

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Huthwaite**<sup>®</sup>  
International

## **Sales skills vital to progression in any business career**

Skills demonstrated by salespeople, including negotiation, persuasion and being a good listener, have been named vital to career progression in a study conducted among senior business leaders by [Huthwaite International](#) and YouGov.

Leadership and people management skills came out on top in the survey, cited as important to career advancement by 63 and 61 per cent of respondents respectively, followed by skills that are integral to sales roles, including listening (51 per cent), negotiation (46 per cent), persuasion (45 per cent).

Interestingly, the research also indicates that 'sales skills' per se are not regarded as highly, coming second to last in a list from the study on 24 per cent, above only digital awareness on 19 per cent.

This suggests a lack of understanding in business of the skills involved in successful selling, according to Tony Hughes, CEO at sales and negotiation experts Huthwaite International.

"This study also demonstrates just how valuable the skills possessed by successful salespeople are. From negotiation and persuasion to listening and asking intelligent questions, sales roles equip people with some of the most important skills for career advancement.

"However, sales still suffers from people mistakenly believing that it's simply wheeler-dealing or being pushy. Instead, being an effective salesperson requires a broad range of skills. You must ask the right questions to probe and test people's needs; you must be able to make the connection in the client's mind as to why your product or service solves a problem they are having; and you must be able to negotiate so that both parties come away feeling happy with the deal," says Hughes.

Looking at the results by industry, financial services is the biggest believer in listening skills and questioning skills helping people get ahead, on 60 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. The industry that rates leadership most highly is retail, on 67 per cent. And unsurprisingly manufacturing is the biggest believer in having specialist/role-relevant skills on 43 per cent.

"Sales are not a dark art that only a chosen few are able to practice. Most people in business have a role in the sales process at some point, it doesn't only happen in the sales department," finishes Mr Hughes.

**Ends**

### **Survey results:**

In full, the results show that the skills business decision makers think help people progress furthest in their business careers are as follows:

- Having leadership skills 63 per cent
- Having people management skills 61 per cent

- Having listening skills 51 per cent
- Having negotiation skills 46 per cent
- Being persuasive 45 per cent
- Having presentation skills 34 per cent
- Having specialist/role-relevant skills 33 per cent
- Having questioning skills 33 per cent
- Ability to manage budgets 26 per cent
- Having sales skills 24 per cent
- Having digital awareness 19 per cent

**About the research:**

The research was carried out for Huthwaite International by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 636 senior decision makers from all business sizes (excluding sole traders). Fieldwork was undertaken between 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of British business size.

**Notes to editors:**

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**About Huthwaite International**

Huthwaite International is best known as the creator of SPIN® Selling – helping salespeople in all countries and most languages to improve their performance. Companies worldwide trust UK-based Huthwaite International, as a leading behavioural change consultancy and owner of the SPIN® trademark in over 50 countries, to deliver measurable results through its research-based models.

The company provides innovative skills training and advice for progressive individuals and organisations in sectors such as IT, financial services, healthcare, telecoms, manufacturing, legal and professional services. It has a client list of thousands of companies worldwide and trains some 14,000 people each year.

Besides the SPIN® Suite, Huthwaite International offers training and reinforcement based on its own original research models in negotiation skills, communication skills, customer service skills. Established in 1974, Huthwaite is headquartered in Wentworth, South Yorkshire and handles international projects through its national offices or associated companies throughout Europe, USA, South Africa and Asia Pacific. The company has won two Queen's Awards in 1999 and 2008 for International trade.

For more information on Huthwaite's cost-effective services and solutions, please visit [www.huthwaiteinternational.com](http://www.huthwaiteinternational.com)