

4 Things Mentally Strong Salespeople Do That Average Reps Don't



If you were to name the number-one thing that separates great from average salespeople, what would it be? Their ability to build rapport? The guts and smarts to ask tough and thoughtful questions? The way that they recover from rejection like a duck shaking water off its back? The endless energy and discipline to hustle? Or their mastery of the latest tools and social selling techniques?

Hint: It's probably not what you might think and the answer doesn't lie within your CRM system (though metrics found in your CRM could provide a hint to where to start digging for the source of the problem).

The one quality that separates great performers from average ones is mental toughness.

Read on to learn how mentally strong salespeople think, how it impacts how they sell, and how they actually close deals.

4 Habits of Mentally Strong Salespeople

1) They set real goals regularly.

"I am not willing to settle for what comes along."

Real goals are not fluffy, nice-to-have-but-it's-okay-if-it-doesn't-happen goals. Real goals are measurable.

Instead of thinking, "I need to get better because I know I can be great," great salespeople set goals that sound like this: "I need to increase my closed deal value by 55% by the end of 2017 so that my spouse and I can have an extra \$50,000 to have a baby through IVF in 2018."

Elite salespeople write their goals down, including why the goal is personally meaningful, when they want to achieve it, how it can be quantified, an action plan for achieving it, and shares the goal with others.

A mentally tough salesperson also sets new goals for themselves as soon as they are about to reach previous ones. Complacency is not an option. They are comfortable with ambitious targets and seek new challenges because they know that no matter what happens, it will make them stronger.

Do you feel a little scared? Like maybe it's not possible to achieve your goals?

That's because setting real goals isn't easy. That's why more people don't do it -- their fear of failure holds them back. Mentally tough salespeople don't focus on the possibility of failure. They think, "How will I?" instead of "What if I can't?"

Weaker salespeople don't think having their own personal goals will help them do their jobs better. They are perfectly willing to let their companies set their goals for them in the form of quotas.

And if you think that setting quantifiable financial goals is "beneath" your higher aspirations, the truth is that you might not be self-motivated enough to excel.

2) They practice self-awareness.

"Uh-oh. My heart is racing, my palms are sweaty, and my breathing is ... am I breathing? Okay, breathe in, breathe out..."

Mentally strong salespeople monitor their own thoughts and can separate the negative from the positive. They can tell when they are starting to get overexcited about an opportunity and make themselves relax and take it slow. They are able to recover from rejection quickly because they know it is not about them. They know their value because they are always seeking ways to increase their value to others.

The better we understand ourselves, the better we can understand why it happens. This makes it easier to relate to others. Increased understanding leads to self-control, which is why it's a lot harder to upset a great salesperson than an average one.

The result of this mental toughness is the ability to control emotions. Mentally strong people aren't robots, but having emotions and showing them are two completely different things. Top reps are aware of their own emotions and can stay in control

as a result. They're also better able to clearly see what makes other people emotional, which is the basis of most decisions.

Becoming more self-aware on your own is incredibly difficult. Even with a lot of meditation and self-reflection, outside feedback is necessary. Taking psychometric tests can help, but tests like Myers-Briggs and DiSC aren't sales specific, so you might consider taking a sales-specific assessment.

An easy way to increase your self-awareness is daily journaling. Write down how your current circumstances make you feel and what's frustrating. What patterns start to emerge? Writing things down puts some distance between what you feel and what is real.

3) They nurture a positive attitude.

"Sh^ happens. So now what?"*

Things don't always work out as we had hoped or planned. When obstacles are put in our way, we all face a choice. We can give in to anger and self-pity, or we can accept that this is just something to be dealt with and learned from, so we can move on. This is another reason why it's so important to commit to your goal -- obstacles will arise, and how you deal with them determines how successful you'll be.

Optimism and pessimism are learned styles of thinking. For the most part, things that happen to us when we are young, or things that happen to us recently can impact our outlook. As author Charles Swindoll said, "Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it."

A mentally strong salesperson makes the conscious choice to look above their circumstances and think of things to be grateful for,

rather than let their frustration and anger spin into self-pity. Instead, they instead use that energy to tackle their problems step-by-step.

Nurturing that positive attitude is the fuel that gets a strong salesperson back into the driver's seat when setbacks, rejection, and obstacles happen.

4) They commit to always be learning.

"I wonder why that is, or how that works..."

The toughest minds are the most curious ones. Curiosity is like an insatiable fire that's only fed when you learn something new. Because tough-minded salespeople are not afraid to be wrong, they ask a lot of questions, seek out feedback, and find ways to apply it. They aren't worried that someone will think less of them if they don't have all the answers. They don't make dangerous assumptions that they know something. In short, they are coachable.

Learning disciplines and strengthens the mind, so the strong salesperson reads blogs, listens to podcasts, attends workshops, and gets coaching from credible experts -- both related to the sales profession and their industry. They know their mind is like a muscle that requires consistent exercise. This curious mind is what enables the strong salesperson to ask questions (because they seek to understand and learn) as well as offer insights and recommendations that add value to the conversation and process with the buyer.

Is mental toughness something that these salespeople are born with? Or is mental toughness something that can be learned and developed? Is it something that you can do yourself, or do you need help? How do you become so mentally strong that no matter what stands in your way, you are able to reach your goals?

If you haven't noticed, I subtitled this as "habits." Like exercise, mental toughness needs to be practiced continuously. It is hard to master and if you don't use it, you lose it -- like any other muscle.