

CAREER MIND

NEWSLETTER

3 SALES SKILLS FOR JOB CANDIDATES

THE ULTIMATE SALESPERSON

The most successful salesperson on the planet is... the baby. It's a master at charisma, rapport virtuoso.

With its chunky cheeks, plump limbs, bright eyes and a voice that sounds the same no matter the background, it's designed to persuade adults to take care of it.

It smiles, cries, laughs and gestures instinctually understanding its target audience is grown people so it can have them do the baby's bidding.

SALES, STAY AWAY!

"Sales" is that triggering word eliciting images of sneaky behavior, underhanded trickery trying to get something from someone. With this lens, if you're trying to sell it has to involve connivance or inauthenticity. There's a negative end-game requiring manipulative influence.

Machiavelli cannot escape the association. Tough luck for "[The Prince](#)" author.

But think about it: every transaction you enter into is a result of a sale.

Favorite dessert? Well you were sold it because you chose to exchange currency for the product.

The car you enjoy is the result of a sale.

Name your streaming service; that's a sale too.

Of the many schools you could've attended, you made a choice. That was a sale.

If you're of the bartering type and want to say "screw the system," you'd still have to trade one resource to obtain another. That transaction is a sale. When you take this basic process away, you end up with no alternative for people with different interests to deal reasonably with each other.

And the universe doesn't do voids; when there's a vacancy, something will fill its place (reason why you can't just remove a thought habit; you have to ~~replace one thought pattern with another~~). What fills the void when people don't agree to a transaction? Theft and pillaging.

In a mutual transaction, all involved parties need a reason to participate.

Communication about what's being offered. Appealing to what the other side may be interested in. Recognizing if a solution can be offered. Connecting with the right audience who may be interested in what's being offered.

For job candidates, sales is one of the most potent skills to develop. It helps you build networks and accurately communicate a message to the ears seeking to hear it. I've seen candidates create opportunities where none seemed to exist because they knew how to overcome doubts and present strengths to the right people at the right time.

Here I'll break down 3 sales skills you can build and put to immediate use.



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NEWSLETTER

1. PROSPECTING [PERSISTENCE]

Recruiters, salespeople and business developers all do prospecting.

To have business, they need people to do business with, to serve.

As a job candidate, you need jobs and companies who have jobs. You need contacts to meet, people to talk to. Not everyone you talk with will result in a yes or progress.

Consequently, rejections are part of prospecting. By checking to see if there's interest in your offer (your skills and experience), there's no 100% guarantee at this stage it'll work out. By improving how you present your offering, you can increase the probability.

So you need persistence, strength to continue moving along.

Five rejections and you keep going.

Recruiters tell you that it's not the right time, not the right fit, the role recently closed, you keep going.

You realize the opportunity is not for you and end the communication. You keep going.

Meetings taking too long to set up, you keep going.

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In the prospecting phase you're testing the waters, seeing what's possible.

A "prospect" for the job candidate could be a recruiter, peer, talent acquisition specialist, a manager. When you're unable to access these titles, go for anyone at the company. All you're looking for is a suitable contact to move you from point A to B.

Abundant prospecting nullifies the scarcity mindset.

What you do: Build a pipeline of potential contacts and opportunities. It's a planning skill.
How do you start?

It begins with you. Make a list, decide on your goal with numbers.

How many contacts? How many jobs? How many companies? Knowing the roles you want, the companies that interest you, the kind of work you want to do, the values you care about, the organizational culture that speaks to you.

Just as a business needs to know its target customer, you need to discover your target companies and roles. The clearer your vision with this, the more accurate your prospecting becomes.

2. PROBLEM-SOLVING [VALUE-CREATION]

In an environment where social media inflates egos, it's interesting to me that discussing the practicalities of how we contribute meaningful value may seem like bragging.

There's a general discomfort with saying to someone at the professional table, "I am good at this. This is what I accomplished," while the list of what we're not good at is readily owned, laundry lists worth of weaknesses. A result of early [education](#).

A strong sales skill will help you to realize that opportunities are attracted to problem-solvers who confidently present their assets.

When you exaggerate an experience, that's bragging. When you talk about the truth of your contributions, it's delivering facts.

The greater the problems you can solve the greater your opportunities. From this view evolves a sales mentality that will eagerly seek out problems because they're gateways to create value.

As a job candidate, your complete portfolio ought to be directed towards illustrating your enthusiasm, comfort with and desire to solve problems using skills you want your prospects to understand you possess.

What you do: Review everything you put forth in front of prospects, from the resume to website to videos to blog posts and ask yourself, "What skills am I presenting to my prospects? What problems am I showing I solved with those skills? Can I speak to those problems and skills if asked?"

Take a basic sales lesson. Many online sources for this.



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3. KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE [AND KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT]

Your skills and experiences aren't going to speak to everyone.

A business's product or service isn't expected to appeal to everyone. A company trying to be everything to everyone ends up resource depleted, potentially missing out on serving the actual market that resonates more.

Salespeople who don't know their targets also waste effort trying to appeal to everyone so they develop the skill to identify their ideal clients. Through prospecting, they learn about who would most likely benefit from what they have to offer and create a profile around that archetype.

When a recruiter uses a platform like LinkedIn for example, they have access to numerous filters in their tailored interface.

The filters by design are meant to help narrow down candidates from the millions to find a professional like you. They find you when you have the appropriate profile (with skills and experiences speaking to their problems needing solutions) that's attractive enough to evoke conversation interest.

If you're trying to appeal to everyone in your job search you're not focused enough.

It's an inverse relationship; the better you know yourself the better you know what you want in an opportunity. The more indecisive you are about knowing yourself the more indecisive you may be about where you commit energy. Your clarity or indecision influences how recruiters identify you, especially digitally.

What you do: Understand that **FOMO** can eradicate your focus. Invest time to recognize the kind of work culture, industries, company sizes, job titles you want. Then hone the first two skills discussed here to concentrate on those.

To Your Success. Be Well.

Trent Rhodes is an autodidact, career development leader, polymath writer & educator. With a passion for martial arts, tea and tech, he's an avid reader and writes on topics bridging futuristic career education and self-directed learning. Discover more of his work on his blog, [Crown of Mind](#) and [MasterLearn](#).

