

Hot Jobs 2010 Briefs

Sales



JOBS

Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except technical and scientific) and Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (technical and scientific).

“Sales” is a tricky job category because it is so general. Importantly, the jobs in sales that pay family-sustaining wages are “Sales Representative” jobs that require detailed knowledge of the product being sold and usually involve building a client list and maintaining it over time. These are not jobs selling in stores (retail sales). The biggest industries for sales jobs are computers, electronics, professional and commercial equipment, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, machinery and grocery wholesalers. Job titles in this industry include sales professional, sales representative, account executive, and outside sales representative

Beware of companies that require a “buy in” to sales jobs with promises of high commissions later. These are often scams and can leave job seekers in debt and with worthless merchandise that they can not sell. Legitimate sales jobs should not require any financial investment on the part of the job seeker.

VACANCIES

Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except technical and scientific) = 127
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (technical and scientific) = 296

REGIONAL INFORMATION

Hiring in this industry is expected to increase in 2009, according to data collected in *Massachusetts Department on Workforce Development 2008, 4th Quarter Job Vacancy Survey*. Regions with the largest projected increases include the Greater Boston area and the Southeast region with expected increases of 26%, the Central Region with 24%, and the Berkshire region with 20%.ⁱ

SALARY AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE OF THE JOB'S WAGE RANGE (meaning 75% of people are paid at or below the represented wage):ⁱⁱ

Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except technical and scientific) = \$84,160
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (technical and scientific) = \$113,680

BENEFITS

Yearly annual salary is usually a combination of commission and hourly wage.ⁱⁱⁱ Bonuses are offered to individuals with outstanding selling records. Health and life insurance as well as pension plans and paid vacation leave are usually standard benefits.

WORK SCHEDULE

Many sales people work more than forty hours per week on average but the workweek is often flexible. Work times are structured around a customer's/client's schedule and can vary from one day to the next.

IS THIS THE JOB FOR ME?

Outside sales positions are performed on the road, traveling from one customer to the next. An extensive amount of traveling is involved in this position. Success in sales relies heavily on a person's personality. Most successful sales representatives are outgoing, persuasive people who tend to get along with many different personality types. Because many positions in sales rely on commission as a significant part of the salary, the work environment is highly competitive. Approximately 30% of employees in these categories of sales are women.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is no one set path to entering into a sales career. Some positions require a four- year degree; others a high school diploma. In general, the more specialized and higher paying sales jobs seek employees with at least some college education and prefer a bachelor's degree. Sales jobs in pharmaceuticals, insurance, or advertising often require a bachelor's degree. Once hired, many employers offer ongoing training for their employees.

Community colleges, technical institutes, and universities do not offer specific degrees in sales. Courses in marketing, economics, communications, and foreign languages are considered to be highly desirable to potential employers. These can be taken at community colleges or universities.

Once a job is offered to an individual, employees gain knowledge of the product either by witnessing its production of the product or by taking classes offered by the company about the product and how to sell it. Also, new sales people usually shadow experienced individuals in a sales territory before covering it by themselves.

CAREER PATHWAYS

Career advancement varies depending on the company. In general, knowledge and expertise gained about particular products increase an individual's value to a company. In the case of outside sales representatives, building a client base makes him or her highly valued by an employer. Two certificates, the certified professional manufacturers' representative certificate and the certified sales professional certificate, are both offered by the Manufacturers' Representatives Education Research Foundation (www.mrref.org). Some companies may encourage employees to become certified through these trainings.

RESOURCES

- Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, Career Information System: <http://www.masscis.intocareers.org/>.
- Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Research Foundation – offers certification as a Certified Professional Manufacturers' Representative (CPMR) or Certified Sales Professional (CSP). Also offers an online Career Center: <http://www.mrref.org>.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook: Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos119.htm>.

ⁱ Data taken from *The Massachusetts Business Hiring Expectations for the 1st Quarter 2009: As Collected in October and November 2008 as part of the semi-annual 2008 4th Quarter Job Vacancy Survey*, the industry "Technical and Scientific" is labeled as "Professional and Technical Services" in this report.

ⁱⁱ Median Annual Salary in Massachusetts in 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.

ⁱⁱⁱ Information in each of these sections was taken from the *2008–2009 Occupational Outlook Handbook* as viewed at <http://www.bls.gov>.