

## Be proud!

ROB BARHAM is adamant that every salesperson should respect his role...



Life as a salesperson can be exciting and challenging. We work in partnership with

customers to develop relationships. Yet, how many of us can say without personal embarrassment and fear of being stereotyped that we are proud to be working in sales?

Do you experience situations similar to this one? You are sitting at the dinner table with people you have met for the first time. The architect turns to the doctor and they both proudly announce to each other their professions. You start to feel uncomfortable at the response you may receive. Then it's your turn and you mumble: "I'm a salesperson."

I once heard of a salesman's wife who would interrupt at such a time and remark: "But he used to be a teacher!" This has been a personal bugbear of mine throughout my sales career. The Americans seem proud of the sales profession, yet here in the UK we appear to be ashamed. This is because we do not vocalise the pivotal role sales plays in the business environment and how exciting and unique a position it is linking businesses with consumers.

Within the economy, the sales profession forms the key link between the producers of goods and services and their potential buyers. Sales is the mediator between businesses and end-users. The number employed in sales is 13 per cent of the UK Services Sector and is growing. This is greater than the total employed in engineering, accountancy and consultancy combined.

### Foundation of the company

There are many reasons why we should feel proud to work in sales. Firstly, we provide a beneficial service which enables businesses to contribute to the growth of the economy. We are in position of developing unique and valuable relationships with clients. Sales is a consultative human-to-human experience and the opportunities within this are fun to explore.

In the past, the sales philosophy was to *put yourself first* and focus on 'closing the deal'. The sales profession has created a negative name for itself and is often associated with unwanted visits and calls or even harassment. At TACK International, our training and development courses encourage delegates to understand their customers and to develop a buyer-oriented view that is central to building quality relationships and respect. It is vital to understand and interpret clients' needs so that sales elevates itself to concentrate on quality and consultative customer service.

We will be working alongside the ISMM to help take this challenging, rewarding and critical profession to a higher standing in both society and business; thus attaining the prestige bestowed on other professionals. ■

*Rob Barham is Chief Executive of TACK International. He leads the organisation following his promotion from the role of UK Sales Director in May 2004. [www.tack.co.uk](http://www.tack.co.uk)*