

BUSINESS

Getting a foot in the door with no sales experience

I am really interested in sales. My only problem is I do not have any sales experience. I have worked as a bartender and a waitress for eight years. I am people-oriented and enjoy meeting new people everyday. What advice can give you me on how to get my foot in the door without the sales experience?

An important quality for success in sales, according to the Canadian Professional Sales Association, is one you've hit on: a love for people. With that by your side, the next step is to learn some essential selling skills. Attending a sales course, either at your local college or university or through the Canadian Professional Sales Association,

will provide you with the basics.

Regardless of the course you choose, ensure that it teaches the principles of the consultative selling technique. Consultative selling is a step-by-step process carefully designed to attract and keep customers by focusing on their needs and helping them solve

their problems. Honing your consultative selling skills is what you need to kick-start your sales career and give you a winning edge.

Next, remember that you do have sales experience! Take for example, your job as a waitress. You likely were "upselling" customers all the time. Perhaps you would intrigue a cus-

tommer into ordering dessert, or you encouraged customers to try a particular dish.

The Canadian Professional Sales Association is a non-profit organization providing benefits and services to more than 30,000 members nationwide. Call 1-888-267-2772 or visit www.cpsa.com for information. (NC)