigned roles and required to meet specific outcomes following a sales game plan. These roles and outcomes are largely dependent on one another to be successful. Sales professionals must be able to align their personal goals, workflows, and schedules with others.

Integrating Soft and Hard Sales Skills

Research and Knowledge

With accurate information about clients, markets, competitors, and other business intelligence, salespeople can make better decisions, engage customers more effectively, and close high-value deals while reducing the sales cycle. Research can be done using your CRM, competitive analysis tools, competitor websites, and social media.

Time Management

Selling involves money, but time is also exchanged and utilized along the way. Your client's time is valuable. Yours is as well. The ability of a salesperson to manage time effectively leads to increased productivity and cost-efficiency, thereby improving performance. In combination with automation, analytics, and other technologies, this soft skill generates considerable ROI for businesses.

Problem-solving and Critical Thinking

Having a tremendous amount of data is not enough for you to succeed. Critical thinking is still necessary to process information, analyze disparate data, and discern relevant information that will help you come up with answers to challenges your prospects or your team face.

Additionally, your salespeople need to be able to problem-solve on the fly. This is something that can be practiced through role-play and reflection.

How to Teach Soft Skills to Sales Reps

Regular practice and time are required to develop soft skills. Here are five techniques to help employees learn them.

Hire Based on Attributes

Candidates should be eager to learn more than just practical skills. Hire people who are good communicators and emotionally intelligent.

Is your potential hire self-motivated and eager to expand their knowledge base? What experience do they have in solving problems in new situations?

Hire employees who are excited about the goals you have for the company. Almost anything else can be taught later.

Conduct a training needs assessment

No matter the skill, every good learning opportunity begins with a training needs assessment.

Assess the training needs of your employees by asking them to set their own goals. Is it difficult for them to manage large projects? How do they deal with challenging suppliers, customers, or colleagues? What are their career goals?

Getting employees involved makes the training more meaningful to them.

Set Up a Learning Management System (LMS)

A good LMS is critical to your business. It helps your employees learn and track their progress. You can track each employee's progress toward their individual goals, as well as their licenses and certifications.

Invest in Learning Platforms

Your employees will be more likely to buy in and retain knowledge with eLearning. You can engage salespeople with a variety of online learning tools if you are trying to get them the soft skills training for sales teams that pay for themselves.

Practice, Reflection, And Enhancement Opportunities

Provide ample opportunity for practice and application, as well as time for reflection and refinement. Set an example by exhibiting emotional intelligence as a manager and encourage your team members to do the same. The best sales manager soft skills are the ones that can be modeled to your team.

Fostering Success with Soft Sales Skills

Clients, prospects, colleagues, and you as a sales manager can benefit from soft skills.

Having salespeople who are good listeners and eager to solve problems will be appreciated by clients and colleagues alike. A salesperson who manages relationships well, and is pleasant to deal with is the best.

People with strong soft skills make workdays more enjoyable for their colleagues, and they are excellent ambassadors for their teams and companies. Developing soft skills for sales professionals is essential for any company.