

## Sales Representative

A sales representative, or sales rep, travels about showing goods to individuals or businesses and trying to sell them. They can also be known as sales executives.

### The Work

The work varies from company to company, and involves either business-to-business (B2B) or direct sales, business-to-consumer (B2C). Main areas include:

- **selling to shops** – which could include shoes, jewellery, stationery, food and a wide range of other goods
- **technical sales** – selling industrial goods to manufacturing companies
- **services** – selling a service such as advertising space
- **pharmaceutical and medical** – selling medicines and equipment to hospitals and health centres. (See the [Medical Representative](#) job profile).

You could be:

- 'cold calling' possible customers, phoning or visiting them without prior contact
- demonstrating new goods to customers, describing the features and encouraging them to buy
- persuading past customers to take out repeat orders
- discussing and agreeing on a price
- developing business relations and managing customer accounts
- trying to increase sales figures in your area and meeting sales targets
- doing administrative work including accounts
- monitoring which items sell well and collecting customer feedback.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay without commission can range from £17,000 to £25,000 a year. Commission or bonuses can sometimes bring it up to between £30,000 and £55,000 or more a year. Some jobs pay only commission. You may be provided with a company car, mobile phone and laptop.

### Conditions

- You will spend most of your time travelling and meeting customers.
- When not on the road you will probably be based in an office or at home.
- You work long and varied hours and may spend some nights away from home.
- You may have to work on a self-employed basis, arranging your own National Insurance and tax

contributions.

## Getting In

There is no single route into this job.

- Some people progress to sales rep after working for a company in administration or retail sales.
- Many companies nowadays want a degree (SCQF Level 9-10) or at least an HND (SCQF Level 8). Useful subjects include business, management or marketing.
- For technical or medical sales you usually need a degree or HND in a relevant subject.
- To get on to a degree course, you need 4-5 Highers.
- Some fashion retail companies have a direct entry scheme for graduates.
- You need a full, clean driving licence.

## What Does It Take

You should be:

- confident when talking to people
- persuasive and a good negotiator
- well organised
- smartly presented
- able to build up good business relationships
- patient
- decisive
- motivated and driven
- able to work under pressure to meet sales targets.

You need:

- excellent communication skills
- good networking skills
- to be able to deal with rejection
- good IT and number skills
- business awareness
- in-depth knowledge of the items you sell.

## Training

- Training is on the job.
- You can study for industry recognised qualifications awarded by the [Institute of Sales Management Education \(ISM Education\)](#).
- The SVQ in Retail (Sales Professional) is available at SCQF Level 6.

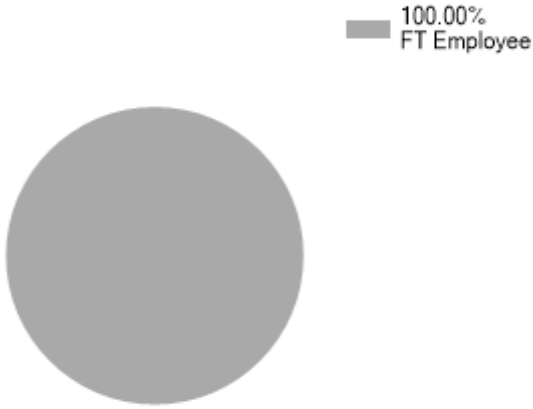
## Getting On

- You might go on to become an area sales manager, organising a team of sales reps.
- You could move into the popular area of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) such as food, drink or alcohol, or in packaged goods.
- You could move into business development or marketing.
- You could possibly become a company director.

## Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

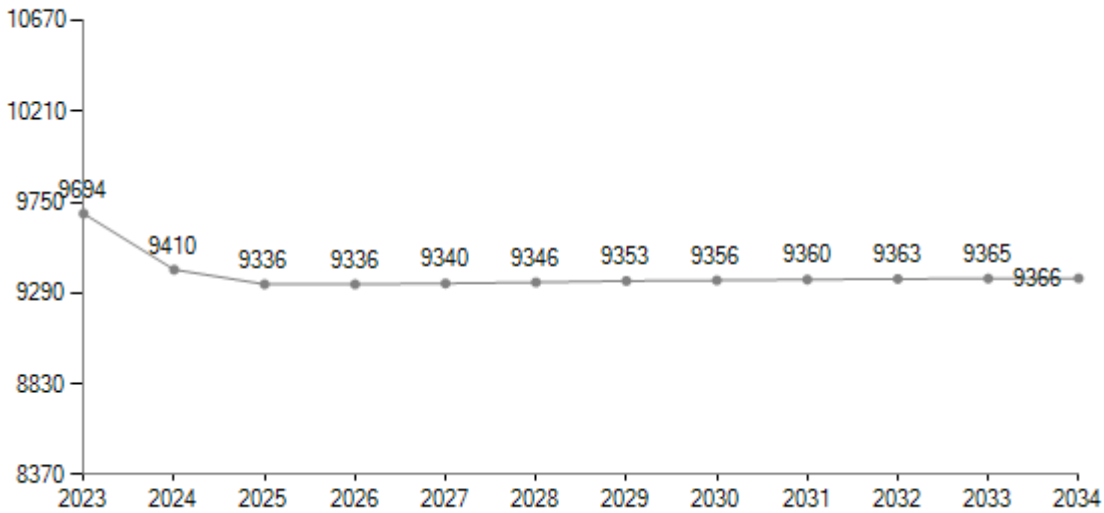


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)