

## The Key Differences Between Superstars & Slouches

By: Bob Hill

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Managers may forever debate whether great sellers are born or made. But a recent study reveals several easy-to-spot differences between high-performers and low-performers, as well as the one common trait most would-be superstars possess.

The study, conducted in part by *Psychology of Sales Reluctance* authors George Dudley and Sharon Goodson, was based on interviews with over 1,000 sales execs across multiple industries.

The findings reinforced that while certain factors (i.e., effort, opportunity, experience, etc.) can definitely impact salespeople's potential for success, personal accountability seems to play the largest role in whether or not a new recruit develops into a sales superstar. To wit:

- Low performers often fear their cold calls will be seen as pushy or intrusive, while top performers assume their calls are always welcome because they have information that can benefit the prospect's business.
- Low performers generally feel there are only certain hours of the day when cold calls should be made, while high performers feel any time is the right time (assuming the correct adjustments are made for time zones and callbacks are scheduled effectively).
- Low performers blame poor results on factors that are out of their control, like non-receptive prospects, bad leads or poor market conditions. Top performers are the first ones to evaluate their own performance, as well as key metrics, to determine what needs to be adjusted and how to go about doing so.

### The Study Also Revealed the Following About Hiring new Salespeople:

While a lot of managers make hiring decisions based on traditional criteria (e.g., years of experience, relationship skills, ability to close, etc.), the biggest indication of whether a sales candidate has superstar potential is whether or not he / she has a natural enthusiasm and willingness to prospect and network as often as possible. The study showed that while other skills are important, they don't have nearly as much bearing if the salesperson isn't constantly looking for new ways to meet (and build relationships with) new prospects.

Job candidates who are hired based solely on their years of prior sales experience don't necessarily live up to expectations, due in large part to their unwillingness to learn a new system after having "done the job" for so long.

For more, check out [The Psychology of Sales Reluctance](#) by George Dudley and Sharon Goodson, Behavioral Science Research Press, 2009.