



# The Sales Competency Model

HayGroup®



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This booklet will provide you with a detailed description of the Sales Competency Model.

## What Is a Competency?

A competency is a measurable characteristic of a person that is related to effective performance in a job, organization, or culture.

These characteristics are defined through empirical research. At the Hay Group, we develop competencies through a process of observing and interviewing outstanding performers in a wide variety of jobs and roles to determine what sets these outstanding employees apart from everyone else. These characteristics are defined in terms of behaviors—those thoughts and actions that characterize outstanding performers. Because competencies are behavioral, they can be developed.

## Where Did These Competencies Come From?

McBer and Company (now part of the Hay Group) carried out the first competency study in 1973. Since that time our researchers have conducted thousands of competency studies on hundreds of jobs, worldwide. The studies that form the basis of our competency database are grounded in solid empirical research.

This Sales Model was derived by an in-depth analysis of this database of competencies—in particular those of outstanding sales representatives. In creating this model we sought to include those competencies that are most critical in defining excellence in a wide variety of sales roles.

The Hay Group is committed to keeping its competency models fresh and current. We update all our models whenever job and role conditions require.

## Today's Sales Jobs

As the world of business has changed from one in which tangible commodities or products are sold, to one in which bundles of sophisticated products and services (service agreements, partnering arrangements just to name two) are sold, so the world of sales has changed. The sales process is now increasingly a relationship-driven process. The fact that the sales proposition is often complex, particularly in terms of its financial components, means that the sales cycle often takes considerable time from first meeting to final decision and implementation.

This means that the job of sales is complex, and becoming more complex all the time. The outstanding salesperson must—

- Be confident in him- or herself in an ever-changing sales environment
- Create new sales opportunities and leverage them for success
- Take the time to build lasting customer and industry relationships

## The Competency Clusters

The Sales Competencies reflect the challenges that the modern salesperson faces. This model contains 11 competencies organized in three clusters. The three clusters are—

- Managing Yourself
- Managing the Sales Process
- Managing the Customer Relationship

## Competency Levels

Each competency is defined in terms of four behavior levels. Level 1 is the most basic level of performance, and Level 4 the most sophisticated. For each competency Level 3 is defined as the *target level*. Level 3 behaviors typically define excellence in sales managers' jobs.

## Sales Factors That Impact the Need for Competencies

These key factors differentiate sales environments from each other:

- *The complexity of the products and services sold by the sales force.* The more complex the sales offerings, the more information sales personnel need in order for them to serve as educators and trusted advisors to their customers. They also may need to network internally to ensure organizational alignment to meet their customer needs.
- *The complexity of the target-customer organizations and the length of the sales cycle.* The more complex the customer, the greater the difficulty in identifying the decision-making network and exerting influence effectively within that organization. The longer the sales cycle, the greater the need to nurture, nudge, and influence the process and people over time.

The resulting implications: Different combinations of competencies will take on added importance in different types of sales environments or situations, and higher levels of competency behaviors may be required to ensure outstanding performance in sales. (Level 3 may not always be the right level for each sales person.)

## Sales Competency Model



### Managing Yourself

- Self-Control
- Self-Confidence
- Resilience

### Managing the Sales Process

- Results Orientation
- Initiative
- Information Seeking
- Problem Solving

### Managing the Customer Relationship

- Empathy
- Networking
- Influencing Others
- Customer Service Orientation

## The Competencies

### *Managing Yourself*

**Self-Control.** Recognizes and manages one's emotions and strong feelings under stress or when provoked

- Holds back
- Responds calmly
- Responds constructively
- Calms others

**Self-Confidence.** Possesses confidence in one's ability to meet challenges and make the right decisions

- Acts independently
- Has confidence in own ability
- Takes on challenges
- Says no

**Resilience.** Deals positively with adversity

- Handles rejection
- Learns from mistakes
- Is resilient
- Maintains optimism

### *Managing the Sales Process*

**Results Orientation.** Focuses on improving performance, meeting goals, and producing results

- Tracks sales performance
- Finds ways to improve sales approach
- Sets measurable, challenging goals
- Focuses on profitable opportunities

**Initiative.** Sees opportunities and acts on them

- Takes action
- Acts decisively
- Acts on sales opportunities
- Takes a long-term approach to sales

**Information Seeking.** Gathers facts, ideas, and opinions needed for analyzing situations, solving problems, or making decisions

- Asks questions
- Calls on contacts
- Collects relevant information
- Uses systems to keep current

**Problem Solving.** Identifies problems and tests alternative solutions to achieve the best outcome

- Objectively identifies problems
- Recognizes patterns
- Analyzes and tests alternatives
- Creates solutions

### ***Managing the Customer Relationship***

Empathy. Recognizes and responds to others' feelings and concerns

- Recognizes others' emotions
- Understands people's feelings
- Understands what people mean
- Understands underlying reasons for behavior

**Networking.** Develops contacts and relationships to facilitate getting work done and to expand one's opportunities

- Builds rapport
- Establishes contacts
- Uses contacts
- Maintains an extensive network

**Influencing Others.** Persuades, convinces, or influences others to change their viewpoint or accept a desired course of action

- Uses direct persuasion
- Uses several methods of direct persuasion
- Calculates impact of actions or words
- Uses complex influence strategies

**Customer Service Orientation.** Understands customers' needs and responds promptly and appropriately; is seen as a valued partner

- Provides prompt service
- Demonstrates commitment to the customer
- Is a trusted advisor
- Acts as customers' advocate within the company

For more information contact:

Professional Learning Systems - 513.772.5115  
<http://www.professional-learning.com>

**Hay Resources Direct™**

116 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02116  
800-729-8074 617-927-5001 Fax: 617-927-5008  
[www.hayresourcesdirect.haygroup.com](http://www.hayresourcesdirect.haygroup.com)