



Five Necessary Traits for an Awesome Inside Sales Associate

Inside sales still refers to phone communication, even though it now includes written communication, e-mail and social media. The traits necessary to be successful at inside sales are fairly similar, even though the phone has its own challenges. Salespeople lacking proper communication skills may make a terrible impression on a customer or prospect. In my years of recruiting for this role I am often asked to define what makes someone outstanding versus ordinary. I'm going to list my preferences for an outstanding inside sales rep.

- **Sense of Humor** – I put this top of my list for a few reasons. The job, working over the phone, can be thankless and fraught with paths of treachery and ignorance. A sense of humor will see you through this and motivate you and those you engage. The second reason is that your role is to build relationships; by having a sense of humor you will naturally be relaxed and easy to converse at different levels.
- **Patience** – This flies in the face of the Gen Y folks out there who want instant gratification. When you are making/taking phone calls the easiest part is making the call; the hardest parts is all of the preparation before and after you dial that number, press that button or whatever method you use to connect to your customer.
- **Clear Speaking Voice** – I could put all kinds of adjectives around this but I won't, it is obvious to me and should be to you. And for goodness sake, do speak to your potential employee by phone before you hire them! I am still finding major organizations that have sophisticated systems for hiring, technology and tiers of HR people but no one talks to that person on the phone. Not everyone can or does have that voice. Even if someone has an accent, if he or she can be understood easily it does not matter.
- **Flexibility** – I mean all kinds of flexibility. I could say versatility. I could say multi-tasker, I could even say all-around willing person. But flexibility is my word of choice because it sums up it everything: flexibility in how you approach your work, because it will vary as customer and business needs change; flexibility in how you talk to prospects or customers and flexibility in how you deal with the daily grind of your job. It isn't easy; no one ever said it is, so you must be flexible.



- **Empathy** – I am not saying that you must always put yourself in the other person's shoes, but you should be able to build relationships with every type of individual. If you are empathetic to a customer's needs and challenges in their day, week or life then you will build those relationships with the right frame of reference.

Inside sales reps understand the customer's business needs and can provide solutions that add value. Outstanding sales reps engage a customer or prospect. Soft skills can be trained and processes are taught, but inside sales reps without these five traits lack the qualities integral to sales success.



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Kathy Pabst Robshaw is the principal of [Telephone Effectiveness Company](http://www.telephoneeffectiveness.com) (TEC), a provider of effective and planned communications which have been proven to radically improve performance and build world class organizations. Her broad background in [lead generation](#), dynamic personality and diverse skill set make her a trusted advisor able to incorporate her communications concepts in some of the most challenging business environments. Contact us to get strategies and processes that will get you desired results from your customers.

<http://www.telephoneeffectiveness.com>

727.421.8818

kathy@telephoneeffectiveness.com

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