



HOW SALESPEOPLE LEARN



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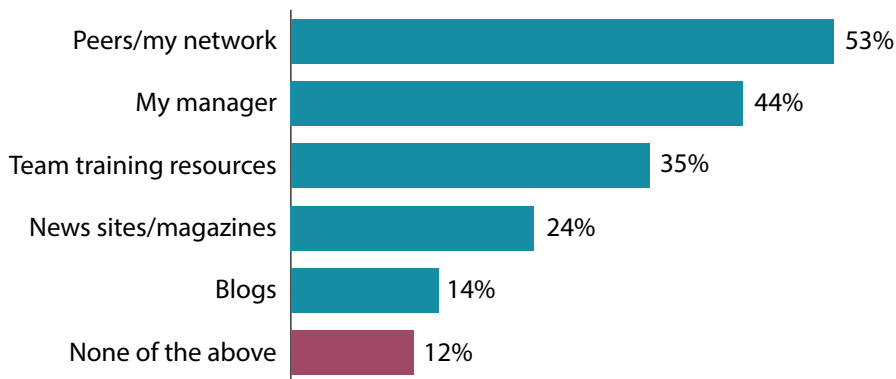
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INTRODUCTION

Most businesses grow with the help of salespeople. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are roughly [9 million](#) people in non-retail sales roles in the United States. We can assume most who start and stay in sales learn how to sell through on the job training and trial and error, given that there are very few preparatory programs to train people for a career in sales. Overall, salespeople note peers, managers, and official training resources as the top places they go to improve.

Peers and managers are the best source of improvement for salespeople

Where do you go to get tips to improve as a salesperson?



Base: 420 sales professionals in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



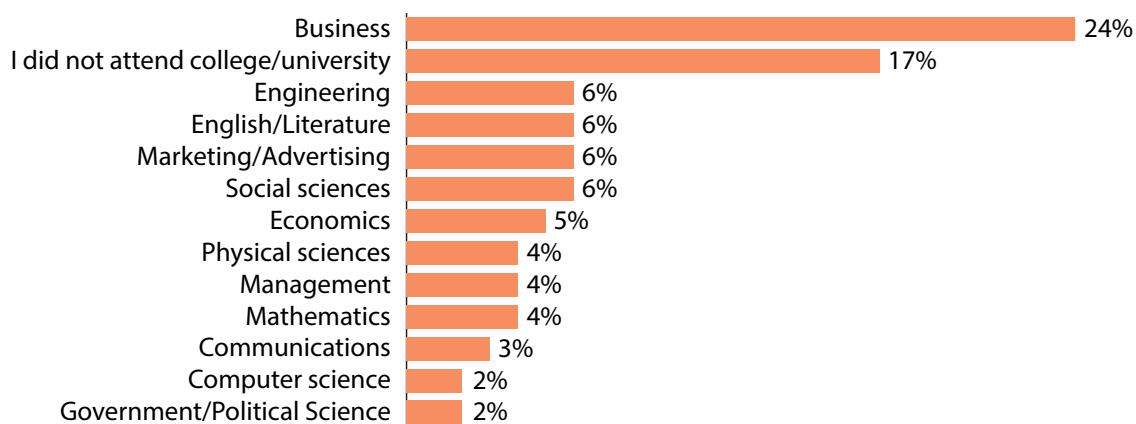
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WHERE DO SALESPEOPLE COME FROM?

Since there are no ways to ‘major’ in sales, we wanted to understand what most salespeople studied. From our pool of 420 sales respondents, we see a healthy mix of business majors, math and science, and liberal arts backgrounds. Additionally, 17% of respondents did not attend a four year college.

Diverse majors are represented in the sales profession, along with those without degrees.

What did you major in at college/university?



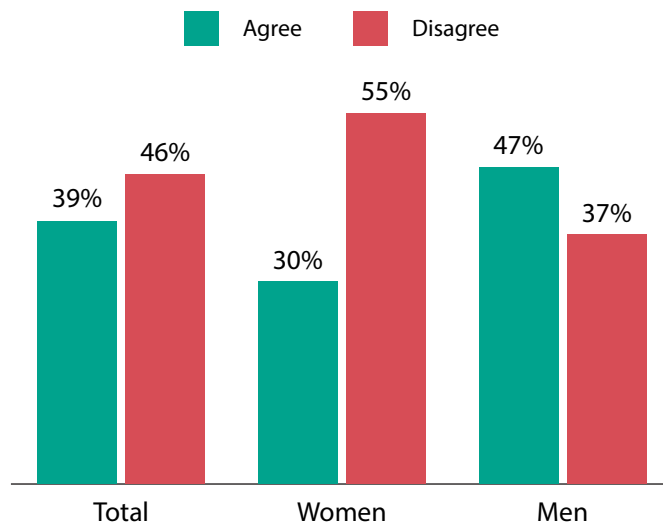
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Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



When directly asked, only 39% of our respondents said they intentionally got into sales as a career. When we split the responses by gender, just 30% of female respondents intended to go into sales compared to 47% of men.

46% of salespeople didn't intend to go into the sales profession. This is even more pronounced for women in sales.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"I intended to go into sales as a career choice."



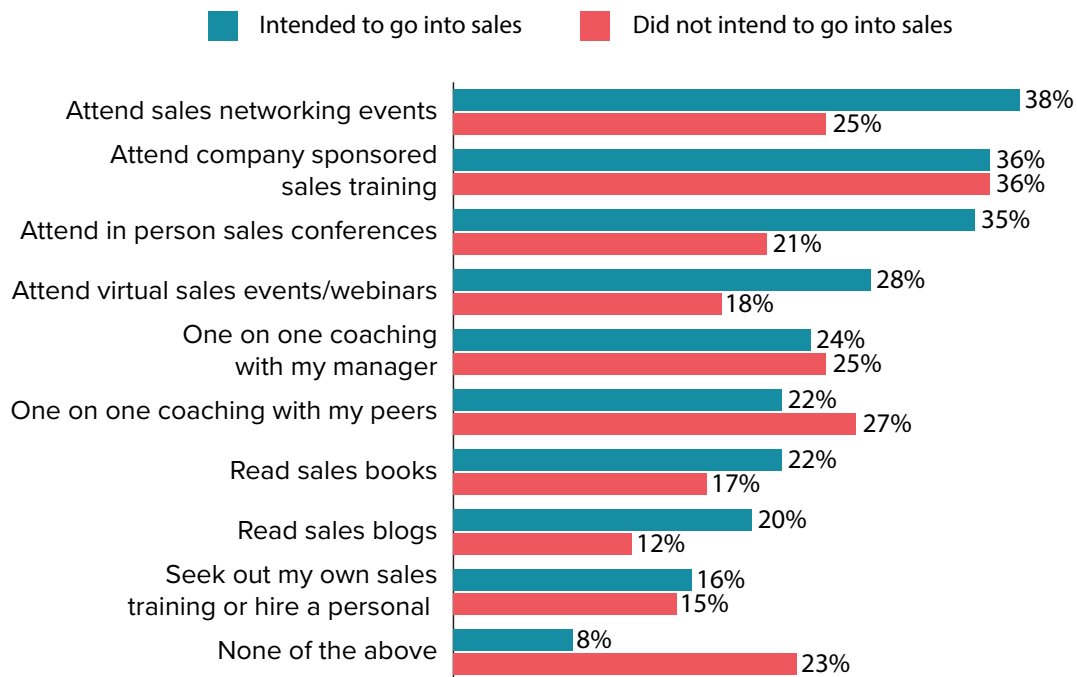
Base: 420 sales professionals in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



Those who found themselves unintentionally in a sales role appear less interested in pursuing training and learning outside of the workplace. To 'unintentional' salespeople, company sponsored training and 1:1 coaching are the top channels for improvement. Based on these preferences, managers and in-house training needs to be compelling and effective to ensure salespeople who aren't certain of their path are engaged and motivated.

Those who did not intend to pursue sales are less likely to seek training outside of work. Managers and internal resources are extremely important in ensuring their success.

How do you try to improve as a salesperson?
(by intention to pursue sales roles)



Base: 420 sales professionals in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



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HOW SALESPEOPLE WANT TO RECEIVE TRAINING

Given that many salespeople didn't study the sales motion or even intend to go into sales, how do businesses encourage their salespeople to be successful? We know once salespeople find what works for them, they rarely change.

59% of salespeople say when they figure out what works for them, they don't change it.

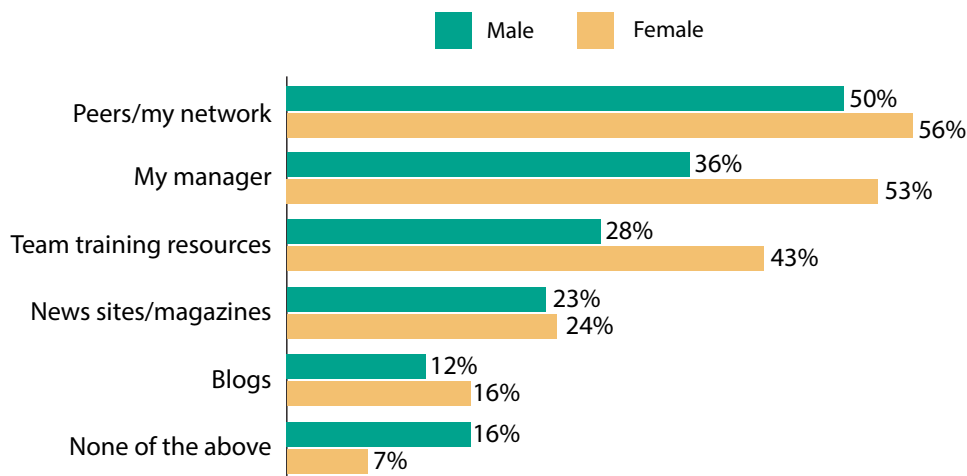
Base: 420 sales professionals in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



When we asked what was the best source of training, we found that salespeople rated peers and managers as the most influential source of knowledge. Most sales people build relationships to successfully sell, they nurture similar relationships to improve themselves. Sales managers especially need to have resources and training materials to help their team grow their skillset. Women in sales particularly rely on their managers for coaching and advice; if a manager isn't in a position to mentor their teams, female sales representatives will likely feel the impact more.

Peers are very important sources of knowledge for salespeople. However, if a manager isn't supportive, female sales representatives feel it more.

Where do you go to get tips to improve as a salesperson?
(by gender)



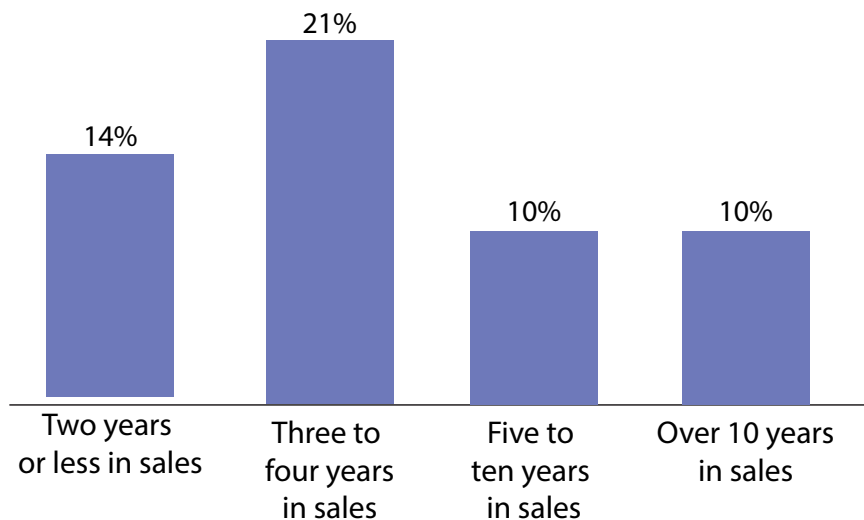
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Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



For businesses looking to invest in and grow their sales team: the key is to train when a sales representative is early on in their tenure. Sales representatives with three to four years of experience spend the most time in training compared to their peers.

Salespeople with three to four years of tenure spent the most time on training.

What percentage of your time at work is spent on training?



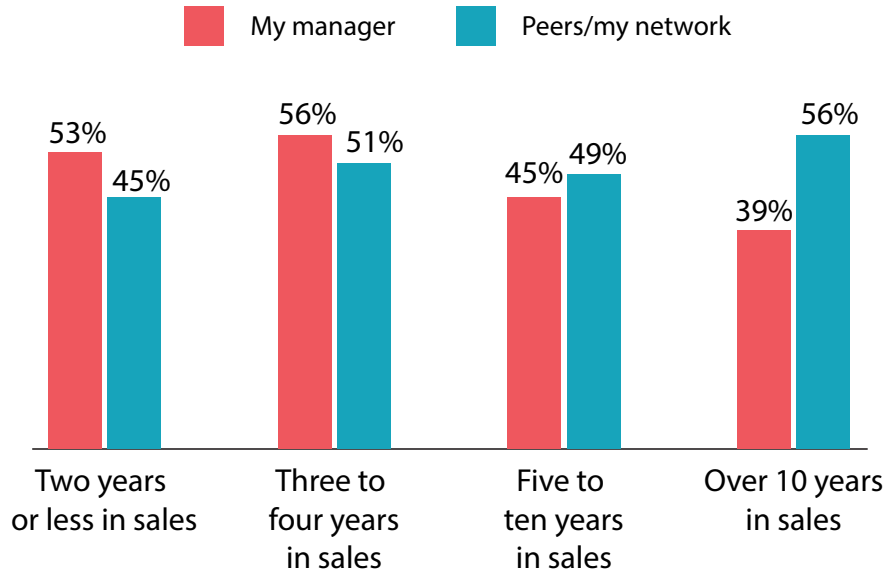
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Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



Likewise, they are more likely to look to their manager for tips to improve. In comparison, more tenured reps look to peers.

Salespeople are less likely to rely on managers as they increase in tenure

Where do you go to get tips to improve as a salesperson?
(by tenure)



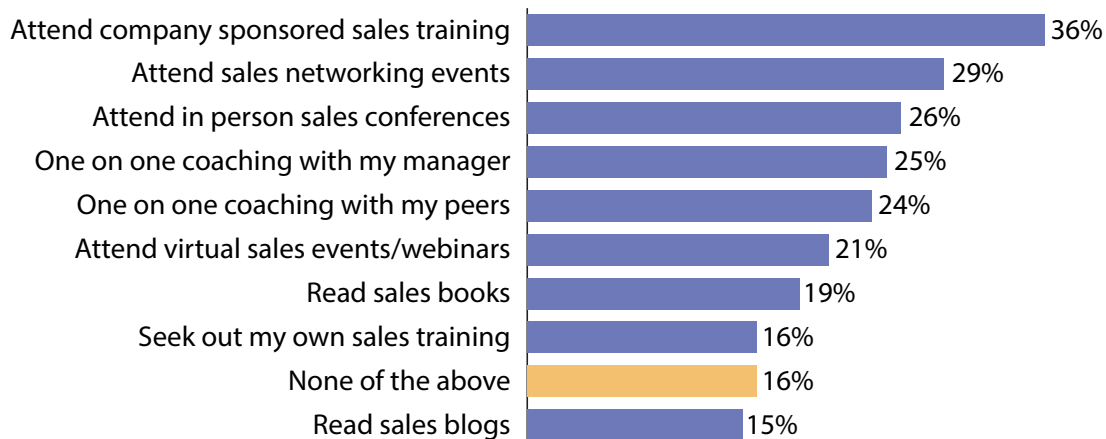
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In general, salespeople have a clear preference for learning through interaction, often in a one-on-one setting. As businesses grow their sales teams, scaling one-on-one training will be a difficult task.

Salespeople use official training and external events to improve. 16% say they do nothing

How do you try to improve as a salesperson?



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Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



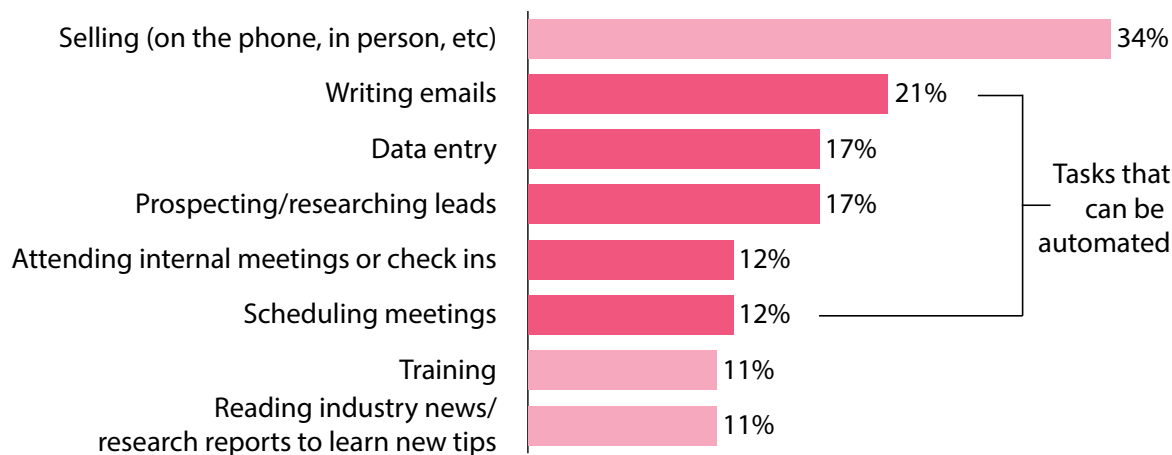
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INEFFICIENCIES IN A TYPICAL SALES DAY

420 salespeople in the US, UK, and Ireland reveal they spend a significant amount of their time tackling administrative work. Writing emails, prospecting leads, data entry, and scheduling meetings are all tasks that can be automated so that salespeople can spend more time doing what they were hired to do: sell.

Salespeople spend a significant portion of their day on administrative tasks. Technology can help manage busy work.

How much of your time is spent doing the following?
(Average of responses)



Base: 420 sales professionals in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Sales Survey Q1, 2017



Many tools that take care of administrative tasks are available today for free. They can assist salespeople with:

- ♦ **Email:** Writing emails takes up an average of 21% of a salesperson's day. Sales enablement and marketing teams should be providing [email templates](#) for salespeople to leverage. Sales tools with sequencing logic can automate follow up sends as well so sales people no longer need to keep track of following up with prospects.
- ♦ **Prospecting and researching leads:** There are many prospecting tools available today, including [Growthbot](#), a free messaging tool designed to retrieve readily available information for salespeople and marketers.
- ♦ **Data entry:** CRMs have been on the market too long for data entry to be a significant time-suck. Most can [automatically record](#) emails correspondence, calls, deals, and other customer-related activity.
- ♦ **Scheduling meetings:** There are many [free tools](#) on the market that allow prospects to automatically book time with sales people, cutting out the back and forth involved in setting up time to connect.

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METHODOLOGY

HubSpot Research ran an online survey leveraging a custom panel of salespeople maintained via Survey Sampling International. 420 respondents from the US, UK, and Ireland make up the sample. Respondents were screened for their primary involvement in sales. The survey was available in English and fielded in March 2017.