

WHY SALES IS A GREAT CAREER FOR GRADUATES

WHAT TYPE OF ROLES COULD YOU GO INTO IN SALES?

There are more jobs which fall under the blanket term 'sales' than you might think, and this is an incredible diverse and rewarding sector to work in. Here are just a few sales jobs you might not have considered, and a few good reasons to choose them for your career.



RECRUITMENT

Recruitment agencies help to match suitable candidates to roles, which means you'd be working with both candidates and various clients. Some recruitment agencies will be very specialised, perhaps working in fields such as the media or the law whereas some are general. Some are focused on entry-levels and some work with more senior roles. As a recruitment consultant you'll need to be able to build and maintain good working relationships, have great communication skills and be confident in a customer-facing role.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Companies in virtually every industry will need account managers. These are the people responsible for overseeing their company's dealings with a particular customer or client, managing their sales and relationship with them. There's a great deal of responsibility which comes with an account management job. There's big money at stake when one company trades with another, so to succeed in this role you'll need to be good with people and be an ace when it comes to networking.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In simple terms, business development means improving how an organisation works in order to generate the maximum revenue possible from its customers. This is an advanced area of sales which requires and in-depth knowledge of a company's workings, in order to build strategic partnerships with customers and other companies. You'll need a good head for business and some great communication skills if you want a successful career in this field, but the rewards and job satisfaction can be great.

FIELD SALES

If you want to get away from the desk then you might enjoy a career as a field sales representative. Many field sales reps will be going out to sell face to face with customers and clients, generating leads, negotiating and getting their company's products or services known as widely as possible. This job requires a great deal of confidence as you're on the front line of selling, so good communication and people skills are key.



THE BENEFITS OF A CAREER IN SALES

When it comes to starting a career, many graduates overlook sales, despite it being a high-earning career with many of the perks that they're looking for. The sector allows for career progression and competitive salaries for those who climb the ranks.

Here are a handful of reasons you might like to consider making the move into sales:



GREAT SALARIES AND BONUSES

- You can earn a very pretty penny with a job in sales, and that's before you add on all the bonuses and commissions that are up for grabs.
- Companies live and die by the amount they can sell, and they often reward their top sellers in order to keep them incentivised.
- When it comes to a job in sales, the more you can sell, the more you can earn.



HIGH DEMAND

- Just about every business is selling something, whether it's a tangible product or a service, so they always want people who can schmooze the customers.
- Sales skills are transferable. Being able to list your selling skills and experience on your CV will make you a more attractive candidate.



SALES BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

- Regardless of whether you're naturally outgoing, talking to potential clients and customers will force you to step outside your comfort zone, and that will boost your confidence.
- Employers like to see candidates who have the power of persuasion, so showing that you can sell proves you're confident and personable.



YOU GET TO MEET LOTS OF PEOPLE

- When you work in sales, you get to meet people from all walks of life.
- If you're sociable then sales is an ideal job for you, with lots of opportunities to network and make useful contacts.



IT'S REWARDING

- In a sales role, you're the face and voice of your company.
- There's real satisfaction to be gained by watching the sales figures rolling in, and many organisations will offer rewards and incentives to the person who can clock up the most sales.



YOU LEARN

- An important skill in sales is knowing the service/ product you are selling and learning about the industry.



IT'S FAST-PACED

- Working in sales requires making decisions, negotiating and acting quickly to keep people interested in the proposition.



EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT

- You'll likely be working with new clients and customers every day, making every day in sales very different.



MARTIN STENBERG, HEAD OF SALES

In January 2017, I took a position of Head of Sales at Mentimeter, with the ambition to build a world-class sales team and we were named Sweden's fastest growing startup in the spring of 2018. I've seen Mentimeter grow from 10 to over 25 million current users with customers in 100 countries.

I have always found sales to be a rewarding and fun line of work, since I can use my creativity and curiosity to help other people to solve their business challenges. You need a split brain of thinking and the ability to take action and make decision at fast pace.

With my background now in several different types of sales roles for different organisations, no two jobs are the same and the nature of the profession means that you have the opportunity to meet people in many different sectors and countries. Ultimately gaining this wide range of experience enables you to learn more about what types of roles and industries you prefer which helps you to move your career into the direction you are the most interested in.

No two days in sales are the same so it is rarely monotonous! The nature of the job also means that you meet a wide range of people and you get to build strong, lasting connections and networks, which can be really rewarding.

Working in sales can also bring a great deal of satisfaction. Since you have to earn someone else's trust and help people to solve their problems. When I close a deal, I feel that I've earned that other person's trust and that their problem will be solved. These are great transferable skills any direction your career will be heading.



LEE DOBSON: FROM SALES TO COO

If you were to ask me what I wanted to do with my career when I left education, then you would have been faced with a shrug of the shoulders.

A rule I've always lived by is to never say no to new opportunities, so when I saw that Bulldog Digital Media were looking for a Sales Executive back in 2013, I bit the bullet and applied. 21-year-old me had very little sales experience (apart from customer service at my part-time job), and I was certain that it meant being on the phones 24/7 trying to pitch something I knew nothing about. I couldn't have been more wrong! I went in with an open mind. I soon learnt that working in sales provides you with an excellent chance to make great money, grow your skills, gain confidence and meet amazing people.

Fast forward to now and I am COO of the company, which is a job title I never thought I'd achieve at the age of 25. This wouldn't have been made possible if I rejected a job opportunity purely because I turned my nose up at the idea of sales.

The weird thing is, a lot of people have the misconception that you can only go in to sales if you're a loud person that can 'sell any object in the room'. Truth is, if you're passionate about what you're selling, then you're going to be a better sales person because of it.

I can't stress enough how grateful I am for going in to sales, and I certainly would not be COO of an extremely successful digital marketing agency if I opted against it.

TOP CEOS WHO STARTED IN SALES

Some of the best CEOs in the world started their careers in sales, walking the shop floor and pitching wares to customers. Here are four inspirational company leaders who started out in sales and went on to head some of the most successful companies in the world.

WARREN BUFFETT



Warren Buffett was named the third wealthiest individual in the world in 2018, and is held up as one of the savviest investors and company leaders. Born in 1930, Buffett started out as a salesman for Buffett-Falk & Co. before slowly building up his fortune with some clever investments and buy-ins. He's also co-founded The Giving Pledge with fellow billionaires Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates, promising to give away at least half of his substantial fortune.

JENNY EU

Jenny set up Three Trees to promote clean eating, plant based, nourishing and delicious food. She started by making nut milks in 2013 and selling them on a small scale at a local farmers market. She even bought a second-hand van and delivered milk out of coolers at the back. Today, over 400 stores stock her milks, including several Whole Foods Market locations.



HOWARD SCHULTZ



Another Xerox prodigy was Howard Schultz, who like Anne Mulcahy began his working life as a salesman for the company. He then sold appliances for Hammarplast, where he was canny enough to notice that they were selling large numbers of coffee machines to a little store in Seattle by the name of Starbucks Coffee, Tea and Spice Company. He climbed on board and eventually bought the company outright in 1987, helping it become one of the most successful chains in the world.

MARISSA MAYER

IT executive Marissa Mayer led Yahoo! for a number of years, but she started her career as a humble checkout worker in her local grocery store. She took a summer job there as a sixteen-year-old, and credits the experience with teaching her a strong work ethic and the need for speed, scanning up to forty items a minute on the express tills. She is now one of the most prominent and successful female CEOs and regularly features in the Fortune's annual 50 Most Powerful Women in Business lists.





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