

Focusing on sales, “Karriere.at”

Vienna, Austria – Sales drive businesses, and it is essential to hire the best sales staff. But is the sales department really such a shark tank? Last year, [Conrad Pramböck](#) (CP) said: “In difficult times, the best remain.” His advice to sales staff: “Be careful, think about what you are doing – don’t look for a quick closing, but aim for a good customer relationship.”

The following table gives some idea of the average ages and gross annual salaries in various positions:

	Age	Lower Limit	Average	Upper Limit
Insurance	47	EUR 16,500	EUR 19,000	EUR 22,100
Clothing Retail Industry	27	EUR 24,100	EUR 27,100	EUR 30,900
Retail Banking Advisor	33	EUR 36,400	EUR 42,600	EUR 49,000
B2B Production Company	38	EUR 41,600	EUR 48,600	EUR 55,200
Pharmaceutical Representative	35	EUR 45,900	EUR 53,200	EUR 61,800
Banking Corporate Customers	45	EUR 57,600	EUR 66,100	EUR 74,500
IT Sales	37	EUR 58,100	EUR 68,200	EUR 77,300
Key Account in B2B Industry	45	EUR 67,800	EUR 76,200	EUR 88,800



How would you assess the labour market in sales at the moment?

CP: If you feel comfortable with the sales process, this field is probably the best area to forge a successful career, simply because your performance is so transparent. In comparison, it can be difficult to show off your skills in HR or Auditing – everyone knows that Accounting is very important, but your performance is not so clearly seen.

“In football, it is of course important to have a good goalie and coach, but most of the applause goes to a striker like Ronaldo when he scores a goal.”

Of course, not everybody is a born salesman. For sales, you must enjoy approaching people, working with people and expressing yourself. In the long run, to succeed in sales you must be able to stand behind the product or service that you are selling – otherwise you will quickly become untrustworthy and disreputable.

What is your prognosis? What are the opportunities and risks?

CP: In recent years, a lot of things have happened in sales. Things are becoming increasingly difficult because of the competition in many industries. These days, it is not enough to be good locally – you must be good internationally. The Internet and social media have brought greater transparency to international competition in many industries. For example, take IT services: If I want a website to be programmed properly, I compete directly with people from India or Southeast Asia, because their services are cheaper.

It's all about trust!

CP: In my experience, it is very important to build a sustainable relationship of trust with the customer. In many industries, it is no longer so easy to make a quick buck, because customers are now much more critical and seek comparative offers. Of course, some will make decisions based on price, but in the end, I would rather work with people who radiate a trust relationship. This sometimes causes conflict where companies are driven by quarterly results, and employees can be dismissed if they do not make the numbers. This can work in areas with a fast turnaround, for example IT sales, but I have also noticed that customers are becoming more critical when there is no continuity and a different employee is the contact person each time. There are also customers who only buy when the contact person remains the same from year to year. You are therefore well advised to maintain stability and consistency, whether as an employee or a company.

What role does the level of education play in sales?

CP: This is different for every sector. In most cases it is enough if I can sell products well, although for some sectors it is very important that the job is done by a university graduate – if the customers are also university graduates, they should be on an equal footing. However, it is also possible to succeed in sales without a college degree, simply because in this field your performance is so transparent. In other words: anyone who can sell, can create a successful career.

Does training have any impact on salary?

CP: For young people, sales training relates primarily to technique, for example, telephone training on the best ways to arrange meetings or attract customers, etc. This is mainly handled in-house, although it can also be done with external trainers and consultants, when a sales coach or a telephone trainer is brought in.

A good seller is not the same as a good leader.

How quickly can you build up a career?

CP: Very quickly! Anyone who wants to make a career in sales just needs to sell more! Interestingly, this often means that the best salespeople then become executives. However, for this you need other skills. Great sales

skills are the best basis for being promoted to executive positions – the higher the sales figures, the higher the bonus. However, as a manager, I don't need to be able to sell by myself – that's what my team does – but to lead my team members very well. If I promote my best salesperson to executive and s/he can't hack it, I have lost an excellent salesperson and gained a bad manager. In my opinion, many companies invest too little in making young executives into better managers – and with these efforts they do not even make better salespeople.

Do you have any advice on how to get more money when working in sales?

CP: Very simple: sell more! Basically there are two ways to increase sales:

1. Better performance;
2. More responsibility.

To improve performance: Many companies have introduced a bonus system, where you can be rewarded for increasing sales or revenue.

To increase responsibilities: Sell more products, a broader product portfolio, to a larger region. If I start out responsible for West Austria, and expand to sell throughout the entire DACH region, I can reasonably ask for a salary increase and management responsibilities.



[Conrad Pramböck](#) is the Head of Compensation Consulting at [Pedersen & Partners](#). Based in Vienna, Austria, he is responsible for consulting companies on all aspects of compensation, including providing companies with up-to-date market information on salary ranges and design of bonus systems across all industries and geographies. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Pramböck held several senior positions in international consultancy firms. He started his career with a German Consultancy firm working in management consulting and later in the Compensation Consulting business unit based in Austria. For the following seven years he worked with one of the top Austrian Executive Search firms as the Head of Compensation Consulting. He was responsible for all international compensation consulting activities and developed and maintained an international compensation database in 40 countries.

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If you would like to conduct an interview with a representative of Pedersen & Partners, or have other media-related requests, please contact: Diana Danu, Marketing and Communications Manager at: diana.danu@pedersenandpartners.com