

Your Perception of a Salesperson

While salespeople are more common in business-to-business marketing (B2B), no doubt you have interacted with professional salespeople in your role as an individual or family consumer. If you have ever bought a computer, a smart phone, expensive clothes, organized a wedding, bought a home or furniture, or a motor vehicle – then you have most likely interacted with a salesperson in your purchase journey.

These salespeople would have most likely provided you with important information on the benefits and features of competing products, helped you choose the right product, helped you choose additional supporting products, and helped to finalize your purchase.

However, consumer's perceptions of salespeople vary significantly, usually depending upon typical stereotypes and people's personal experiences.

In this activity, you need to select the five attributes (from the list below) that you most associate with a salesperson.

When you are finished, compare your responses to the perceptions of other students and answer the questions below.

Possible Attributes of a Salesperson

Good communicator	Honest	Thoughtful
Good listener	Aggressive	Energetic
Concerned for customer	Pushy	Difficult
Tricky	Self-interested	Professional
Slick	Talkative	Misleading
Friendly	Causes problems	Helpful
Dishonest	Good understanding	Educated
Annoying	Knowledgeable	Polished
Profit-driven	Problem solver	Awkward
Trustworthy	Time waster	Over promises

Student Discussion Questions

1. What are the five attributes that you (or your group) most associate with a salesperson?
2. Class comparison: Is your list quite similar or different to other students?
3. Are the attributes that have been listed mainly positive, negative, or balanced?
4. Do you think that how salespeople are perceived differs by industry? That is, a car salesperson versus an Apple Store salesperson?
5. What actions can a firm implement to ensure that their salespeople are perceived in a more positive manner?