

What It Takes to Succeed in Sales and Marketing Jobs

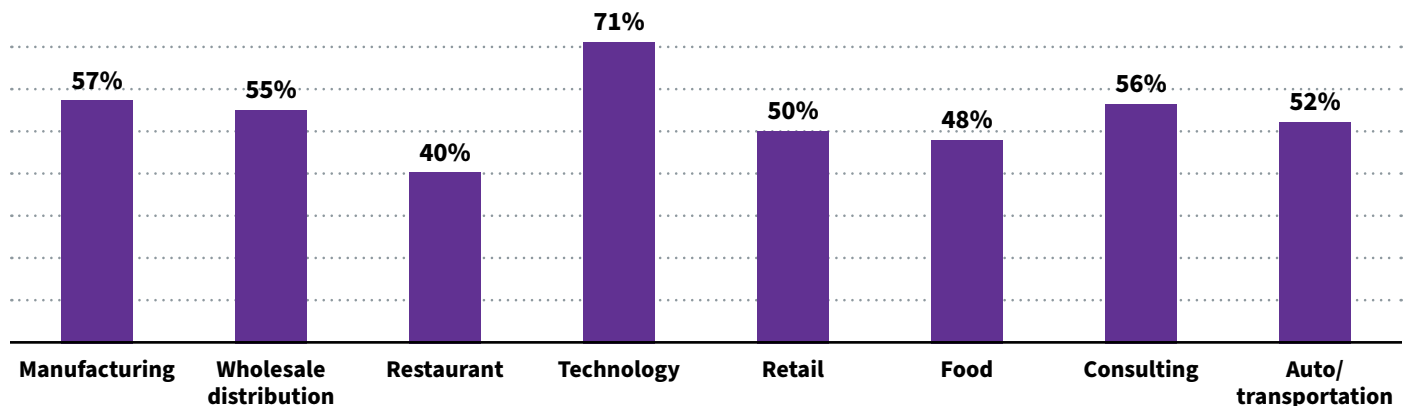


Like in most industries, sales and marketing are important functions in a foodservice distribution business, but what does it take to be successful in those fields? Do younger professionals think differently than older generations about skills and activities that make you effective in those jobs? The International Foodservice Distributors Association (IFDA) surveyed sales and marketing workers to see what qualities and features they believe will help you succeed.

WHICH SECTORS OFFER GREAT JOBS?

Survey respondents were asked if various industries offer great or not so great sales/marketing jobs. In general, there wasn't a significant difference in what generations thought about great job opportunities, though younger individuals were slightly more enthusiastic about the restaurant sector and older generations favored the technology sector slightly more.

----- Percentage saying these sectors offer great sales and marketing jobs -----



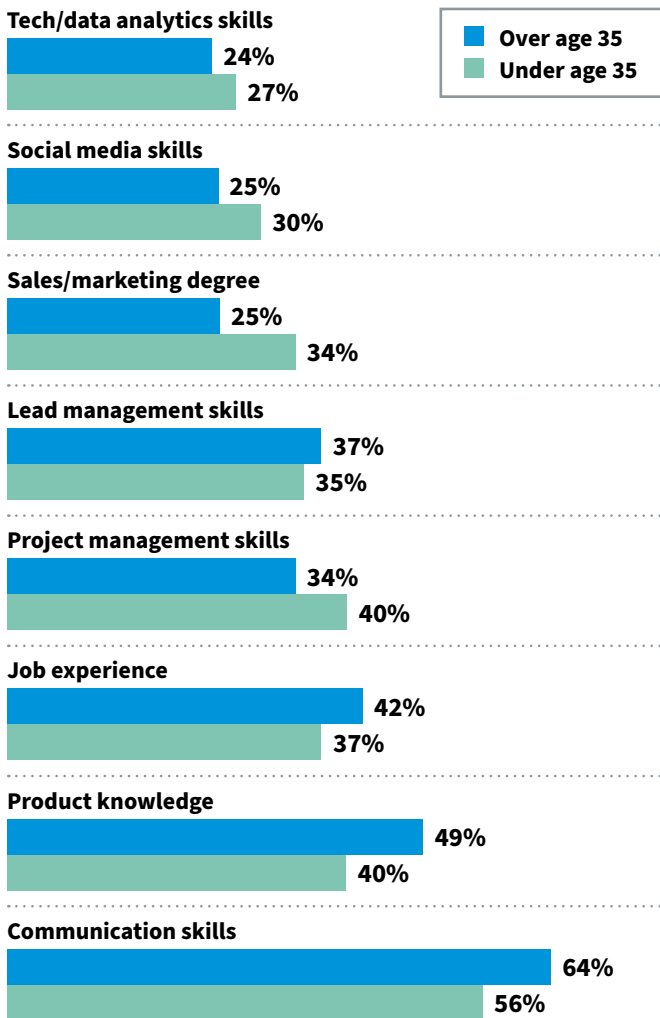


Hard Skills

MOST VALUED HARD SKILLS ARE COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

Respondents were asked which hard skills they thought were the most important to be good at a sales/marketing job. There were slight differences in how younger and older generations valued various skills, but communications/presentation skills were selected as the top skill by both groups, followed by product/industry knowledge, and related job experience. As far as the least important hard skills, both groups placed social media, technology and sales/marketing college degrees at the bottom of the list provided.

----- Selected in top three most important hard skills. -----

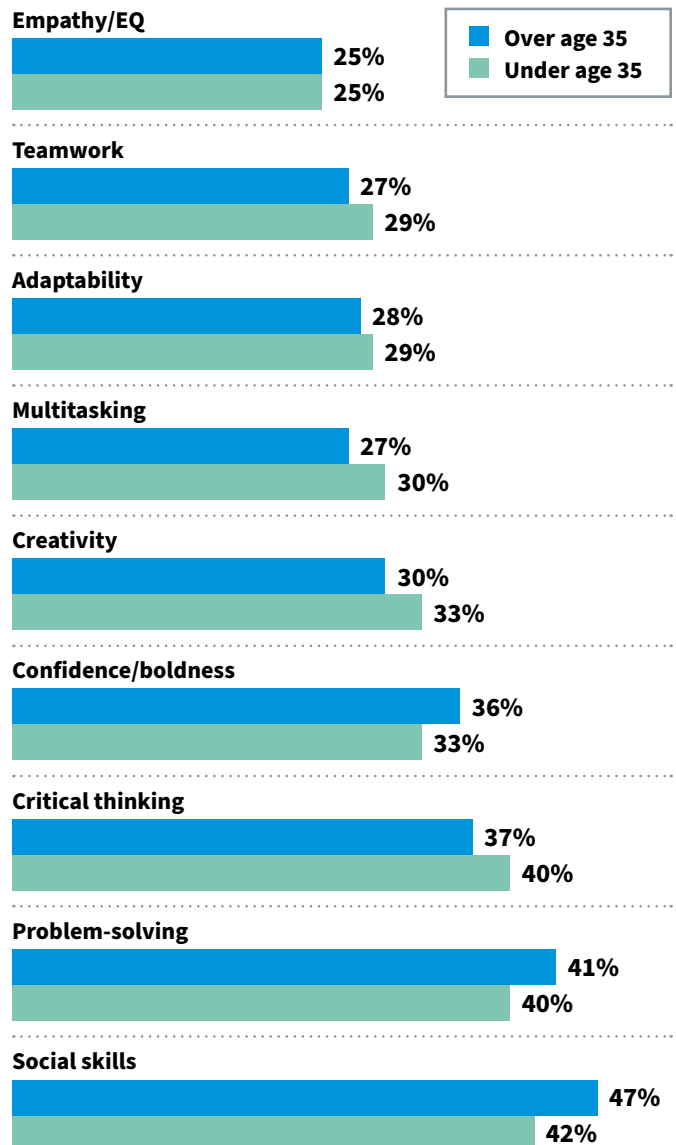


Soft Skills

SOCIAL SKILLS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING ARE THE MOST VALUED SOFT SKILLS

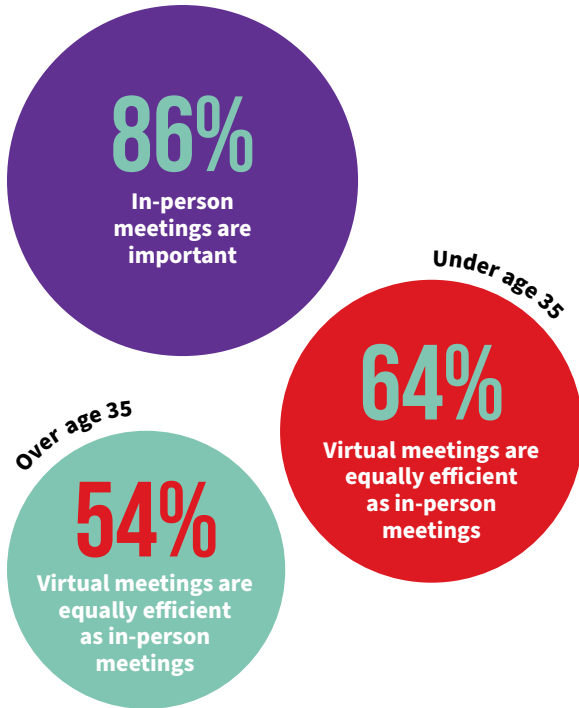
Respondents were also asked which soft skills were the most important to be good at a sales/marketing job. Like the hard skills, there were slight differences in responses between younger and older generations, but both groups said that social skills were the most important to be a successful sales/marketing professional, followed by problem-solving and critical thinking. Empathy/emotional intelligence was considered the least important among the listed soft skills in the survey.

----- Selected in top three most important soft skills. -----



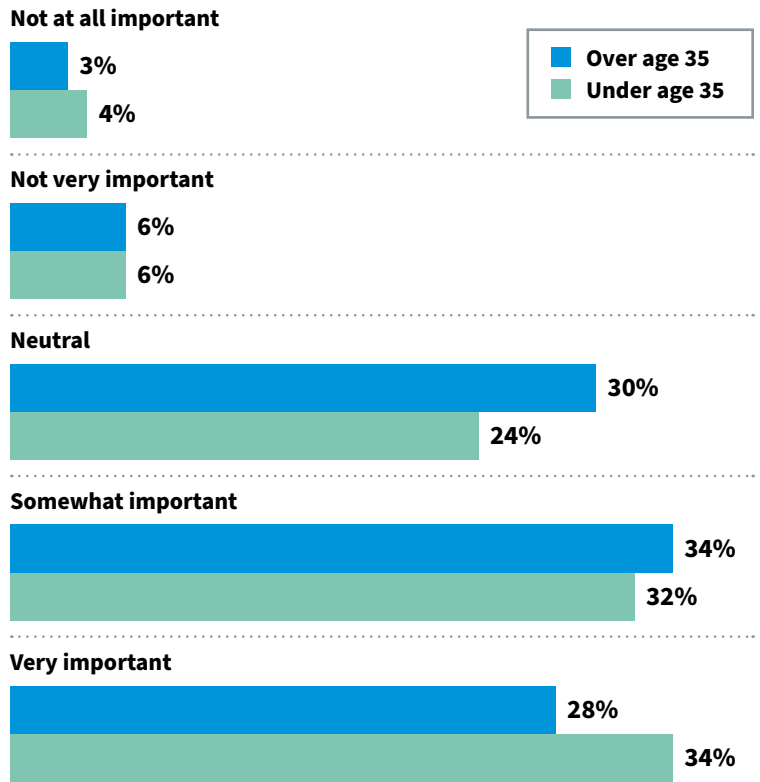
VIRTUAL VS. IN-PERSON MEETINGS

There was no notable difference between younger and older generations when it comes to finding in-person meetings important to be efficient in a sales/marketing job, but younger individuals were more likely to say that virtual/video-conference meetings are as efficient as in-person meetings.



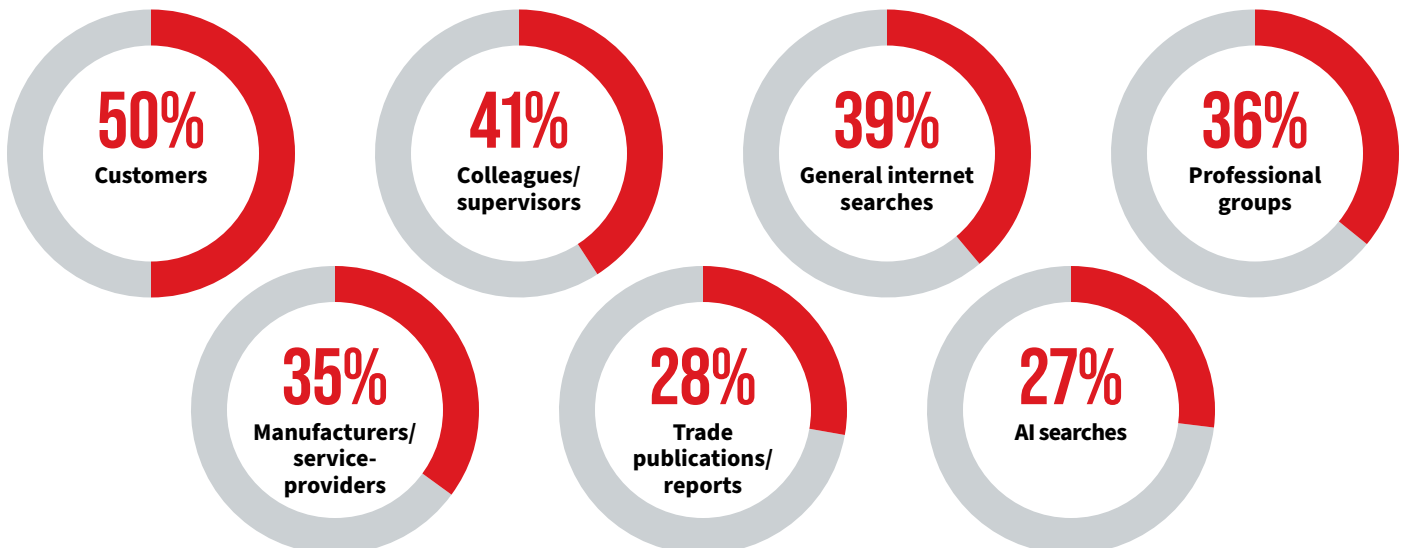
TWO-THIRDS BELIEVE AI PROFICIENCY IS IMPORTANT

A majority of survey respondents agree that using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools proficiently is important to sales/marketing job performance. However, younger generations showed a stronger degree of importance.



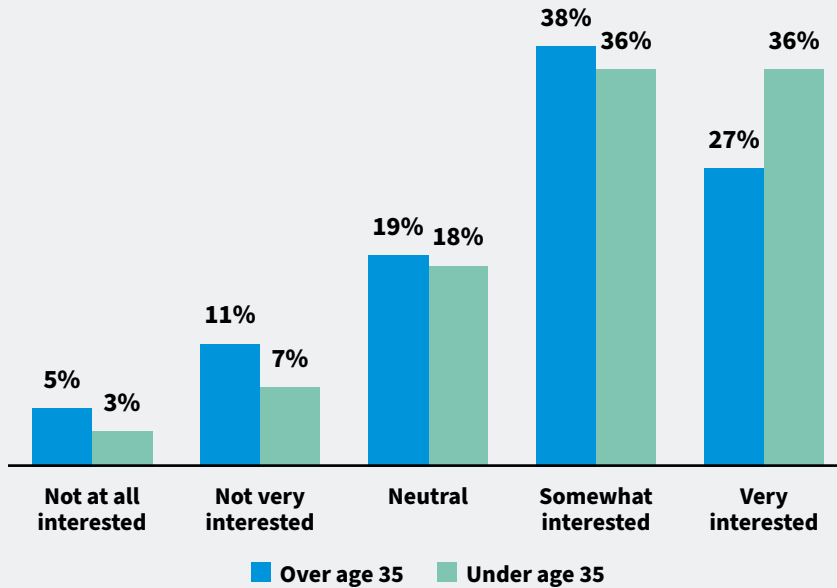
PEOPLE ARE KEY SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

When asked where they would go to learn about an industry and customers in a new job, respondents' top sources were customers and colleagues. Individuals over age 35 were more likely to say they learn from general internet searches and trade publications/reports, while younger cohorts were more likely to use AI tools to find relevant information.



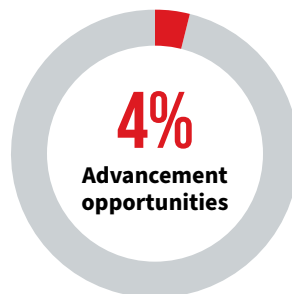
SEVEN IN 10 ARE INTERESTED IN FOODSERVICE DISTRIBUTION JOBS

Survey respondents were given a brief description of what a typical foodservice distribution company does, and then asked if they would be interested in foodservice distribution if they were looking for a new sales/marketing job. Seven in 10 (69%) said they would be interested, with individuals under the age of 35 showing a stronger degree of interest.



WHAT'S THE ONE THING AN EMPLOYER CAN DO TO MAKE YOU WANT TO STAY?

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about the number-one thing an employer could do to keep them in their job. The top two responses involved cash compensation, and feeling respected and valued. Responses in the "other" category varied, but included good employee communication, training, work environment, and business processes.



Source: International Foodservice Distributors Association, 2024.

IFDA surveyed 500 U.S. adults aged 18-64 with current or previous marketing and/or sales job experience on June 27-July 2, 2024, about their thoughts and opinions around sales and marketing jobs. In the sample, half of the individuals were under the age of 35, and half were over the age of 35. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.