

Sales people who engage in consultative selling win business by consulting with customers in order to understand their true needs and provide solutions that effectively address those needs. In order to do so, they establish and then strengthen working relationships based on mutual trust and shared accountability, which allows them to question their clients and uncover root causes of stated issues. Through this process, Consultative Sellers provide compelling proposals, allowing them to close sales that turn into repeat business.

### Example positions

Consultative Selling is about how the sale occurs rather than about what is being sold or whether the target is a current customer or a prospect. This model may apply to many different sales job titles.

## COMPETENCIES

**Active Listening** – Consultative salespeople enhance mutual understanding in communicating with others by expressing genuine interest in, and providing full attention to, the content and meaning of others' messages.

**Relationship Building** – They develop effective long-term professional interactions with others based on trust: trust that they will always work toward the best interest of those involved and that they are sufficiently competent to provide positive results.

**Influence and Persuasion** – Consultative salespeople are effective in persuading, convincing, influencing, or impressing others in order to get them to support a specific agenda, make a specific type of impression, or take a specific course of action.

**Interpersonal Sensitivity** – They relate effectively to other people, sense the impact of their own behavior upon others, and modify their approach in order to achieve productive outcomes.

**Accountability** – They take responsibility for their own performance and accept full ownership of issues, problems, and opportunities, regardless of the source.

**Information Seeking** – Consultative salespeople are driven by an underlying curiosity and desire to know more about things, people, or issues. This involves going beyond routine questions and includes digging or pressing for exact information; resolving discrepancies by asking a series of questions; or conducting less-focused environmental scanning for opportunities or miscellaneous information that may be used in the future.

**Service Focus** – They place emphasis on creating customer loyalty by continually enhancing the customer experience. They show the capacity to identify and understand the needs of customers, manage expectations, and give priority to meeting and exceeding those needs.

**Composure and Resiliency** – They are able to deal effectively with pressure, maintain focus and intensity, and remain optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. They have the ability and propensity to recover quickly from setbacks, rejections, and conflicts and to maintain self-control in the face of hostility or provocation.

**Negotiating** – They identify key bargaining points for all parties and work effectively toward win-win solutions.

### Representative behaviors

- Reflects back what is said to check understanding
- Positions self and company as a strategic business partner
- Persuasively sells ideas to gain support and buy-in
- Adapts communication style to meet the needs of others
- Stays on top of open issues and opportunities in order to drive them to closure
- Gathers all information needed to make informed recommendations
- Works to understand situations from the customer's perspective
- Copes with rejection
- Collects, analyzes, and organizes relevant information to support selected approach



