

## Sales Benchmark Research

By Mike Stewart, CSP



**Salespeople are different** from most other employees, which is something many of us have recognized for a long time. This was confirmed by a recent job trends Research Study conducted by Target Training International, of Scottsdale, AZ. This study illustrates just how different salespeople have to be from other employees in order to be successful.

**This extensive Research Study** included data from a total of 2,471 subject matter experts covering 353 benchmarks for 21 jobs. These jobs included financial, engineering, legal, customer contact, sales and executive positions, among others.

**Three skills stood out** when considering all jobs in the research. Self management was a requirement in 96% of the jobs tested, and was the number one skill required over 50% of the time. Results Orientation was in second place, being required in 94% of the jobs tested. According to the research, Personal Accountability was third and was required in 76% of the jobs studied.

**I was surprised** that, according to the research, the results for salespeople didn't list these three skills as the top three. Surely, I thought, Self Management, Results Orientation, and Personal Accountability are desirable skills in salespeople. Two of these are indeed included as desirable skills for salespeople, but they aren't listed at the top.

**The top three skills for salespeople**, according to this benchmark study are: Self-Starting, Resiliency, and Self Management. Results Orientation came in fourth, but Personal Accountability didn't even make the cut!

**I don't like that!** I just don't buy the idea that personal accountability isn't on the list. However, in looking at the top two skills listed...

**These results make a kind of sense.** When you think about salespeople's performance requirements, especially compared to people in other positions in a company, salespeople must be much stronger Self-Starters and much more Resilient if they are to be successful.

**Self-Starting means** getting up, getting out and getting going,

on your own without depending on anyone else to get you moving. If they are facing a bad day, salespeople, unlike many other employees, don't have the luxury of huddling up in a safe office and losing themselves in a pile of paper spending their day chatting with their fellow employees about how tough things are.

***We recruited players who were intrinsically motivated. We weren't interested in guys we had to build a fire under.***

– Marv Levy, NFL Hall of Fame Coach

**The world of sales requires resilience.** Sales is a world of changing priorities and potential rejection at every turn. The ability to roll with the punches and bounce back when you get knocked down is fundamental to success in sales. That is resiliency. Without it, burnout and loss of motivation is almost certain, which will inexorably lead to poor performance, and possibly failure.

***Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever.***

– Lance Armstrong

***Stop thinking about the problems,  
Start thinking about the possibilities, and  
Make something happen!***

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