

Creating Your Sales Career Path: Starting the Journey

October 16, 2023

Choosing the right sales career path can be trickier than it seems. After all, sales is a versatile landscape. Depending on your skills and interests, you might pursue a role in a particular industry, like tech sales, or account management for healthcare companies.

You could choose to explore the world of field sales if you like the idea of travelling, or you might focus helping your colleagues as a sales enablement professional. The number of available jobs in the sales industry, along with endless opportunities for progression, makes this space highly appealing to a wide range of professionals.

The question is, how do you decide what your sales career path should look like?

Introducing the Sales Career Path

There's no single 'sales career path' that's applicable to every sales professional. Sales spans virtually every industry and every business. Enterprise companies need salespeople just as much as smaller brands. Plus, there are a variety of responsibilities and roles that encompass different aspects of sales.

You might even decide to eventually use all of the years of experience you've had in sales to move into a different landscape, like [teaching or coaching](#).

The good news is that whether you decide you want to follow a tech sales career path, a sales ops career path, or something else entirely, there are numerous benefits to getting involved in sales. As a sales professional, you don't just get an opportunity to sell various products or services.

You also get benefits like:

- **Being a valuable member of any team:** Sales reps are crucial in any business. When you work as a salesperson, you know you're actively playing a role in the growth of the company you serve. If you're looking for a job that offers a high degree of fulfillment, this could be it.
- **Financial rewards:** Not only is the base salary of sales managers and leaders often extremely high, but you can also earn extra income too. Commissions, bonuses, and other financial awards are common in the sales industry.
- **Skill development:** Salespeople don't just learn technical skills like how to close calls, they also learn soft skills like communication, collaboration, and time management. [Around 89% of employees](#) fail due to lack of soft skills, so developing these talents could be valuable.

- **Flexibility:** Depending on the sales positions you pursue; you might have a lot of control over where and how you work. You might be able to work as a remote account manager, or travel around the world with your sales team.

The Different Levels of a Sales Career Path

Career paths in sales, much like careers in other industries, often span across a few different areas: beginner-level jobs (or entry-level roles), intermediate sales jobs, and executive positions. In most cases, your path through sales will start at the bottom, and your opportunities will expand as you gather more years of experience, and discover new skills.

Entry-Level Sales Positions

Entry-level sales positions are fantastic for a lot of reasons. First, you don't necessarily need any technical knowledge or a specific education to get started. You can dive in and start building your abilities on the job. Depending on your passions and interests, options include:

- **Sales development rep:** SDRs, or Sales Development Reps are highly focused on the initial stage of the sales process, researching prospects, and qualifying leads. They're essential for driving opportunities towards other sales managers and leaders. You'll be able to learn a lot about the sales process as a sales development rep.
- **Outside sales reps:** As an outside or field sales rep, you can work in a diverse environment, travelling to different locations to meet with potential customers face-to-face. If you're excellent at communicating with people and building relationships, you can have a great career as a field rep. You may even have a lot of control over your own schedule.
- **Inside sales reps:** Inside sales reps work within the office, connecting with clients remotely through cold calling, [social selling](#), video conferencing and emailing. If you're looking for a relatively predictable workflow and a straightforward sales role, this could be the option for you. However, you will need to learn how to use various sales tools and technologies.

Mid-Level Sales Positions

After you gain a little experience in your career, you can start to move into different branches with your sales career path. You might stick to your focus on selling, and move into a position with more responsibilities. Or you may choose to look into a career in sales operations.

Some of the top mid-level positions in sales include:

- **Account executive:** A lot of SDRs shift into an account executive role within just a couple of years on the job. These professionals are responsible for identifying and resolving purchasing challenges, negotiating buying terms, and developing value propositions. They're great at building trust and rapport

with customers on a daily basis.

- **Account managers:** An account manager sales role is ideal for people who are great at preserving relationships. These professionals step in once a sales rep makes a sale, to ensure the customer stays happy and loyal. They act as the main point of contact for customers, becoming both a customer service rep and sales agent at the same time.
- **Regional sales manager:** Regional sales managers manage various sales reps inside and outside of the business. They develop goals for team members and sales quotas, manages training opportunities, and provide feedback. In some cases, they may also be responsible for hiring and firing new sales professionals.
- **Sales operations manager:** If you're interested in a sales ops career path, this could be the option for you. Sales operations managers influence the entire sales process, contributing to strategic planning, process development, and sales training. Their focus as sales managers is on aligning the efforts of their teams, and encouraging growth.
- **Sales engineers:** Sales engineers are professionals with a huge level of technical knowledge. They combine their business expertise with tech insights to address product questions, identify the needs of customers, and develop demos. The roles of sales engineer could be a good choice if you're interested in a tech sales career path.

Senior-Level Sales Positions

Some sales professionals stay in a mid-level role forever, while others choose to take their sales career path to the next level, with a more executive role. If you move into a leadership position after gaining a lot of sales experience, you'll generally focus more on high-level objectives and initiatives.

Some of the most common senior level positions include:

- **Sales enablement manager:** If you're following a sales enablement career path, your end goal could be to become a sales enablement manager. Here, you'll facilitate and support the relationships between marketing and sales, implement sales enablement platforms, and work with leadership teams to optimize sales operations.
- **Director of sales:** As a director of sales, you'll work closely with managers to craft sales strategies, maintain revenue, and develop objectives. You'll usually be held accountable for overall sales performance, which can make this role quite stressful. However, you can earn a huge income as a director.
- **VP of sales:** The VP or Vice President of sales is a company's go-to person for identifying areas for strategic growth. They determine hiring needs for a team, look for opportunities to branch into new markets, and manage other directors.
- **Chief Sales Officer:** Chief sales officers are common in large enterprise companies and organizations. They supervise various sales strategies, and look for opportunities for business growth. These professionals act as experts in all things related to sales, and generally have decades of experience behind them.

- **Chief Revenue Officer:** CROs, or Chief Revenue Officers oversee the entire revenue for the company, aligning sales, marketing, operations, and customer success teams. If you're on a tech sales career path and are interested in working with software companies, you might eventually end up in a role like this.

Building Your Sales Career

There's no one right way to build your own sales career path. [Opportunities in sales](#) are constantly evolving, and new roles are emerging all the time. If you're wondering where you should get started on your path towards a lucrative career in sales, the following tips will help:

- **Decide what type of career you want:** Entry-level sales jobs exist in a variety of industries and cover a wide range of responsibilities. It makes sense to choose an industry you're interested in, and think about the kind of work you're going to want to do.
- **Build your network:** Few things are more important to a strong sales career path than the right network. Find opportunities to connect with other salespeople and business owners through social media, online forums, and in-person events.
- **Develop transferrable skills:** Although all sales jobs have their own unique tasks and responsibilities associated with them, most require the same transferrable skills. Learning how to communicate effectively, collaborate with teams, and connect with people will help.
- **Know what you're looking for:** Think about the priorities that matter most to you in the sales world. Do you want more flexibility in your career, or are you looking for a high income? Do you want to lead a team, or just focus on independent work?

Building out your sales career path can be both daunting and exciting. If you're not sure where to get started, join the [Hard Skill Exchange](#) today, for top tips and insights on how to harness your skills as a sales professional, and turbocharge your career.??