

Take care of the rainmakers and they'll take care of you

What motivates the sales superstars or Rainmakers? With so many other ways to make a lot of money, why do they choose a calling in which rejection is a daily fact of life, even for the best?

 By Peter Gilbert ^{10 Apr 2006}

Profiles we've done on tens of thousands of top producers point to seven motives that drive them:

- **Need for status:** The best salespeople seek recognition as proof of their ability and importance. They enjoy power and authority, and are strongly aware of image and reputation.
- **Need for control:** Successful sellers like people, enjoy being with them, and delight in influencing them. But they seldom care deeply whether others like them or not, a trait which enables them to use emotion without falling prey to it.
- **Need for respect:** They want to be seen as experts on what is right, best or appropriate. They regard themselves as well-intentioned people, willing to help and advise others.
- **Need for routine:** Contrary to the stereotype that salespeople are impulsive and somewhat undisciplined, most sales superstars like routine and hate having it interrupted. They prefer positive actions to positive thoughts because, as many have told us, positive thoughts occur naturally after they've gone through their positive routines.
- **Need for accomplishment:** Material comforts - a nice house, expensive clothing, a fancy car - are at the beginning. Money starts as a prime motivator, but the top salespeople earn so much that, as How Stevens of HR Chally says, "Money loses its ability to motivate you." The superstars constantly create new challenges and go after the "impossible sales" to maintain their enthusiasm.
- **Need for stimulation:** Top producers are normally calm, relaxed people who thrive on challenge. They have more physical energy than most of us and welcome outside stimulation as a way to channel their energy in satisfying ways.
- **Need for honesty:** The best salespeople have such a strong need to believe in their product that they will switch jobs if the company's reputation falls or they have serious doubts about a new product line. But they are not rigidly moralistic; experience has taught them to accept imperfections, in the people and products of the real world.

Rainmakers or sales superstars are rare and wondrous creatures and of inestimable value to the companies that hire them. In the motor industry they sell four or five motorcars every working day, year after year. In insurance they sell billions of rands worth of policies in a career. You find them in IT, corporate banking, management consulting and real estate. Your company's ability to identify Rainmakers in their formative years could make your (and their) fortune.

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