# 21

# Sales Competencies You Need to Drive Sales Performance

Objective Management Group

GROW SALES

# Every company has a unique go-to-market approach.

Some companies rely on highly specialized sales teams to find and close business, while others expect individual sellers to build, manage, and close their pipeline. Even among direct competitors, there is no universal blueprint for selling effectively.

No matter the approach, one thing is clear: companies must be able to accurately assess where their sellers are strong and where they need improvement to drive better results.

Objective Management Group (OMG) has identified 21 core sales competencies that are critical for success in B2B sales. These competencies apply across all major sales methodologies, including BANT, MEDDIC, Challenger or SPIN, offering a clear framework for building stronger, more effective sales teams.

**These competencies fall into three distinct categories of assessment:**

### Tactical Competencies

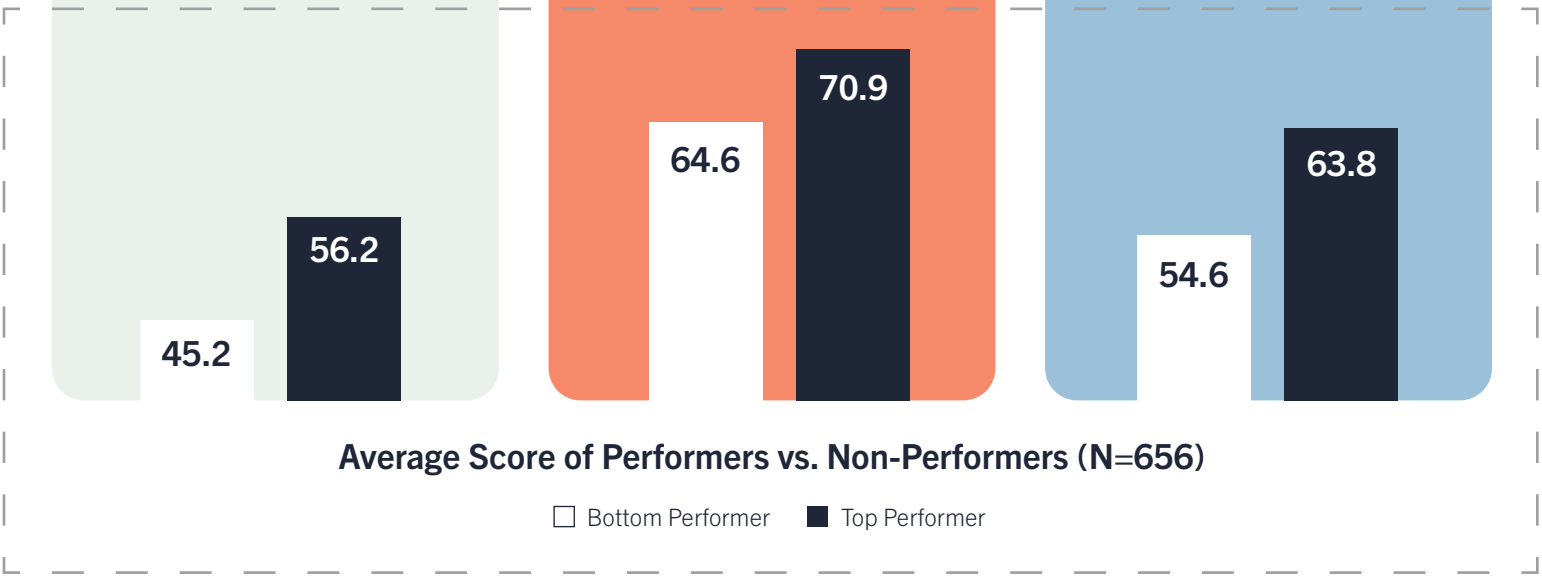
Selling **skills** needed to successfully find and guide potential customers through the sales process. These are the skills that are most easily observable, and typically the focus of sales training.

### Mindset Competencies ("Sales DNA")

A sales-specific **mindset** that supports or limits a seller's ability to successfully execute on their Tactical Competencies.

### Grit Competencies ("Will to Sell")

**Measure** the seller's drive to succeed at selling. These competencies are foundational for the seller to make the necessary changes to their Sales DNA and Tactical skills.





©2025 Objective Management Group

# How to Better Predict Sales Performance

Evaluating a seller's competencies is fundamental for predicting a team's overall success. In fact, OMG found that **salespeople with high competency scores are 50% more likely to be top performers.**[1]

**Sellers with higher competency scores perform better on:**

- **Win Rate**
- **Manager-Rating**
- **New Opportunity Creation**
- **Building Relations**

As such, competency scoring offers an efficient way for companies to better understand their sales teams and better forecast pipelines.

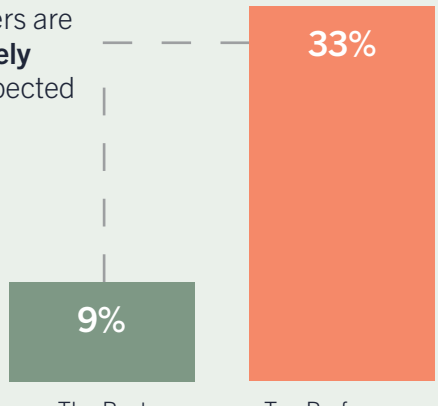
**Based on OMG's assessment, top sales performers represented only:**

**16%**

OF SELLERS

**% of Salespeople Exceeding Expected Win Rate**

Top performers are **~4x more likely** to exceed expected win rate




When assessing a team, it is also critical to pinpoint the specific competencies a seller needs to succeed in their individual role. For example, an account executive (AE) who owns their own pipeline from start to finish may require different competencies than an AE who is only in charge of closing a deal.

By identifying and incorporating the right competencies into their sales strategies, company leaders can give their sales teams the tools and training they need to better succeed in their specific roles.

1 High competency score = overall competency scores are in the 20%.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# Breaking Down the 21 Competencies for Sales Success


©2025 Objective Management Group

PART 01

# Tactical Competencies: Guiding Prospects Through a Sale

When first assessing a team's skill level, leaders will often look first at their Tactical Competencies, or the skills needed to successfully find and guide a prospect through a sale. These are the skills where development issues are most obvious. For example, a seller struggling to find new business will have low pipeline numbers.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 01 Finding New Business Opportunities

A main element of effective selling is the ability to find new, high-value business opportunities, or hunting. A salesperson's ability to hunt for new leads and bring them into their pipeline is the necessary first step in kicking off any successful sale.

Sales leaders should encourage teams to proactively and consistently look for new business by reaching out to targeted prospects, instead of simply waiting for inbound leads.

**Strong Hunting leads to:**

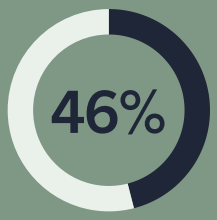
- Increased Effective Activity
- A Strong Sales Pipeline
- The Ability to Prospect with Confidence

OMG assessments evaluate 13 skills a seller needs to master hunting, such as the willingness to prospect via phone or walk-ins, avoiding perfectionism that can delay opportunities, quickly reaching target prospects, and attending networking events.

# 02 Reaching the Right Decision Makers

Many salespeople struggle to identify and reach the right decision makers. A crucial part of any successful sales process, reaching the people who ultimately control a purchase can be a make-or-break moment in the sale.

According to OMG's data, only **46%** of salespeople are proficient in reaching the right economic buyer who has the authority to approve or reject a deal.




Salespeople can often find it more comfortable to continue speaking with existing contacts to not seem pushy. Sellers must be encouraged to find ways to reach the person responsible for deciding to purchase the products or services offered.

**Reaching the Right Decision Makers leads to:**

- **Higher win rates**
- **Better identifying and navigating the Buying Committee**
- **Decreased sales cycle timelines**
- **Decreased deals lost to indecision**

OMG assessments evaluate seven skills a seller needs to reach the right decision makers, including not starting with a proposal but talking to the people who have problems to solve, speaking directly with decision makers at critical points in the process, and using their tactical skills to reach decision makers more quickly.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 03 Building Strong Relationships to Earn New Business

Relationship building is a core competency that all salespeople need. Despite its criticality, **nearly half of all salespeople lack proficiency in this skill.** Successfully nurturing relationships is key for sellers who need to rely on referrals for new business, or who sell in scenarios with high information asymmetry, such as blind RFPs.

Measuring a salesperson's ability to quickly begin and develop strong relationships with key stakeholders can be a strong marker for success.

Instead of limiting themselves to basic rapport with clients, salespeople should work to establish bonds that help them acquire and grow business. This bond with customers should be strong enough that they refer new business or bring salespeople with them when they move to new companies.

**Building Strong Relationships leads to:**



**High-value customers staying throughout their career journey**



**Increased advantage in an RFP**



**Uncovering critical client information**

OMG assessments evaluate seven skills a seller needs to build strong relationships, such as quickly developing a rapport with customers, believing making friends is the single greatest asset for selling, and developing strong relationships over time.

# 04 Uncovering a Prospect's Reasons to Buy

Consultative selling, or identifying a prospect's compelling reasons to buy, is a critical sales skill, which requires a salesperson to actively listen to prospective buyers and ask the right questions.

**With only 15% of salespeople proficient in this skill**, companies have an opportunity to grow this key aspect of their sales process, opening up not just a stalled pipeline but also a host of other opportunities.

**Improved Consultative Selling leads to:**



**Fewer stalled opportunities**



**Increased urgency from buyers**



**Ability to distinguish yourself from other sellers**

OMG assessments evaluate 17 skills that sellers need to master to be effective at consultative selling, including uncovering compelling reasons to buy, asking and listening to customers with ease, asking tough questions, and understanding how a prospect prefers to buy.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 05 Selling the Benefits of Your Product

When measuring a salesperson's competencies, a key focus should be around whether they can sell the value of a product or service. Customer fixation on price can be difficult to overcome but skilled salespeople can sell a product based on the economic and personal benefits of that product rather than focusing on how much it costs.

Successful salespeople position themselves as a trusted advisor and provide the customer with crucial solutions that are unavailable elsewhere.

**Selling Value leads to:**

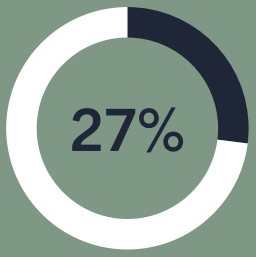
- Fewer discounted opportunities
- Fewer opportunities ending up in competitive scenarios

OMG assessments evaluate 13 skills a seller needs to master to effectively sell value, such as avoiding making assumptions, learning why prospects buy, creating a sales process that supports selling value, and focusing on value over price.

# 06 Evaluating If a Prospect Is a Good Fit

The competency that many salespeople struggle with usually surrounds qualifying potential leads. Inexperienced sellers may prematurely prepare a quote, proposal, or presentation before determining if the opportunity is fully qualified and worth their time.

OMG has found that only **27%** of sellers are proficient in qualifying, while its impact on sales performance remains high.




For that reason, sales leaders should always consider their team's ability to **qualify a prospect** when measuring the competencies and success of their sales teams.

**Effective Qualifying leads to:**

- **Increased win rates**
- **Fewer deals lost to "no decision"**
- **Decreased time spent educating prospects**

OMG assessments evaluate 15 skills that a salesperson needs to master when qualifying a prospect, such as knowing why a customer would buy, finding customers that handle high-ticket pricing well, and uncovering the customer's actual budget.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 07 Presenting the Right Way to Increase Wins

Presentation skills can often be an overlooked part of the sales process, but it is critical that all salespeople know how to present the right content, at the right time, and to the right people. A poor presentation can be the nail in the coffin to an otherwise closeable sale, which is why sales leaders should take note of how well their sellers practice this competency.

Effective sellers should be focused on presenting the product or solution and not worrying about the timing, specific topics, or who is in attendance. Instead, sellers should be thoughtful about what to present, when to present, and to whom it should be presented.

**Strong Presenting leads to:**



**Higher win rates**

OMG assessments evaluate 10 skills a seller needs to master presenting, including taking a practical view of the importance of presenting and not presenting when it is not required, balancing presentation skills with solid questions and qualifying tactics, and not needing to present to feel in control of sales process.

# 08 Getting More Commitments from a Buyers at Each Stage of the Sales Cycle

The old adage “always be closing” is iconic for a reason. The ABCs of selling really come down to whether a salesperson can get commitments and decisions from buyers at every stage of the sales cycle. If a company is suffering from bloated pipelines or long sales cycles, measuring a sales teams’ competency in their ability to close can help ensure success at every step of the process.

**Effective Closing leads to:**



**Decreased pipeline bloat**



**Decreased sales cycle timelines**

OMG assessments evaluate 14 skills sellers should master to be more effective at closing, such as seeking a win/win in negotiations, being a problem solver, not making inappropriate quotes, and exhibiting appropriate amount of assertiveness with customers.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 09 Creating the Right Structured Sales Process

An easy, simple sales process that is easily understood by the prospect and follows the appropriate stages and milestones is critical to making a final sale. **Less than half of salespeople are proficient in this skill**, meaning that sales journeys can become overly complicated, with prospects unsure of where they are at in the process and what steps come next.

Sales leaders should ensure their teams have a formal, staged, and milestone-centric sales process that provides repeatable, predictable results.

By measuring a team's understanding of the sales process and their skills at structuring a proper sales journey, companies can create more consistency for prospects that results in more wins.

**Improved Sales Process leads to:**



More consistent descriptions of opportunities



A prospect-friendly sales process

OMG assessments evaluate 10 skills sellers should master to be more effective at, such as strategically using the sales scorecard, being more relationship-based, creating a sales process that has key milestones, and wasting little time on actions that won't lead to a sale.

# 10 Leveraging the Right Selling Tools

Selling is no longer just an in-person process of shaking hands and lunchtime discussions. Successful selling also requires salespeople to effectively leverage sales technologies like CRMs, social media, and video to improve and grow their success.

Sellers who are not proficient with common CRMs, ignore LinkedIn, and choose face-to-face meetings over video can be at a significant disadvantage.

While successfully using sales technologies is still underutilized by many salespeople, with **OMG finding only 35% of sellers being proficient**, company leaders have an opportunity to train their sales teams on these crucial technologies that can help teams reach their goals.

**Effective use of Sales Technology leads to:**



**Utilizing CRMs for the best outcomes**



**Using tools to research prospects more fully**



**Growing inbound opportunities from the seller's network**

OMG assessments evaluate three skills that require sellers to have a strong understanding of CRM, social, and video technologies.



©2025 Objective Management Group

PART 02

# Discovering Your Team's Sales DNA

Strong Sales DNA requires proficiency in beliefs and behaviors that support success in sales. These elements, like the need for approval, comfort in discussing money, and the ability to handle rejection well, are all critical for sales success. Many sales teams, leaders, and individual sellers may not be aware of where their teams are deficient in these areas, which can sabotage even the most experienced and well-trained sellers.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 11 Overcoming a Seller's Need to Be Liked

Salespeople who need to be liked will have trouble asking prospects challenging questions and having difficult conversations to sell consultatively. This can lead to sellers not challenging the status quo in fear of upsetting their customers. When sellers avoid asking tough questions, they risk missing critical information needed to deliver the best solution for the customer.

Leaders and **managers** can also fail to hold their teams accountable if they also need to be liked. **Less than half of salespeople are proficient in this skill**. However, when a salesperson has an appropriate level of need for approval, they can ask the right questions that make prospects think and discover their true reasons to buy.

**Not Needing Approval leads to:**

- **Less bloated, more qualified pipeline**
- **Creating more in-depth discovery calls**
- **Gaining more control over the sales process**

# 12 Becoming Better Consultants

If a team is struggling to build their pipeline, one reason may be down to how they approach their discovery calls. Weak salespeople often sound like they are reading from a script rather than actively listening to their prospects' questions.

By staying in the moment and not worrying about specific discussion points a salesperson must hit, sellers can address important needs from customers, including those that are spoken and unspoken.

**Staying in the Moment leads to:**

- **Improving questioning skills**
- **Improving discovery calls**


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 13 Understanding Sales-Specific Beliefs that Support or Limit Salespeople

OMG's research has found that high self-awareness is critical for success in sales, helping sellers better understand their own belief systems that can consciously or unconsciously hurt their efforts during the sales process. This can include a salesperson's desire to implement even basic sales measures like cold calling or discussing finances.

By replacing self-limiting beliefs with supportive beliefs, sellers can avoid self-sabotaging sales interactions and be more comfortable in their role overall.

**Strong Supportive Beliefs leads to:**



**Finding common ground on what needs to be done or what can be achieved**



**Combating stalls, put-offs, or excuses**



**Improving focus around money, negotiations, and discounting**

OMG assessments evaluate self-limiting beliefs that salespeople might have and provides corresponding supportive beliefs that they can develop with training and coaching, such as:

- Expecting prospects to make major purchases more quickly
- Being more comfortable making sales calls
- Maintaining healthy skepticism about what prospects say
- Acknowledging the real reasons behind a lack of results

# 14 Understanding a Salesperson's Own Buying Behavior

When moving a prospect through a sales journey, many sellers will come up against stall tactics. To avoid these tactics, a salesperson must be aware of how they may fall into these traps based on their own purchasing behavior.

To keep the sales cycle moving, salespeople must be aware of their own buying habits and avoid letting excessive empathy stall the process. They should be ready with solutions to keep deals progressing. **Only 27% of salespeople are proficient at understanding their own buy cycle**, which means leaders must ensure their teams understand this potentially self-sabotaging element.

**Strong Buy Cycles leads to:**



**Fewer competitive situations**



**Identifying the right time for demos, price quotes, and information**



**Increased sales velocity**



©2025 Objective Management Group

# 15 Having More In-Depth Financial Conversations

A core aspect of selling is being comfortable with having in-depth financial conversations with potential customers. These are conversations that go beyond budget and require asking the buyer potentially difficult questions like the economics of a specific product, the buyer's costs (such as salaries), and even the personal financial implications of a purchase.

Salespeople who are comfortable discussing money have a detailed understanding of their prospect's business. They can confidently show a CFO the financial benefits of their product or service.

It should come as no surprise that **only half of all salespeople are comfortable discussing money**. Since this competency has a major effect on sales outcomes, leaders should ensure their teams excel at this critical skill.

**Being Comfortable Discussing Money leads to:**



**Avoiding late-stage surprises relating to price**



**Ability to sell at a premium**

# 16 Handling Rejection Better

The degree to which a salesperson can effortlessly move on to another opportunity after being rejected by a prospect is key to maintaining confidence and continuing the right level of prospecting.

Salespeople who struggle to handle rejection may stall their own sales cycle when a prospect says no or shuts down an opportunity late in the sales process. Thankfully, **nearly 90% of salespeople are adept at handling rejection**, but leaders should still ensure that younger or less experienced salespeople gain significant comfort in this vital skill.

**Handling Rejection Well leads to:**



**Effortlessly moving on to another opportunity after being rejected by a prospect**



**Maintaining confidence and high prospecting activity**



**Becoming comfortable with friction with a buyer**


©2025 Objective Management Group

PART 03

# Will to Sell Competencies: Foundational Skills to Drive Successful Selling

The Will to Sell competencies measure a salesperson's overall drive to achieve success in sales but are often the least easily observed. Without a strong Will to Sell, it is difficult for an individual or team to change their habits or learn new skills. By measuring their team's Will to Sell, leaders can determine whether their team has the drive required to succeed in sales.


©2025 Objective Management Group

# 17 Does Your Team Have the Desire to Succeed?

Sellers who have a strong desire to success in sales prioritize sales activities, have strong urgency, and are deeply concerned with sales results. When a seller's desire is low, they might focus more on non-sales activities and see subpar sales results as not concerning.

OMG has found that **most salespeople have a strong desire to sell**, however, leaders should still encourage their teams to avoid complacency and focus on business-related activities.

**Desire for Success leads to:**



**Avoiding complacency and instilling drive**



**Increasing focus on business-related activities**

# 18 What Is Your Team's Commitment to Success?

An effective sales team must be committed to doing whatever it takes to close deals. When a salesperson has a strong commitment to success, they will persist at new tasks despite any initial discomfort. They will prioritize whatever activities they need to achieve their sales quota.

A lack of commitment might lead sellers to give in to discomfort when challenged to take a new approach.

**While 72% of salespeople are proficient in this skill**, sales leaders should consistently analyze and assess their team's commitment to success.

**Commitment to Success leads to:**



**Going above and beyond especially when faced with pushback on difficult tasks**



**Being more open to change**



**Improved coaching and training**



©2025 Objective Management Group

# 19 How Does Your Team Feel About Selling?

How a team feels about themselves, the work they do, the company they work for, the people they work with, and the people they call on, all impact how they feel about selling, and consequently, their success at selling. Someone with a strong outlook is more likely to commit themselves to succeeding and come across positively to their colleagues and prospects.

Only **68% of salespeople have a positive outlook**, which requires leaders to ensure their teams feel more positive, focused, and appreciative.

**Strong outlook leads to:**



**Improved team member self-image and confidence**



**Better navigating the market, opportunity, product and services, company and sales leadership**

# 20 Does Your Team Take Full Responsibility for Sales Results?

Taking responsibility for sales results is a major marker for whether a seller or team will ultimately be successful. Teams that rationalize poor sales by pointing to the economy, the competition, or the company fail to hold themselves accountable and learn from their mistakes.

Salespeople who take responsibility point the finger at themselves when they do not meet expectations—focusing more on what they could have done better.

**Just over half of salespeople are proficient at this skill**, giving leaders an opportunity to instruct their teams on how best to take ownership of less than stellar sales results.

**Responsibility leads to:**



**Avoiding excuses for outcomes, actions, and inactions**

# 21 How Motivated Is Your Team to Succeed?

A motivated team has a strong drive and a goal to achieve optimal sales performance. OMG measures three motivational styles, which can help leaders know what tools will be most effective while encouraging change:

**EXTRINSIC:**
Likely to be motivated by money and rewards

**INTRINSIC:**
Likely to be motivated by being part of something bigger than themselves, loving what they're doing, self-improvement, etc.

**ALTRUISTIC:**
Likely to be motivated by being of service to others

**A strong majority of salespeople are proficient at this skill** though leaders should continue to find the best ways to keep their team's motivation strong.

**Strong motivation leads to:**



**Improved response to financial opportunity, promotions, or team success**


©2025 Objective Management Group

GROW SALES

Grow Sales is a Certified Partner of Objective Management Group. As an independent contractor, they are licensed to deliver OMG's sales assessments and insights.

# Measuring a Team's Sales Competencies

Each year OMG assesses over 80,000 salespeople across nearly 2,000 companies, measuring competency proficiency based on the number of questions that a respondent answers correctly.

OMG assessments measure all 21 competencies, while letting users place more weight on certain competencies based on the skills that are most relevant for a **team's specific roles**. For example, one company may place more weight on their AE's Qualifying competency, while another company may place more weight on an AE's Hunting competency.

OMG uses statistical analysis to validate its assessment. The analysis tells us how much of a top seller's performance is explained by their skill in a Competency.

Top-performing sales teams excel across a full range of competencies—not just in asking the right questions. **Contact us** to discover how your team measures up on the 21 key competencies that predict sales success.

© 2025 Fairfield Opco, LLC DBA Objective Management Group. All rights reserved.

OBJECTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP and the Objective Management Group logo are the trademarks of Fairfield Opco, LLC in the United States, other countries, or both. Other company, product, or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.