

PRESS RELEASE
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Retail hails sales, but procurement sees a fail

- *Sales biggest hero in retail (34 per cent) but slips to third place across all industries (24 per cent)*
 - *Procurement languishing joint last with HR on nine per cent*

Sales skills are overlooked and undervalued in all industries except retail, according to new research from Huthwaite International.

The YouGov study asked business decision makers from a range of sectors which departments they considered the 'heroes' in businesses. While sales came out top for those in retail on 34 per cent, across all industries surveyed sales slipped to third place (24 per cent), behind research and development on 32 per cent and production and manufacturing on 26 per cent.

Tony Hughes, CEO at sales and negotiation experts Huthwaite International, comments:

"Businesses operating in the retail sector understand that sales are crucial, but other industries still don't seem to give credit where credit is due. Possibly they believe that services and products just sell themselves, which is certainly not the case.

"Skilled salespeople build value for the product or service they sell, working with customers to understand their needs and how these needs can best be served. It's not a one-size-fits-all approach, but a tailored and consultative effort that is essential to success in all industries."

At the other end of the scale, procurement and HR came joint last, each being named as heroes of businesses by only nine per cent of respondents.

Mr Hughes continues: "Procurement continues to suffer from a serious reputation problem when it comes to how it's viewed by the rest of the business. Research we conducted in 2013 showed that procurement's image within the business is negative overall and it seems not much has improved over the last few years.

"Sales can make their own lives easier – and also help to make procurement look good to their colleagues – by ensuring that they clearly articulate the customer benefits of what they are selling and ensure at least some of these benefits are expressed in terms that enhance the value to procurement.

"Also, by involving procurement earlier in the process, salespeople can help them communicate the value of what is being sold to the wider business. The closer salespeople can get to the procurement department the better, both for salespeople to do their job and for procurement to improve their image in the business," finishes Mr Hughes.

Other departments ranked in the research include IT, which came in fourth place with 19 per cent, followed by the CEO and marketing and communications, both on 16 per cent. Finance and accounting came in with 12 per cent of respondents naming them heroes, above procurement and HR on nine per cent.

Ends

About the research:

The research was carried out for Huthwaite International by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 636 senior decision makers from all business sizes (excluding sole traders). Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd -

9th May 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of British business size.

Notes to editors:

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About Huthwaite International

Huthwaite International is best known as the creator of SPIN[®] Selling – helping salespeople in all countries and most languages to improve their performance. Companies worldwide trust UK-based Huthwaite International, as a leading behavioural change consultancy and owner of the SPIN[®] trademark in over 50 countries, to deliver measurable results through its research-based models.

The company provides innovative skills training and advice for progressive individuals and organisations in sectors such as IT, financial services, healthcare, telecoms, manufacturing, legal and professional services. It has a client list of thousands of companies worldwide and trains some 14,000 people each year.

Besides the SPIN[®] Suite, Huthwaite International offers training and reinforcement based on its own original research models in negotiation skills, communication skills, customer service skills. Established in 1974, Huthwaite is headquartered in Wentworth, South Yorkshire and handles international projects through its national offices or associated companies throughout Europe, USA, South Africa and Asia Pacific. The company has won two Queen's Awards in 1999 and 2008 for International trade.

For more information on Huthwaite's cost-effective services and solutions, please visit www.huthwaite.co.uk.