

# Exploring Careers Through Technical Routes

## Sales



### The Industry

There are two types of sales activities:

1. Business to Business is referred to as B2B. This is where a business sells to a distributor e.g. Apple selling its products through O2 or Vodafone.
2. Business to Consumer is known as B2C. Here a business sells directly to the public either online or through a retail outlet.

Many sectors offer sales opportunities. You can work in telesales, face-to-face selling, direct sales (away from retail premises), field sales (using a field team) or business development. Tasks can include establishing needs, answering queries, meeting customers, making presentations or negotiating prices.

Sales people earn competitive salaries. This can include a base salary plus benefits and/or commission schemes.

Institute of Sales Management  
[www.ismprofessional.com](http://www.ismprofessional.com)  
 Prospects

[www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/sales](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/sales)

### Skills and Requirements

As a sales person you will need to present a confident image and look professional.

Listening is a key sales skill to develop as you will need to understand your customer's wants, requirements and barriers. You will also need to:

- Be confident and articulate to clearly explain benefits of the product or service you are selling
- Have excellent presentation skills
- Possess an outgoing personality with tenacity and resilience as you will not always close the deal
- Have persuasion and negotiation skills
- Be self motivated and results driven
- Be interested and willing to learn about your industry
- Show an interest in learning about the customer's needs
- Have an ability to problem solve to overcome customer resistance and provide the best solution
- Work independently and manage your own clients
- Be able to mentally calculate figures when in negotiations.

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## Working and learning in Sales



### Job Roles & Progression

Try to develop your skills working part time in a retail shop or through work experience.

**Study Programme**  
Levels 2 and 3  
Business Studies.



#### Further study

Many degrees give skills and knowledge for working in sales and many larger companies run their own graduate sales schemes.

For example:

Pharmaceutical sales organisations employ science graduates;  
Advertising sales organisations employ media graduates to sell advertising space.



**Apprenticeships**  
Intermediate and Advanced  
Sales and Telesales.  
IT Technical Sales.



#### Career roles

Career progression tends to be based on your performance levels and results from personal drive, ambition and determination.

Opportunities that exist include:  
Account Manager; Business Development Manager; Call Centre Manager; Technical Sales Engineer.

### Calculation including problem solving

#### Tasks

1. Negotiate the total cost of a customer's order (products, delivery and VAT).
2. Mark stock prices down by 30% in the summer retail sale.
3. Annually track staff take home pay including any commission or bonus.
4. Forecast sales figures for the next quarter based on last year's sales figures for the same period.
5. Collect and interpret data weekly to demonstrate improvements in wastage over time.

#### Links to GCSE Maths

1. **Number** (addition, multiplication; financial mathematics - VAT).
2. **Ratio, proportion and rates of change** (percentages - finding a percentage, decreasing an amount by a percentage).
3. **Algebra** (graphs - co-ordinates).  
**Statistics** (representing data - pie charts).
4. **Number** (approximation - estimating calculations; whole numbers - addition, multiplication).
5. **Statistics** (collecting data - data collection sheets; representing data - scatter graphs; analysing data - mean, median).

### Communication, all forms

#### Tasks

1. Make a sales presentation to a potential customer.
2. Write a detailed proposal for a customer on the costs and benefits of your service.
3. Go to a product update event to increase your knowledge of what the sector is doing and industry trends.
4. Write a script for staff to use in your call centre.
5. Discuss a new sales strategy with other sales staff at an internal sales meeting.

#### Links to GCSE English Language

1. **Writing non-fiction** (context, audience and purpose; writing non-fiction - a presentation).  
**Spoken language** (speaking and listening - audience and purpose, individual presentation; personal presence - body language).
2. **Writing** (audience and purpose; writing non-fiction - a proposal; planning - editing and proofreading).
3. **Spoken language** (listening - audience and purpose).  
**Analysing non-fiction** (examples of context).
4. **Writing** (writing non-fiction - context, audience and purpose; a speech).
5. **Spoken language** (speaking and listening - audience and purpose, discussion skills).