

Building Emotional Intelligence for Sales: Top Tips

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Emotional intelligence is one of the most crucial skills any sales professional can have.

Successful salespeople don't just need to be excellent at communicating and sharing the benefits of products and services with prospects. They need to be able to empathize with customer pain points, handle complex and stressful situations, and build rapport with clients.

Developing relationships with prospects, and converting them into loyal customers requires an excellent ability to understand your customer's emotions, and manage your own feelings.

Improved emotional intelligence is what separates the highest performing sales professionals from the laggards in their field. So, how do you build emotional intelligence?

What is Salesperson Emotional Intelligence?

On a broad level, emotional intelligence, otherwise known as 'EI' or 'EQ', is the ability to effectively perceive, control, interpret, evaluate, and use emotions to communicate with, and relate to other people. It's crucial in virtually every professional landscape, with many experts suggesting [High EQs](#) are even more important than a high IQ.

EQ in sales describes a professional's ability to sense, understand, and apply their own emotions when interacting with buyers. It also covers the ability a professional has to understand and respond to a customer's emotional state.??

Emotional intelligence consists of a number of skills and components, such as:

- **Self-awareness:** People who are self-aware have a greater ability to control their emotions and acknowledge how their feelings affect their behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses.
- **Emotional control:** Being able to self-manage emotions during the sales process is crucial. It requires strong communication and time management skills, and resistance to stress.
- **Empathy:** Effective salespeople need to be aware not just of their own emotional needs, but the emotions their customers feel, so they can relate to their prospects.
- **Social skills:** Social skills, such as the ability to communicate clearly, ask questions to discover a customer pain point, and build rapport are essential in emotional intelligence.
- **Relationship building:** People with high levels of emotional intelligence use actions and words to create productive and valuable relationships with others.

Is EQ Important in Sales?

Sales professionals need a lot of skills to be effective in their roles. While there are many technical skills and soft skills involved in the sales landscape, EQ is one of the most valuable of all. Sales is a job that requires sales reps to be able to break down barriers with strangers.??

Emotional intelligence, social awareness, and empathy are the factors that help professionals to start building rapport with customers. According to some studies, sales reps who increased their emotional intelligence by 18% improved their sales revenues by [around 12%](#).

In the sales landscape, developing emotional intelligence helps reps to:

- **Overcome objections:** Empathizing with customers about their concerns and pain points can make it easier to build rapport, and create more effective sales pitches and strategies.
- **Handle rejection:** If you can manage your emotions effectively, you're less likely to be thrown off your game by a rejection. No's are common in sales.
- **Build rapport:** Salespeople with strong emotional intelligence are better at connecting with customers on a deeper level, which can lead to higher customer lifetime values.
- **Improve their personal brand:** Emotionally intelligent and self-aware sales professionals are more likely to come across as trustworthy and reliable.
- **Stay motivated:** Sales professionals with emotional intelligence can overcome the negative emotions that might damage their motivation and productivity levels.

How to Build EQ

Developing emotional intelligence isn't something that happens overnight. While the skills associated with high emotional intelligence can be taught, it takes time for professionals to learn how to recognize and navigate complicated emotions.

Here are some steps to help you increase your EQ.??

1. Cultivate self-awareness

Being more aware of your own emotions and how they influence your behavior can help you to present a better image to the prospects you connect with. Knowing when you're feeling anxious and angry can help you process those feelings, and stop them from damaging your interactions. Self-awareness can also help you to sense positive and negative emotions in others.

1. Be mindful of others

Emotional intelligence often starts with self-reflection. However, it's important to be mindful of how other people around you act to convey their own feelings and emotions. Being mindful of others, and how they respond to specific instances and situations can help you adjust your emotions and actions to ensure you build better relationships.

1. Practice active listening

To understand how others feel, and pick up on customers' emotions, you need to be prepared to listen carefully. People communicate through both verbal and non-verbal messages. It's important to both listen and watch for positive and negative reactions during a conversation. Show you're actively listening to people and collect more information by asking questions, or repeating what they say.

1. Communicate clearly

Excellent communication skills are a core component of good emotional intelligence. You should know how to adapt your language and messaging to the needs of your target audience. Mimic the speech of others, and explain yourself clearly when things are confusing. Learn how to communicate on the mediums your clients and colleagues use, from social media to email.

1. Preserve positivity

Excellent emotional intelligence doesn't require you to ignore negative emotions. However, you should be able to overcome them, with a focus on positivity. Stay positive in stressful situations by focusing on the good. Think about how you can restructure your thought process with a more optimistic view. For instance, rather than saying 'I've missed out on that sale', say 'I didn't get that sale, but I know what to do differently next time.'

1. Empathize

As mentioned above, empathy is critical to salesperson emotional intelligence. You need to be able to put yourself in the shoes of the people you're talking to, so you can understand their concerns and worries. Try to imagine what you would feel like in another person's position. Show empathy by sharing stories relevant to a situation, and saying things like 'I see what you mean'.

1. Listen to feedback

Part of being self-aware and emotionally intelligent is being able to positively respond to feedback. It's easy to try and block out negative feedback as a sales professional. But feedback can help you to improve your skills and achieve more of your goals. Being open to feedback means you can take responsibility for your actions, and constantly improve your outcomes.

Improve Your Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence isn't just a buzzword in the business world. It's a crucial part of ensuring you can thrive as a successful salesperson. Your ability to understand your own emotions, and connect with the feelings of your prospects will make you a more valuable member of any sales team.

The more you cultivate your emotional intelligence, the more effective you'll become at overcoming objectives, building rapport, and managing your own stress levels.

Learn more about emotional intelligence and the other soft skills that can help you to thrive as a sales professional today. At the [Hard Skill Exchange](#), you can discover how to cultivate your emotional intelligence, and use your EQ skills in a range of sales scenarios.??

HSE Team