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SKU: 9781453385135-SOLUTIONS

Chapter 2: The Power to Choose Your Path: Careers in Sales

Overview

Ride along with Paul and find out "What it takes to be a great salesperson" and what he looks for when he's hiring new salespeople.

- The following *Video Learning Segment* is recommended for this chapter.
  - For Section 1: "**Careers in Sales**"
    - This video provides insights from salespeople about how they chose their path, and the best and worst things about being in sales.

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Projects and Major Assignments

1. Make student groups of five and let each group pick a sales position listed in Table 2.1 or using any of the links provided in the text. Sales positions chosen should be specific. For example: Sales manager in the hospitality industry.

   Contact five to ten recruiters using the Internet (*The Power of Selling* group and other social networking sties) or interview in person. Identify the evaluation criteria they have, along with the weightage given, while recruiting a candidate. Consolidate the results and arrive at the overall weightage each skill is given. Discuss in class the top three criteria listed by each group. Identify reasons.

2. Using the Internet, search for a sample resume and a cover letter. Download one of the free samples. Format the resume and cover letter using the approach discussed in this chapter and analyze the differences between the two resumes. If your college has a career assessment center, get feedback from one of the staff there. Or if possible get feedback from a professional recruiter.

3. Make index cards listing the following job profiles. Ask students to identify the jobs that are generally classified as inside sales, outside sales, or inside/outside (indicates hybrid profiles). Let students mention their names on the cards. The student to give all correct answers wins scratch cards.

   Job profiles:
   - Sales representative
   - Telesales representative
   - Field sales manager
   - Sponsorship sales executive
   - Product specialist
   - Business development manager

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- Sales consultant
- Account development executive

Outside sales profiles:

- Sales representative
- Field sales manager
- Sponsorship sales executive

Inside sales profiles:

- Account development executive
- Business development manager
- Telesales executive

Inside / Outside sales profiles:

- Product specialist
- Sales consultant

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Chapter Outline

1. What Does It Take to Be in Sales?

- Discuss the characteristics required to be successful in a career in sales.
- Understand what you can expect from a career in sales.

- To be successful in sales, and in life, you must love what you do and be passionate about it; else you will always lag behind those who love doing it.

1.1 Are You Born to Sell?

- This course will help you identify if sales is your passion, and whether you want to make a career out of it.
- Although communication and relationship building are valuable skills for a sales profession, just being able to talk to people is not enough to be successful in sales.
- Some important skills that make salespeople successful are listed below. If you fit in with these skills, then you are on the right track.

1.1.1 Character and the Ability to Build Trust

- **Character**, the combination of your beliefs, tendencies, and actions that you take, is the single defining trait for a salesperson and is the yardstick by which customers measure you.
- The ability to build trust will help you not just increase sales, but build your reputation.
- According to a survey by Forrester Research, trust and believability are so important in the buying and selling processes that 71 percent of buyers based their decisions on these traits.

See why Jake Nickell, the founder, and Jeffrey Kalmikoff, the chief creative officer, of Threadless.com think that being trusted by the customer makes a great salesperson.

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1.1.2 Ability to Connect

- Salespeople should know how to engage their customers in a way that helps the customers identify, for themselves, the way the product or service offered can deliver value.
- A good salesperson connects with a customer, so that their conversation prompts and echoes the customer's own internal thought process, which ultimately helps build relationships and trust.

View the interview with Jim Cathcart, President, Cathcart Institute to learn how a motorcycle trip led to a sale in the "Harley-Davidson story."

1.1.3 Listening Skills

- Although speaking is presumed to be the most important aspect of selling, listening is more important because "salespeople are communicators, not manipulators."
- Salespeople who have genuine interest in listening learn customers' needs, priorities, and opportunities.
- The challenge is that listening with undivided attention is hard.
- Salespeople who take notes, refer to written material, and are intently aware of their nonverbal cues can be extremely successful because they see and hear things that people who are talking just can't absorb.

See why Andy Taylor, CEO of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, thinks that great listening skills make a great salesperson.

1.1.4 Ability to Ask the Right Questions

- Asking the right questions is possible when you listen and have the ability to connect, which is vital to the success of a salesperson.

1.1.5 Willingness to Learn

- Salespeople must not only have product knowledge and understand the buying and selling process; they must also learn additional skills (like

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financial skills, negotiating skills, and even speedreading courses) that will make them more effective and efficient as salespeople.

- Skills and abilities are developed and fine-tuned over time, and experience plays a role in the learning process.
- It takes time, training, and experience to be successful in sales.

1.1.6 Drive to Succeed

- Great salespeople set goals for themselves, achieve them, and celebrate those achievements.
- They visualize what they want, then put together a plan to get it.

1.1.7 Resilience and a Positive Attitude

- You can succeed in sales, only when you are ready to hear "no" yet get back to your work, and be eternally optimistic and feel that you can make it happen.

1.1.8 Willingness to Take Risks

- Great salespeople set themselves apart by taking smart business risks as they go beyond the norm to explore and test the waters.

Listen to Lisa McCullough, a high-profile stuntwoman, as she shares her thoughts on taking risks.

Read the box on "Secret to Success: Failure" as Jeffrey Gitomer talks about the importance of taking risks and failing.
View the video "No Risk No reward," to find out why salespeople need to take risks.

1.1.9 Ability to Ask for an Order

- Although it may sound intuitive, salespeople shouldn't be afraid to ask for a customer's order, as most customers want you to ask for an order.
- You reduce your chances of being successful if you don't ask for the order, because, if *you* don't ask for the order, someone else *will.*

See why Fred Franzia, Founder of Bronco Wine Company and creator of "Two Buck Chuck" wine, thinks that "asking for the order makes a great salesperson."

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1.1.10 Independence and Discipline

- Most sales positions require independence (especially if you are calling on customers in person), self-motivation, and discipline.
- Salespeople must be focused and hard working in the long-term, or they will not enjoy consistent success over time.

1.1.11 Flexibility

- Salespeople need to be flexible on their customers' needs and be available when the customers want to buy.

1.1.12 Passion

- You have to love what you do, believe in it, and feel passionately about it.
- Passion is the element that sets you apart from other salespeople and makes your prospects and customers believe in you and your product or service.

See why Selena Cuff, head of Heritage Link Brands, thinks "passion is what makes a great salesperson."

1.1.13 Bringing It All Together

- There are three traits that define a successful salesperson:
  - business intelligence (IQ or intelligence quotient);
  - the ability to create rapport and build trust (EQ or emotional intelligence), and
  - a good way to approach and to follow up sales (XQ or executional intelligence; the ability to execute the sale).

Watch the video "How to Hire "A" Players" featuring Mary Delaney, Chief Sales Officer at Careerbuilder.com as she discusses what she looks for in candidates for sales positions.

Read Power Player: Lessons in Selling from Successful Salespeople "It's All about Their Stuff", to understand what customers care about in the words of Mark Bozzini, CEO of Infinite Spirits.

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1.2 Creating Value Is the Name of the Game

- Salespeople are value creators, i.e. they are not just those pushing a product; they are experts on all products available.
- They engage you in dialogue, listen, and learn about what you are looking for and then help you chose the product that will fit in with your needs.

1.3 WII-FM

- Although the name WII-FM (**W**hat's **I**n **I**t **F**or **M**e) is of a radio station, it is applicable to you as well.
- If you are considering investing your career in the selling profession, you should know what's in it for you.

1.3.1 What Will You Be Doing?

- You can be assured of a very exciting life with a career in sales.
- The number of customers you deal with, the location you will be in, the activities that you will perform will be different with each day.
- On the whole, you will be performing various activities to support existing customers and bring in new customers.

1.3.2 What Can You Achieve?

- Selling gives you the satisfaction of providing solutions to people, financial opportunity, and even financial independence.
- Sales drive every company's growth and hence they offer unlimited income potential.
- Sales is a **pay-for-performance** profession; hence you can determine your income.

To research salary and other compensation elements for different sales positions across the country, use the salary wizard found at Salary.com.

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2. Sales Channels and Environments Where You Can Put Your Selling Skills to Work

- Understand the different types of selling channels and selling environments.

2.1 Is It B2B or B2C?

- **Personal selling** is the communication between a customer and a salesperson with the intention of providing information for the customer to make a buying decision.
- There are two major **distribution channels**, or organizations or group of organizations involved in the process of making products and services available to customers, in which personal selling is conducted.
  - **Business-to-business** (or **B2B**) is when businesses sell products or services to other businesses for consumption by the ultimate consumer.
  - **Business-to-consumer** (or **B2C**), means that a company is selling a product or service directly to you as the ultimate consumer.
- Some companies engage in both B2B and B2C selling.
- Many manufacturers don't participate in B2C personal selling, but these brands use B2C marketing to make consumers aware of their brands; their B2B personal selling organizations focus on selling these products to retailers.
- Some differences between B2B and B2C:
  - B2B selling engages with fewer customers.
  - B2B selling involves much larger purchases.
  - B2B selling process is usually longer.

Refer Figure 2.12. Business-to-Business versus Business-to-Consumer Selling Characteristics for the other differences.

2.2 Types of B2B and B2C Selling

- **Transactional selling** efficiently matches the customer's needs in an operational manner and no personal relationship is formed.

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- **Consultative selling,** or relationship selling, occurs when there is a long-term or ongoing relationship between the seller and the buyer and the salesperson provides ideas or solutions to the customer based on customer needs.
- **Adaptive selling** occurs when a salesperson changes selling behavior during a customer call to improve the exchange or outcome.
- Both transactional and consultative selling are found in B2B and B2C selling.
- In some cases, the selling relationship establishes a **strategic alliance**, in which sellers and buyers work together to develop opportunities and points of difference that wouldn't exist without the relationship.
    - This is usually found in B2B because the two companies have something to gain by each taking an appropriate risk.

Read PowerPoint: Lessons in Selling from the Customer's Point of View about "But Do the Customers Like It?" to understand that satisfied customers are the true measure of success in selling.

2.2.1 Is It Inside or Outside Sales?

- **Inside salespeople** are those who usually work inside the office and may interact with customers by phone, email, text, social networking, or other methods of communication.
    - They perform more tactical selling functions, and perform customer support functions.
    - They rarely meet face-to-face with customers.
- **Outside salespeople** are those who mostly interact face-to-face with customers and perform a variety of sales functions.
    - They are the primary drivers of sales and cost of sales.
    - They travel to meet in person with customers to know their needs, build relationships, and provide consultation, solutions.
- Today, many companies are converting outside salespeople to inside salespeople to reduce selling costs.
- Advances in technology are providing platforms for inside salespeople to be more collaborative and consultative.

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- The focus is now on the most mutually efficient and beneficial customer relationships, than the physical location of the salespeople.

Watch the video "Hilarious Selling Mistakes" by Dan Seidman, author and speaker to hear about some sales horror stories.

2.3 What Kind of Job Can I Get in Sales?

- You can choose a sales position depending on what you want to do and chances are there's a sales role that you will enjoy.

Refer Table 2.1. Types of B2B and B2C Sales Positions.

- Different types of sales positions:
  - **Order-takers** interact with customers to consummate a sale, but their role does not require planning or consultative selling.
  - **Order-getters** work to develop a relationship and solve customers' problems on an ongoing basis.
  - Another role is **missionary selling**, in which salespeople call on customers who are not the ultimate purchaser.

Read Power Selling: Lessons in Selling from Successful Brands "What's in a Name?" to know about Nike's new selling strategy, the change in designation of sales positions.

To identify some prospective employers, view the Selling Power magazine's "50 Best Companies to Sell For."

2.4 Direct Selling

- **Direct selling** process is the sale of a consumer product or service away from a fixed retail location.
- Features of direct selling:
  - Provides the chance to run your own business using the power of an established brand name and without costs of manufacturing or providing the product or service.

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  - Usually requires an initial purchase of products or services, called starting inventory.
  - Works as supplement income.
- Direct selling is growing as a result of the uncertain job market and more people are turning to direct selling:
  - to safeguard themselves during the recession.
  - to get the attractive profits that **independent business owners** or IBOs make on the products they sell.

To learn about the current trends in direct selling, read the article "Avon, Mary Kay making comeback." Also watch the video "Direct selling up in down time" provided in the article.

- Many direct selling companies engage in **network marketing,** or **multilevel marketing** (MLM), which allows IBOs to invite other people to sell the products and earn money based on the sales of those they recruited.
  - MLM operates on the same principle as social networking.
  - Unfortunately, some unscrupulous people involved in the MLM business have created **pyramid schemes** in which many people have lost money.
- As a result, most states have laws against "**pyramiding**," a practice that offers incentives simply for recruiting new members of the network or IBOs and incentives are to be paid only when sales are generated.

'MLM Business Directory Online' features the Top 100 Network Marketing Companies Worldwide. Check out the site to know more.

2.5 Other Selling Environments

2.5.1 Entrepreneurial Selling

- Being an entrepreneur can be exhilarating, invigorating, and exciting; but it can also be challenging, time-consuming, and frustrating.

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- Successful entrepreneurs, like successful salespeople, plan, do their homework, listen to customers, and make ideas and solutions come alive.
- The traits of a successful salesperson discussed earlier are the same traits that are required of an entrepreneur.
- This area has got vast potential as there are virtually unlimited types of businesses that can be started by entrepreneurs and due to the Internet.

2.5.2 Domestic versus Global Selling

- The outlook for personal selling both in the United States and internationally is very strong.
- With the use of technology, it's important that salespeople not only know the product and the customer, but also the industry and the environment.
- International selling presents an additional level of challenges, including cultural, political, legal, demographic, and economic issues.
- Nonetheless, countries such as Brazil, Russia, China, and India (together known as the BRIC nations), are quickly transforming the global economy.

2.5.3 Nonprofit Selling

- Nonprofit organizations are those that use their proceeds to reinvest in the cause and are granted "tax-exempt" status from federal and other taxes.
- Just like for-profit businesses, selling is the engine of nonprofit organizations as well; fund-raising and the development of endowments are actually the lifeblood of nonprofit organizations.
- If you want to focus on making a contribution by choosing a career in the nonprofit sector, there are career fund-raising and development positions.

To see jobs and job descriptions in the nonprofit sector use the links provided in the text.

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3. *Selling U:* Resume and Cover Letter Essentials

- Learn how to position your education and experience to create a resume and cover letter to get the job you want.

- A resume and cover letter serve as your "advertising" campaign to a prospective employer.
- Here are some steps to help you create a cover letter that gets read and a resume that gets you the interview.

3.1 Five Steps for a Resume That Stands Out

- Your resume and cover letter need to be crafted so that your **brand story** highlights what you have to offer in a concise and compelling way.

3.1.1 Step 1: Define Your Three Brand Points That Make You Unique and Provide Value to a Prospective Employer

- Your brand points are the foundation of your resume and cover letter; it is in their summary that you comprise your brand story.
- Two important things to remember when creating your resume:
  - Tell your brand story with your brand points.
  - Your brand points should be clear at a glance (literally).

Compare Julianna Lanely's resume developed using the standard approach (Figure 2.6) with her resume built by incorporating the brand points (Figure 2.7)

3.1.2 Step 2: Choose Your Resume Format and Font

- Although many advise to stick to a one-page resume, it is best to choose a format that best tells your brand story.
- Choose your resume format so that it is easy for the reader to skim.

See the comments in Figure 2.6 to know what to avoid in your resume. Watch the video "Resume Tips" to learn to format your resume in a similar way.

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- Choose a font that you will use for your resume and cover letter and adjust the margins, to make it easy to read.

3.1.3 Step 3: Choose Your Headings: Put the Most Important Ones First

- Use headings that help you tell your brand story at a glance.
- Remember to put the most important things first.
- Use the work experience heading to make your brand story come alive.
- Avoid a long list of generic activities at the end of your resume; instead, include your most recent activities.
- Do add "Skills" as the final heading listing the computer software you are proficient with.
- Do not include things like "References available upon request," "Hobbies and Activities," or a photo on your resume.

See Rakeem Bateman's resume shown in Figure 2.8. to see how headings are used effectively to highlight his brand points.

3.1.4 Step 4: Write Your Bullet Points

- Bullet points are better than a narrative format.
- Keep your bullet points concise, but specific, so that each delivers powerful information.
- Start with your objective and write a short, specific goal.

See Figure 2.8 for an example of how to list your education.

- Bullet points are critical to setting yourself apart; they should:
  - be concise and specific but descriptive.
  - focus on accomplishments and contributions, not a listing of activities or tasks.
  - help reinforce your brand points with details of how you delivered on those points.

3.1.5 Step 5: Review, Check Spelling, Proofread, and Repeat.

- Ask some people you trust to review and proofread your resume.

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- Once you are satisfied that it is perfect, print on twenty-four-pound paper.

You've Got the Power: Tips for Your Job Search provides tips on "How to Save" your resume.

3.2 Three Steps for a Cover Letter That Gets Noticed

- Cover letters give you a serious edge if they are written and presented effectively.

3.2.1 Step 1: Start with Your Three Brand Points

- Write a summary statement for each of your three brand points.
- Write two concise sentences for each point.

3.2.2 Step 2: Understand the Elements of a Cover Letter

- A cover letter has three major sections:
  - **First paragraph**: Introduction and purpose for your letter
  - **Second paragraph**: Why you think you will bring value to the company (this is where you include your brand points)
  - **Third paragraph**: Closing and follow-up

Take a look at the cover letter in Figure 2.9. to see how your brand points become the focus of your cover letter.

- *Repeat* the highlights of your resume in your cover letter so the reader can see at a glance how you can bring value.
- Introduce the highlights in the cover letter and then provide the details in your resume, since you only have a few seconds to "sell" the reader on the fact that you are the right person for the job.
- Limit the cover letter to a single page and include the same font that you used for your resume.

See Figure 2.10. for all the elements of a formal cover letter.

3.2.3 Step 3: Write Your Cover Letter

- Here you can demonstrate your personality and your selling skills.

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- Make your cover letter a powerful lead-in to your resume
- Sell your prospective employer on the reasons why you should come in for an interview.
- Be sure to spell-check and proofread your cover letter carefully.
- Review your cover letter and resume together to be sure your brand story is clear and powerful.

Look at Rakeem Bateman's cover letter and resume together in Figure 2.11 and Figure 2.12 to see how the two documents can work together and really set you apart just at a glance.

- This cover letter can be the basis you use for most situations; however, you should adapt it and personalize it for every situation.
- Create one or two new brand points that also define your brand that you can change based on the job posting.
- It's best to use your cover letter whenever you send your resume to someone.

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Additional Exercises

1. Visit five different stores. Observe and talk to the salespeople there. Identify how salespeople help in choosing a product. Evaluate the salespeople on parameters like knowledge on product, ability to connect with customers, and assisting customers in choosing the product. Add parameters based on your observation and discuss in class the parameters.

2. Invite a local entrepreneur to give a talk on "Entrepreneurial selling and its challenges".

3. Research on strategic alliances in sales. Do you think such an alliance can be beneficial to the companies? Or would it be disadvantageous to the participants? Write a short paper summarizing your chosen position. Use examples to justify your stand. Participate in a class discussion reviewing the two positions.

4. Play this simulation game online "B2B Selling: Can You Win the Game?" to test your B2B selling skills. The game is available at http://blogs.bnet.com/salesmachine/?p=2308&page=1&tag=col1;post-2308
   You could act as the moderator and ask a group of students to play this game simultaneously. The fastest one to finish will be the winner.
   Players should maintain a journal for the choices they make in the simulation game. Once the game is played, you or the winner could defend the choices made and explain the B2B selling process.

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Power (Role) Plays

The following power (role) play is provided in the text at the end of chapter. Read the role play scenario and enact in class. Use the power (role) play scoring sheet to evaluate the performance.

1. Trust Me?

Role: Seller of a home

You are the owner of a four-bedroom home in a very nice part of town. The home has a spectacular view and impeccable landscaping. It is decorated so well that everyone who comes over wishes his or her house could look like yours. You and your spouse have decided that you want to sell your home even though the market is soft. You think you have found the real estate agent with whom you want to list the house. You want to get top dollar for your home.

- What characteristics will you look for when you choose a real estate agent?
- What role do you have to help ensure a successful sale of your home?
- Is this a B2B or B2C sale?

Role: Real estate agent

You are a seasoned real estate agent with a loyal clientele in this part of town. You have a track record of selling very expensive homes and reaping the benefits. You have done very well because of your referral business. But lately, the soft economy has taken its toll on your sales. You believe that keeping the prices as low as possible will attract new buyers.

- Is this a B2B or B2C sale?
- If you are the real estate agent, how would you approach the sellers in order to get the listing at the price you want?
- What characteristics does the real estate agent need to be successful?

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Power (Role) Play Scoring Sheet

Instructions: Use this checklist to provide feedback to role players and discussion for the class. You may make copies and ask the student observers to complete after each role-play, then discuss in class. Or, project the checklist on the screen and use as a discussion point for comments after each role-play.

Chapter: 2

Role: Seller of a home

Role Play Attribute	**Score on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being lowest)**	**Comments**
1. Possessed clarity on skills required in the agent.		
2. Convinced the agent that the deal was valuable.		
3. Possessed knowledge on the home sales market.		
4. Created rapport and built trust.		
5. Ensured a successful sale at a listing price in his/her own favor.		
Total Score		
Overall Comments		

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Role: Real estate agent

Role Play Attribute	Score on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being lowest)	Comments
1. Had a professional approach.		
2. Created an emotional connection with the sellers.		
3. Possessed negotiating and convincing skills.		
4. Asked the right questions to understand the sellers.		
5. Closed the deal in his / her own favor.		
Total Score		
Overall Comments		

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Additional Power (Role) Play

The following power (role) play is an additional role play and is not included in the textbook. Read the role play scenario and enact in class. Use the power (role) play scoring sheet to evaluate the performance.

1. To Grant or Not To?

Role: Fund-raiser at a nonprofit organization

Assume that you are a fund-raiser working at a nonprofit organization. The Director of a grant-making agency has come to your premises to have an on-site inspection before making the grant. Competition for the grant is very high. Your organization satisfies most of the requirements for the grant. Now, you have to "sell" your nonprofit organization to the director. In short, you have to convince the director that your organization merits the grant.

Role: Director of a grant-making agency

You are the director and have come for a site visit. The technical aspects of the grant procedure are more or less satisfied. However, you feel that a thorough evaluation is necessary. You are also concerned about the management of the nonprofit organization. You have decided to evaluate the fund-raiser's skills (selling skills, passion in this work, etc.,) before taking any decision. You feel the grant should be sanctioned to the right people and for the right cause.

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Power (Role) Play Scoring Sheet

Instructions: Use this checklist to provide feedback to role players and discussion for the class. You may make copies and ask the student observers to complete after each role-play, then discuss in class. Or, project the checklist on the screen and use as a discussion point for comments after each role-play.

Chapter: 2

Role: Fund-raiser at nonprofit organization

Role Play Attribute	**Score on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being lowest)**	**Comments**
1. Demonstrated good selling skills.		
2. Was passionate about the mission.		
3. Demonstrated resolute and decisiveness.		
4. Was able to build a relationship.		
5. Was able to provide measurable results through success stories.		
6. Was able to convince the director that the organization merited the grant.		
Total Score		
Overall Comments		

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Role: Director of grant-making agency

Role Play Attribute	**Score on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being lowest)**	**Comments**
1. Demonstrated a formal approach to the evaluation process.		
2. Demonstrated fairness in evaluation.		
3. Demonstrated good listening skills.		
4. Was able to ask the right questions to know about the nonprofit's efficiency.		
Total Score		
Overall Comments		

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Power Tools (Additional Resources)

Video Learning Segments

Section 1 – Careers in Sales featuring many sales professionals.

Web Sites

Selling Power, www.sellingpower.com

Sales & Marketing Management Magazine, www.salesandmarketing.com

BNET, www.bnet.com

Inc., www.inc.com

BusinessWeek, www.businessweek.com

Fast Company, www.fastcompany.com

SalesRoundup, www.salesroundup.com

Articles and Journals

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3. Tom Atkinson, Ron Koprowski, "Sales Reps' Biggest Mistakes," *Harvard Business Review,* July–August 2006, http://hbr.org/2006/07/sales-reps-biggest-mistakes/ar/1 (accessed March 5, 2010).
4. Tim Connor, "Traits Of Six Figure Income Salespeople," *EzineArticles.com*, http://ezinearticles.com/?Traits-Of-Six-Figure-Income-Salespeople&id=404799 (accessed March 5, 2010).

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