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# Sales Occupations



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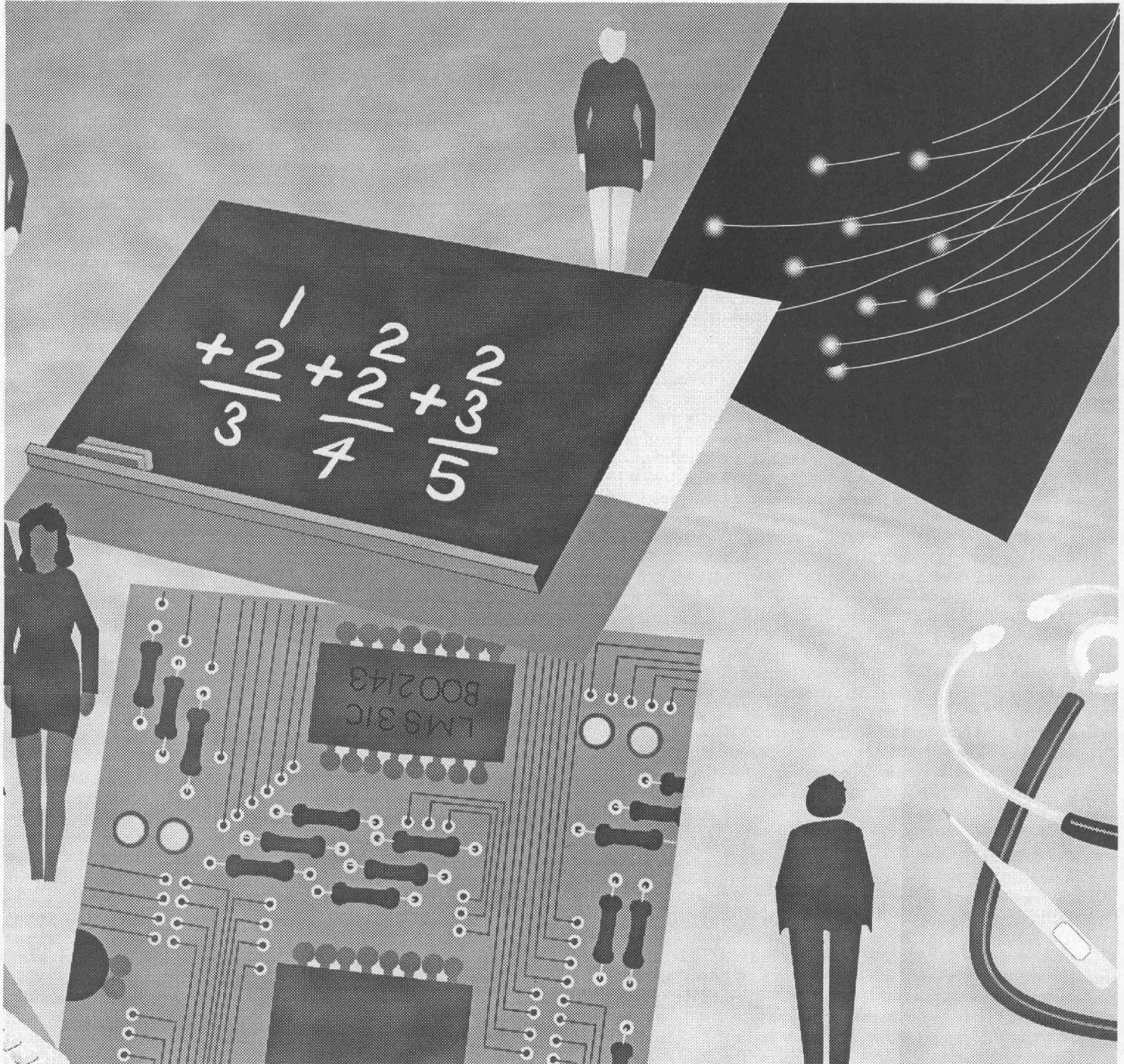
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## Cashiers

(D.O.T. 209.567-014; 211.362-010, .367, .462, .467, .482-010; 249.467; and 294.567)

### Nature of the Work

Supermarkets, department stores, gasoline service stations, movie theaters, restaurants, and many other businesses employ cashiers to facilitate the sale of their merchandise. Most cashiers total bills, receive money, make change, fill out charge forms, and give receipts. Bank tellers, who perform similar duties but work in financial institutions, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.

Although specific job duties vary by employer, cashiers are usually assigned to a register and given a drawer at the beginning of their shifts. The drawer contains a "bank" of money. Cashiers must count their bank to insure that it contains the correct amount of money and that there is an adequate supply of change. At the end of their shift, they once again count the drawers' contents and compare the totals with sales data. An occasional shortage of small amounts may be overlooked, but repeated shortages are grounds for dismissal in many establishments.

Cashiers traditionally have rung up customers' purchases using a cash register—manually entering the price of each product the consumer was buying. However, most establishments are now using more sophisticated equipment, such as scanners and computers. In stores with scanners, the cashier passes the product's Universal Product Code over the scanning device, which transmits the code number to a computer. The computer identifies the item and its price. In other establishments, cashiers manually enter a code into a computer, and a description of the item and its price appear on the screen.

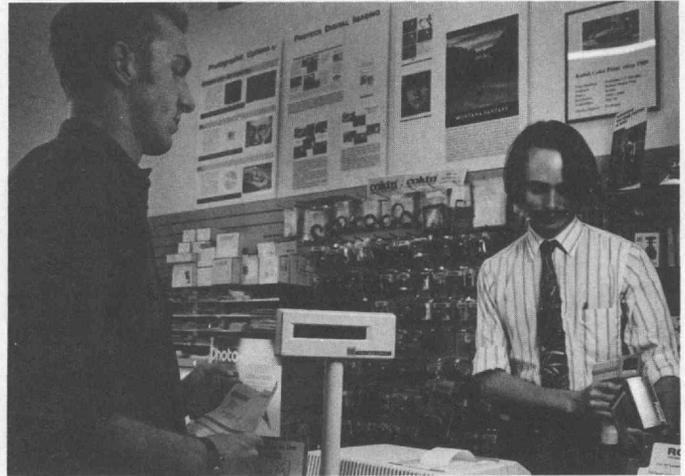
After entering all items and subtracting the value of any coupons or special discounts, cashiers total the bill and take payment. Depending on the type of establishment, payment may be by cash, check, charge, or increasingly, debit cards. Cashiers must know the store's policies and procedures for accepting each type of payment. For checks and charges, they may have to request additional identification from the customer or call in for an authorization. When the sale is complete, cashiers issue a receipt to the customer and return the appropriate change. They may also wrap or bag the purchase.

In addition to counting the contents of their drawer at the end of their shift, cashiers usually separate charge forms, return slips, coupons, and any other non cash items. Cashiers may also handle returns and exchanges. They must insure that the merchandise is in good condition and determine where and when it was purchased and the type of payment used.

Cashiers may have other duties as well. In many supermarkets, for example, they weigh produce and bulk food as well as return unwanted items to the shelves. In convenience stores, cashiers may be required to know how to use a variety of machines other than cash registers, and how to furnish money orders. Operating ticket-dispensing machines and answering questions are common duties for cashiers who work at movie theaters and ticket agencies. Counter and rental clerks, who perform many similar duties, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.

### Working Conditions

More than one-half of all cashiers are on part-time schedules. Hours of work often vary depending on the needs of the employer. Generally, cashiers are expected to work weekends, evenings, and holidays to accommodate customers' needs. However, because of this, many employers offer flexible schedules. For example, full-time workers who work on weekends may receive time off during the week. Because the holiday season is the busiest time for most retailers, many employers restrict the use of vacation time from Thanksgiving through the beginning of January.



Many cashiers use scanning equipment.

Most cashiers work indoors, usually standing in booths or behind counters. In addition, they are often unable to leave their workstations without supervisory approval since they are responsible for large sums of money. The work of cashiers can be very repetitious but improvements in machine design are being made to combat problems caused by repetitive motion.

Dealing with angry customers can be very taxing but for those who like daily interaction with people, the job can be rewarding.

### Employment

Cashiers held about 2,747,000 jobs in 1992. Although employed in nearly every industry, more than one-third of all jobs were in supermarkets and other food stores. Department stores, gasoline service stations, drug stores, and other retail establishments also employed large numbers of these workers. Because cashiers are needed in businesses and organizations of all types and sizes, job opportunities are found throughout the country.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Cashier jobs tend to be entry level positions requiring little or no previous work experience. Although there are no specific educational requirements, employers filling full-time jobs often prefer applicants with a high school diploma.

Nearly all cashiers are trained on the job. In small firms, beginners are often trained by an experienced worker. The first day is usually spent observing the operation and becoming familiar with the store's equipment, policies, and procedures. After this, trainees are assigned to a register—frequently under the supervision of a more experienced worker. In larger firms, before being placed at a cash register, trainees first spend several days in classes. Topics typically covered include a description of the industry and the company, instruction on the store's policies, procedures, and equipment operation, and security.

Training for experienced workers is not common except when new equipment is introduced or when procedures change. In these cases, training is given on the job by the employer or a representative of the equipment manufacturer.

Persons who want to become cashiers should be able to do repetitive work accurately. They also need basic arithmetic skills, good manual dexterity and, because they deal constantly with the public, cashiers should be neat in appearance and be able to deal tactfully and pleasantly with customers. In addition, some firms seek persons who have operated specialized equipment or who have business experience, such as typing, selling, or handling money.

Advancement opportunities for cashiers vary. For those working part time, promotion may be to a full-time position. Others advance to head cashier or cash office clerk. In addition, the job offers a good

opportunity to learn an employer's business and so may serve as a steppingstone to a more responsible position.

### Job Outlook

Employment of cashiers is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2005 due to expanding demand for goods and services by a growing population. Although growth will account for numerous openings, most jobs will result from the need to replace experienced workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. As in the past, replacement needs will create a significant number of job openings, for the occupation is large and turnover is much higher than average. Opportunities for part-time work are expected to continue to be excellent.

Workers under the age of 25 traditionally have filled many of the openings in this occupation. This age group shrank in numbers during the decade of the 1980's and although it will rebound during the 1990's, it will not attain its 1992 share of the workforce until about 2005. To attract and retain workers, employers may offer higher wages, additional benefits, and flexible schedules. Recruitment efforts also may be directed toward non-traditional groups such as retired or disabled persons.

### Earnings

Cashiers have earnings ranging from the minimum wage to several times that amount. Wages tend to be higher in areas where there is intense competition for workers. In establishments covered by Federal law, those beginning at the minimum wage earned \$4.25 an hour in 1993. In some States, the minimum wage in many establishments is governed by State law, and where State minimums are higher, the establishment must pay at least that amount.

In 1992, median weekly earnings for full-time cashiers were about \$219. The middle 50 percent earned between \$185 and \$295; 10 percent earned below \$153; and 10 percent earned above \$414.

Benefits for full-time cashiers tend to be better than for those working part time. Cashiers often receive health and life insurance and paid vacations. In addition, those working in retail establishments often receive discounts on purchases and those in restaurants may receive free or low-cost meals.

### Related Occupations

Cashiers receive payment for the purchase of goods and services. Other workers with similar duties include food counter clerks, bank tellers, counter and rental clerks, postal service clerks, and sales clerks.

### Sources of Additional Information

For information about employment opportunities as a cashier, contact:

☞ National Association of Convenience Stores, 1605 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2792.

☞ Service Station Dealers of America, 801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 109, Alexandria, VA 22314.

☞ United Food and Commercial Workers Union, 1775 K St. NW., Washington, DC 20006-1502.

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## Counter and Rental Clerks

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(D.O.T. 216.482-030; 249.362-010, .366-010; 295.357-010, -014 and -018, .367-010, -014, and -026, .467-010, -014, and -018, .477-010; 299.367-018; 369.367-010 and -014, .477-014, and .677-010)

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### Nature of the Work

Whether renting power tools, dropping off clothes to be dry-cleaned, or getting appliances serviced, we rely on counter and rental clerks to handle these transactions efficiently. Although specific duties vary by establishment, counter and rental clerks are responsible for answering questions involving product availability, cost, and rental provisions. They may give other types of advice as

well. Counter and rental clerks also take orders, calculate fees, receive payments, and accept returns. (Cashiers and retail sales workers, occupations with similar duties, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Regardless of where they work, counter and rental clerks must be knowledgeable about the company's services, policies, and procedures. For example, in the car rental industry, they inform customers about the features of the different types of automobiles available and their daily and weekly rental costs, ensure that customers meet age or other requirements, and indicate when and in what condition the car must be returned. In dry-cleaning establishments, counter clerks inform customers when items will be ready. In other establishments, counter and rental clerks use their special knowledge to give advice on a wide variety of products and services ranging from hydraulic tools to shoe repair.

When taking orders counter and rental clerks use various types of equipment. In some establishments, they write out tickets and order forms. However, computers and bar code scanners are quickly becoming the norm. Most computer systems are user friendly and usually require very little data entry. Scanners "read" the product code and display a description of the item on a computer screen. Clerks must insure, however, that the data on the screen matches the actual product.

### Working Conditions

Because firms employing counter and rental clerks generally operate at the convenience of their customers, these workers often work night and weekend hours. However, because of this many employers offer flexible schedules. Many counter and rental clerks work a 40-hour week but nearly one-half are on part-time schedules—usually during rush periods such as weekends, evenings, and holidays.

Working conditions are usually pleasant; most stores and service establishments are clean, well-lighted, and temperature controlled. However, clerks are on their feet much of the time and may be confined behind a small counter area. This job requires constant interaction with the public and can be taxing—especially when things go wrong.

### Employment

Counter and rental clerks held about 242,000 jobs in 1992. About 3 of every 10 clerks worked for a laundry or dry-cleaning establishment. Other large employers included automobile or truck rental firms, equipment rental firms, and miscellaneous entertainment and recreation establishments. Four out of 10 counter and rental clerks work part time.

Counter and rental clerks are employed throughout the country but are concentrated in metropolitan areas where personal services and renting and leasing services are in greater demand.



Four of every 10 counter and rental clerks work part time.

## Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Counter and rental clerk jobs are primarily entry level and require little or no experience and little formal education. However, many employers prefer high school graduates for these positions.

In most companies, counter and rental clerks are trained on the job. Clerks usually learn how to operate the equipment and become familiar with the establishment's policies and procedures under the observation of a more experienced worker. However, some employers have formal classroom training programs lasting from a few hours to a few weeks. Topics covered in this training usually include a description of the industry and the company, company policies and procedures, equipment operation, sales techniques, and customer service. Counter and rental clerks must also become familiar with the different products and services rented or provided by their company in order to give customers the best possible service.

Persons who want to become counter and rental clerks should enjoy working with people and have the ability to deal tactfully with difficult customers. In addition, good oral and written communication skills are essential.

Advancement opportunities depend on the size and type of company. However, jobs as counter and rental clerks offer good opportunities for workers to learn about their company's products and business practices. These jobs can be steppingstones to more responsible positions, because it is common in many establishments to promote counter and rental clerks into assistant manager positions.

In certain industries, such as equipment repair, counter and rental jobs may be an additional or alternate source of income for workers who are unemployed or entering semi-retirement. For example, a retired mechanic could prove invaluable at a tool rental center because of his or her relevant knowledge.

## Job Outlook

Employment in this occupation is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005 due to anticipated employment growth in the industries where they are concentrated—laundries and dry cleaners, equipment rental and leasing, automotive rentals, and amusement and recreation services. Despite this growth, however, most job openings will arise from the need to replace experienced workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. Part-time employment opportunities are expected to be plentiful.

## Earnings

Counter and rental clerks typically start at the minimum wage, which, in establishments covered by Federal law, was \$4.25 an hour in 1992. In areas where there is intense competition for workers, however, wages are often much higher. In addition to their wages, some counter and rental clerks receive commissions based on the number of contracts they complete or services they sell.

Retail counter clerks earned a median weekly income of \$252 in 1992. The middle 50 percent earned between \$201 and \$383 a week. The bottom 10 percent earned less than \$175; the top 10 percent earned more than \$514.

Full-time workers typically receive health and life insurance and paid vacation and sick leave. Benefits for counter and rental clerks who work part time tend to be significantly less than for those who work full time. Many companies offer discounts to both full- and part-time employees on the services they provide.

## Related Occupations

Counter and rental clerks take orders and receive payment for services rendered. Other workers with similar duties include cashiers, retail sales workers, food counter clerks, postal service clerks, and bank tellers.

## Sources of Additional Information

For more information about opportunities as counter and rental clerks contact:

☞ Association of Progressive Rental Organizations, 6300 Bridgepoint Pky., Austin, TX 78730.

# Insurance Agents and Brokers

(D.O.T. 239.267 and 250.257-010)

## Nature of the Work

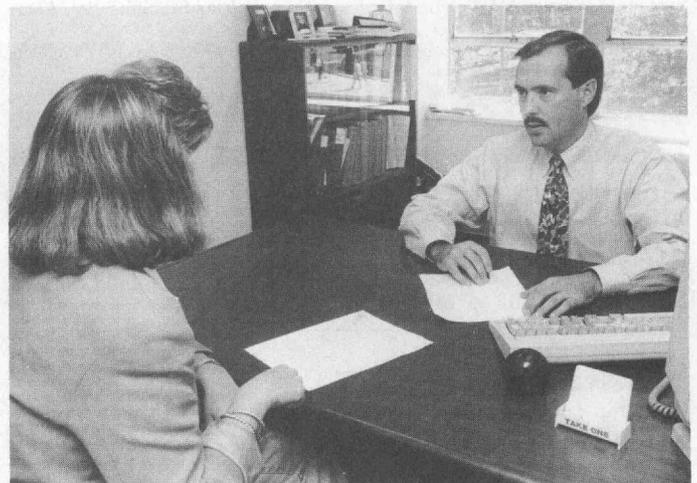
Most people have their first contact with an insurance company through an insurance agent or broker. These professionals sell individuals and businesses insurance policies that provide protection against loss. Insurance agents and brokers help individuals, families, and businesses select the right policy that best provides insurance protection for their lives and health, as well as for their automobiles, jewelry, personal valuables, furniture, household items, businesses, and other properties. Agents and brokers prepare reports, maintain records, and, in the event of a loss, help policyholders settle insurance claims. Specialists in group policies may help an employer provide employees the opportunity to buy insurance through payroll deductions. *Insurance agents* may work for one insurance company or as "independent agents" selling for several companies. *Insurance brokers* do not sell for a particular company, but place insurance policies for their clients with the company that offers the best rate and coverage.

Insurance agents sell one or more of several types of insurance: Life, property/casualty, health, disability, and long-term care. Life insurance agents specialize in selling policies that pay survivors when a policyholder dies. Depending on the policyholder's circumstances, a whole-life policy also can be designed to provide retirement income, funds for the education of children, or other benefits. Life insurance agents and brokers also are sometimes called life underwriters. (See the statement on underwriters elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Property/casualty insurance agents and brokers sell policies that protect individuals and businesses from financial loss as a result of automobile accidents, fire or theft, or other property losses. Property/casualty insurance can also cover workers' compensation, product liability, or medical malpractice. Many life and property/casualty insurance agents also sell health insurance policies covering the costs of hospital and medical care or loss of income due to illness or injury.

An increasing number of insurance agents and brokers offer comprehensive financial planning services to their clients, such as retirement planning counseling. As a result, many insurance agents and brokers are also licensed to sell mutual funds, annuities, and other securities. (See the section on securities and financial services sales representatives elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Since insurance sales agents obtain many new accounts through referrals, it is important that agents maintain regular contact with their clients to ensure their financial needs are being met as personal and business needs change. Developing a satisfied clientele who will recommend an agent's services to other potential customers is a key to success in this field.



*It is important that insurance agents and brokers maintain regular contact with their clients.*

## Working Conditions

Most insurance agents and brokers work in small offices, contacting clients and providing insurance policy information. However, most of their time is spent outside their offices, traveling locally to meet with clients and close sales. They generally arrange their own hours of work, and often schedule evening and weekend appointments for the convenience of clients. Many work more than 40 hours a week.

## Employment

Insurance agents and brokers held about 415,000 jobs in 1992. About one-third of all agents and brokers are self-employed. While most insurance agents specialize in life insurance, a growing number of "multiline agents" offer life, property/casualty, and health and disability policies. The following tabulation shows the percent distribution of wage and salary jobs by industry.

Total .....	100
Insurance agents, brokers and service .....	41
Life insurance carriers .....	37
Fire, marine, and casualty insurance carriers .....	14
Medical service plans and health insurance carriers .....	4
Pension funds and miscellaneous insurance carriers .....	1
Other industries .....	3

Agents and brokers are employed in cities and towns throughout the country, but most work in or near large population centers. Some insurance agents and brokers are employed in the headquarters of insurance companies, but most work out of local company offices or independent agencies.

## Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

For jobs selling insurance, companies prefer college graduates—particularly those who have majored in business or economics. Some hire high school graduates with potential or proven sales ability or who have been successful in other types of work. In fact, most entrants to agent and broker jobs transfer from other occupations, so they tend to be older, on average, than entrants to many other occupations.

College training may help agents or brokers grasp more quickly the technical aspects of insurance policies and the fundamentals and procedures of selling insurance. Many colleges and universities offer courses in insurance, and some schools offer a bachelor's degree in insurance. College courses in finance, mathematics, accounting, economics, business law, government, and business administration enable insurance agents or brokers to understand how social, marketing, and economic conditions relate to the insurance industry. It is important for insurance agents and brokers to keep current with issues concerning clients. Changes in tax laws, government benefit programs, and other State and Federal regulations can affect the insurance needs of clients and how agents conduct business. Courses in psychology, sociology, and public speaking can prove useful in improving sales techniques. In addition, some basic familiarity with computers is very important. The use of computers to provide instantaneous information on a wide variety of financial products has greatly improved agents' and brokers' efficiency and enabled them to devote more time to clients.

All insurance agents and brokers must obtain a license in the States where they plan to sell insurance. In most States, licenses are issued only to applicants who complete specified courses and then pass written examinations covering insurance fundamentals and the State insurance laws. Agents and brokers who plan to sell mutual funds and other securities must also obtain a separate securities license. New agents usually receive training at the agencies where they work and, frequently, also at the insurance company's home office. Beginners sometimes attend company-sponsored classes to prepare for examinations. Others study on their own and accompany experienced agents when they call on prospective clients.

As the diversity of financial products sold by insurance agents and brokers increases, employers are placing greater emphasis on continuing professional education. Agents and brokers can hone their practical selling skills and broaden their knowledge of insurance and other financial services and planning by taking courses at colleges and universities and attending institutes, conferences, and seminars sponsored by insurance organizations.

A number of organizations offer professional designation programs which certify expertise in specialties such as life, health, or property and casualty insurance or financial consulting. Although

voluntary, professional designation assures clients and employers that an agent has a thorough understanding of the relevant specialty. Many professional societies now require agents to commit to continuing education in order to retain designation. Nearly every state has or soon will make continuing education mandatory.

Insurance agents and brokers should be enthusiastic, outgoing, self-confident, disciplined, hard working, and able to communicate effectively. They should be able to inspire customer confidence. Some companies give personality tests to prospective employees because personality attributes are important in sales work. Because they usually work without supervision, agents and brokers must be able to plan their time well and have the initiative to locate new clients.

An insurance agent who shows sales ability and leadership may become a sales manager in a local office. A few advance to agency superintendent or executive positions. However, many who have built up a good clientele prefer to remain in sales work. Some, particularly in the property/casualty field, establish their own independent agencies or brokerage firms.

## Job Outlook

Employment of insurance agents and brokers is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2005. Most job openings are expected to result from the need to replace agents and brokers who leave the occupation. Many beginners find it difficult to establish a sufficiently large clientele in this highly competitive business; consequently, many eventually leave for other jobs. Opportunities should be best for ambitious people who enjoy sales work and who develop expertise in a wide range of insurance and financial services.

Future demand for agents and brokers depends on the volume of sales of insurance and other financial products. The growing number of working women should increase insurance sales. Rising incomes as well as a concern for financial security also may stimulate sales of mutual funds, variable annuities, and other financial products and services. Growing demand for long-term health care and pension benefits for retirees—an increasing proportion of the population—should spur insurance sales. Sales of property/casualty insurance should rise as more people seek coverage not only for their homes, cars, and valuables, but also for expensive, advanced technology products such as home computers. As new businesses emerge and existing firms expand coverage, sales of commercial insurance should increase. In addition, complex types of commercial coverage such as product liability, workers' compensation, employee benefits, and pollution liability insurance are increasingly in demand.

Employment of agents and brokers will not keep pace with the rising level of insurance sales. Using computers, agents can access an abundance of information on potential clients, allowing them to save time and money by carefully crafting individually tailored plans. Consequently, agents will be able to handle a greater volume of sales. Many companies and agencies are diversifying their marketing techniques to include some direct mail or telephone sales, as well as other methods. These methods reduce the time agents must spend developing sales leads, allowing them to concentrate on following up on leads. In some cases, clients can purchase policies without a visit from an agent. Also, customer service representatives are increasingly assuming some sales functions, such as expanding accounts, and, occasionally, generating new accounts. The trend toward multiline agents, self-insurance, and group policies also will cause employment to rise more slowly than the volume of insurance sales. In addition, large firms may increasingly hire risk managers to analyze their insurance needs and select the best policies.

Most individuals and businesses consider insurance a necessity, regardless of economic conditions. Therefore, agents are not likely to face unemployment because of a recession.

## Earnings

The median annual earnings of salaried insurance sales workers was \$30,100 in 1992. The middle 50 percent earned between \$20,900 and \$42,200 a year. The lowest 10 percent earned \$15,400 or less, while the top 10 percent earned over \$64,600. Most independent agents are paid on a commission only basis, whereas sales workers who are employees of an agency may be paid in one of three ways: Salary only, salary plus commission, or salary plus bonus. Commissions, however, are the most common form of compensation, especially for experienced agents. The amount of the commission depends on the

type and amount of insurance sold, and whether the transaction is a new policy or a renewal. Bonuses are usually awarded when agents meet their production goals or when an agency's profit goals are met. Some agents involved with financial planning receive an hourly fee for their services rather than a commission.

Agency-paid benefits to sales agent employees generally include continuing education, group insurance plans, and office space and support services. Many agencies also pay for automobile and transportation expenses, conventions and meetings, promotion and marketing expenses, and retirement plans. Independent agents working for insurance agencies receive fewer benefits, but their commissions may be higher to help them pay for promotion and marketing expenses. They are typically responsible for their own travel and automobile expenses, life insurance and retirement plans, and receive no paid holidays or vacations. In addition, all agents are legally responsible for any mistakes that they make, and independent agents must purchase their own insurance to cover damages from their errors and omissions.

### Related Occupations

Other workers who sell financial products or services include real estate agents and brokers, securities and financial services sales representatives, financial advisors, estate planning specialists, and manufacturers' sales workers.

### Sources of Additional Information

General occupational information about insurance agents and brokers is available from the home office of many life and casualty insurance companies. Information on State licensing requirements may be obtained from the department of insurance at any State capital.

Information about a career as a life insurance agent also is available from:

☞ National Association of Life Underwriters, 1922 F St. NW., Washington, DC 20006.

For information about insurance sales careers in independent agencies and brokerages, contact:

☞ National Association of Professional Insurance Agents, 400 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

For information about professional designation programs, contact:

☞ American Society of CLU and ChFC, 270 Bryn Mawr Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-2195.

☞ Society of Certified Insurance Counselors, 3630 North Hills Dr., Austin, TX 78731, or call 1-800-633-2165.

☞ Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters, Kahler Hall, 720 Providence Rd., P.O. Box 3009, Malvern, PA 19355-0709.

## Manufacturers' and Wholesale Sales Representatives

(List of D.O.T. codes available on request from the Chief, Division of Occupational Outlook, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, DC 20212.)

### Nature of the Work

Computers, compact discs, and articles of clothing are among the thousands of products bought and sold each day. Manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives are an important part of this process. They market their company's products to manufacturers, wholesale and retail establishments, government agencies, and other institutions. Regardless of the type of product they sell, the primary duties of these sales representatives are to interest wholesale and retail buyers and purchasing agents in their merchandise and ensure that any questions or concerns of current clients are addressed. Sales reps also provide advice to clients on how to increase sales. (Retail sales workers, who sell directly to consumers, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Depending on where they work, these sales representatives have different job titles. Many of those representing manufacturers are referred to as *manufacturers' representatives* and those employed by wholesalers generally are called *sales representatives*. Those selling technical products, for both manufacturers and wholesalers, are

usually called *industrial sales workers* or *sales engineers*. In addition to those employed directly by firms, *manufacturers' agents* are self-employed sales workers who contract their services to all types of companies.

Manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives spend much of their time traveling to and visiting with prospective buyers and current clients. During a sales call, they discuss the customers' needs and suggest how their merchandise or services can meet those needs. They may show samples or catalogs that describe items their company stocks and inform customers about prices, availability, and how their products can save money and improve productivity. In addition, because of the vast number of manufacturers and wholesalers selling similar products, they try to emphasize the unique qualities of the products and services offered by their company. They also take orders and resolve any problems or complaints with the merchandise.

These sales representatives have additional duties as well. For example, sales engineers, who are among the most highly trained sales workers, typically sell products whose installation and optimal use require a great deal of technical expertise and support—products such as material handling equipment, numerical-control machinery, and computer systems. In addition to providing information on their firm's products, these workers help prospective and current buyers with technical problems. For example, they may recommend improved materials and machinery for a firm's manufacturing process, draw up plans of proposed machinery layouts, and estimate cost savings from the use of their equipment. They present this information and negotiate the sale, a process that may take several months. Afterwards sales engineers will keep close contact with the client to assure the client renews the contract. Sales engineers may work with engineers in their own companies, adapting products to a customer's special needs.

Increasingly, sales representatives who lack technical expertise work as a team with a technical expert. For example, a sales representative will make the preliminary contact with customers, introduce his or her company's product, and close the sale. However, the technically trained person will attend the sales presentation to explain and answer technical questions and concerns. In this way, the sales representative is able to spend more time maintaining and soliciting accounts and less time acquiring technical knowledge. After the sale, sales representatives may make frequent followup visits to ensure that the equipment is functioning properly and may even help train customers' employees to operate and maintain new equipment. They may be equipped with a portable computer so they can have instant access to technical, sales, and other information while they are with a customer.

Those selling consumer goods often suggest how and where their merchandise should be displayed. Working with retailers, they may help arrange promotional programs and advertising.

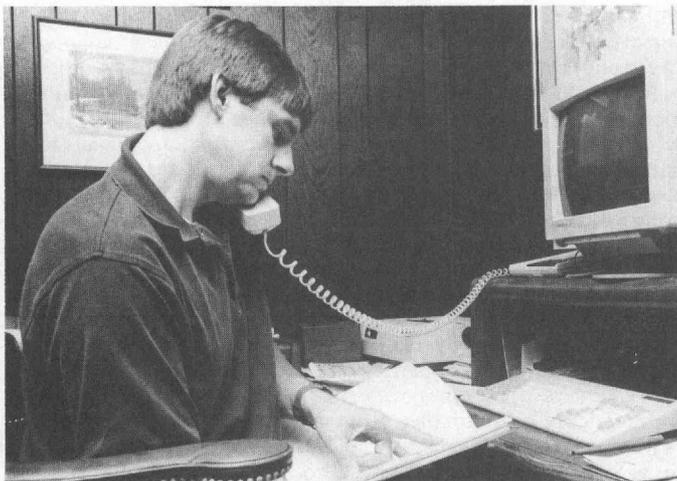
Obtaining new accounts is an important part of the job. Sales representatives follow leads suggested by other clients, from advertisements in trade journals, and from participation in trade shows and conferences. At times, they make unannounced visits to potential clients. In addition, they may spend a lot of time meeting with and entertaining prospective clients during evenings and weekends.

Sales representatives also analyze sales statistics, prepare reports, and handle administrative duties, such as filing their expense account reports, scheduling appointments, and making travel plans. They study literature about new and existing products and monitor the sales, prices, and products of their competitors.

In addition to all these duties, manufacturers' agents must manage their businesses. This requires organizational skills as well as knowledge of accounting, marketing, and administration.

### Working Conditions

Some manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives have large territories and do considerable traveling. Because a sales region may cover several States, they may be away from home for several days or weeks at a time. Others work near their "home base" and do most of their traveling by automobile. Due to the nature of the work and the amount of travel, sales representatives typically work more than 40 hours per week.



*Obtaining new accounts is a large part of the manufacturer's salesworker's job.*

Although the hours are long and often irregular, most sales representatives have the freedom to determine their own schedule. As a result, they may be able to arrange their appointments so that they can have time off when they want it.

Dealing with different types of people can be stimulating but demanding. In addition, sales representatives often face competition from representatives of other companies as well as from fellow workers. Companies may set goals or quotas that the representatives are expected to meet. Because their earnings depend upon commissions, manufacturers' agents are also under the added pressure to maintain and expand their clientele.

#### **Employment**

Manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives held about 1,613,000 jobs in 1992. Seven of every 10 worked in wholesale trade—mostly for distributors of machinery and equipment, groceries and related products, and motor vehicles and parts. Others were employed in manufacturing and mining. Due to the diversity of products and services sold, employment opportunities are available in every part of the country.

In addition to those working directly for a firm, many sales representatives are self-employed manufacturers' agents who worked for a straight commission based on the value of their sales. However, these workers generally gained experience and recognition with a manufacturer or wholesaler prior to going into business for themselves.

#### **Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement**

The background needed for sales jobs varies by product line and market. As the number of college graduates has increased and the job requirements have become more technical and analytical, most firms have placed a greater emphasis on a strong educational background. Nevertheless, many employers still hire individuals with previous sales experience who do not have a college degree. In fact, for some consumer products, sales ability, personality, and familiarity with brands are more important than a degree. On the other hand, firms selling industrial products often require a degree in science or engineering in addition to some sales experience. In general, companies are looking for the best and brightest individuals who display the personality and desire necessary to sell.

Many companies have formal training programs for beginning sales representatives that last up to 2 years. However, most businesses are accelerating these programs to reduce costs and expedite the return from training. In some programs, trainees rotate among jobs in plants and offices to learn all phases of production, installation, and distribution of the product. In others, trainees take formal classroom instruction at the plant, followed by on-the-job training under the supervision of a field sales manager.

In some firms, new workers are trained by accompanying more experienced workers on their sales calls. As these workers gain familiarity with the firm's products and clients, they are given increasing responsibility until they are eventually assigned their own territory. As businesses experience greater competition, increased pressure is placed upon sales representatives to produce faster.

These workers must stay abreast of new merchandise and the changing needs of their customers. They may attend trade shows where new products are displayed or conferences and conventions where they meet with other sales representatives and clients to discuss new product developments. In addition, many companies sponsor meetings of their entire sales force where presentations are made on sales performance, product development, and profitability.

Manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives should be goal oriented, persuasive, and able to work both as a team member and independently. A pleasant personality and appearance, the ability to get along well with people, and problem-solving skills are important as well. In addition, patience and perseverance are needed because completing a sale can take several months. Because these workers may be on their feet for long periods and may have to carry heavy sample cases, some physical stamina is necessary. Sales representatives should also enjoy traveling because much of their time is spent visiting current and prospective clients.

Frequently, promotion takes the form of an assignment to a larger account or territory where commissions are likely to be greater. Experienced sales representatives may move into jobs as sales trainers—workers who train new employees on selling techniques and company policies and procedures. Those who have good sales records and leadership ability may advance to sales supervisor or district manager.

In addition to advancement opportunities within a firm, some go into business for themselves as manufacturers' agents. Others find opportunities in buying, purchasing, advertising, or marketing research.

#### **Job Outlook**

Employment of manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through the year 2005 due to technological advances and changing business practices. Despite some growth in demand for sales representatives, most job openings will result from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force.

The use of electronic data interchange (EDI) is used by a growing number of organizations. EDI enables computers to communicate with each other, making ordering and reordering goods from suppliers quicker and easier than ever before. EDI has the potential to substantially reduce the need for sales representatives when paired with other advances such as point of sale inventory systems, which read the bar codes on merchandise and adjust inventory according to sales volume or expert system software, which can predict sales trends.

In addition to the technological innovations that may affect employment demand, some of the largest companies are using their market power to negotiate directly with suppliers, bypassing sales representatives entirely.

At present, the majority of firms find it impractical to spend the amount of money required to operate such a complex system and many do not possess the negotiating power necessary to bypass the sales representative. In addition, smaller retailers who rely on their reputation for selling specialty and fashionable items or establishments that routinely change the lines they carry may not want to deal with an automated system that reduces their flexibility and diversity. For example, the use of automated reordering might be practical for a large grocery store that consistently stocks the same merchandise. However, this technology would be unsuitable for a small high fashion clothing retailer that changes inventory depending on the season and the latest trend.

Those interested in this occupation should keep in mind that direct selling opportunities in manufacturing are likely to be best for products with strong demand, such as consumer products or computers and related supplies and equipment. Furthermore, jobs will be most plentiful in small wholesale firms because a growing number of these companies will rely on wholesalers and manufacturers'

agents to market their products as a way to control their costs and expand their customer base.

Opportunities for manufacturers' agents may be affected more adversely than other sales representatives by the changes in business practices, and, as a result, most independent sales representatives will work for smaller firms. These representatives will benefit from the increased consumption of imported goods because it is often more cost efficient for importers to delegate their sales responsibilities than to hire a sales force.

Employment opportunities and earnings may fluctuate from year to year because sales are affected by changing economic conditions, legislative issues, and consumer preferences. Prospects will be best for those with the appropriate knowledge or technical expertise as well as the personal traits necessary for successful selling.

### Earnings

Compensation methods vary significantly by the type of firm and product sold. However, most employers use a combination of salary and commission or salary plus bonus. Commissions are usually based on the amount of sales, whereas bonuses may depend on individual performance, on the performance of all sales workers in the group or district, or on the company's performance.

Median annual earnings of full-time manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives were about \$32,000 in 1992. The middle 50 percent earned between \$22,300 and \$46,500 per year. The bottom 10 percent earned less than \$16,400; the top 10 percent earned more than \$62,000 per year. Earnings vary by experience and the type of goods or services sold.

In addition to their earnings, sales representatives are usually reimbursed for expenses such as transportation costs, meals, hotels, and entertaining customers. They often receive benefits such as health and life insurance, a pension plan, vacation and sick leave, personal use of a company car, and "frequent flyer" mileage. Some companies offer incentives such as free vacation trips or gifts for outstanding sales workers.

Unlike those working directly for a manufacturer or wholesaler, manufacturers' agents work strictly on commission. Depending on the type of product they are selling, their experience in the field, and the number of clients, their earnings can be significantly higher or lower than those working in direct sales. In addition, because manufacturers' agents are self-employed, they must pay their own travel and entertainment expenses as well as provide for their own benefits, which can be a significant cost.

### Related Occupations

Manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives must have sales ability and knowledge of the products they sell. Other occupations that require similar skills are retail, services, real estate, insurance, and securities sales workers, as well as wholesale and retail buyers.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information on manufacturers' agents is available from:  
Sales and Marketing Management International, Statier Office Tower, Cleveland OH, 44115.

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## Real Estate Agents, Brokers, and Appraisers

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(D.O.T. 191.267-010 and 250.157-010, .357-010, -014, and -018)

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### Nature of the Work

The purchase or sale of a home, or an investment property, is not only one of the most important financial events in peoples' lives, but one of the most complex transactions as well. As a result, people generally seek the help of real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers when buying or selling real estate.

Real estate agents and brokers have a thorough knowledge of the housing market in their community. They know which neighborhoods will best fit their clients' needs and budgets. They are familiar

with local zoning and tax laws, and know where to obtain financing. Agents and brokers also act as a medium for price negotiations between buyer and seller.

Brokers are independent business people who, for a fee, sell real estate owned by others and rent and manage properties. In closing sales, brokers often provide buyers with information on loans to finance their purchase. They also arrange for title searches and for meetings between buyers and sellers when details of the transactions are agreed upon and the new owners take possession. A broker's knowledge, resourcefulness, and creativity in arranging financing that is most favorable to the prospective buyer often mean the difference between success and failure in closing a sale. In some cases, agents assume the responsibilities in closing sales, but, in many areas, this is done by lawyers or lenders. Brokers also manage their own offices, advertise properties, and handle other business matters. Some combine other types of work, such as the sale of insurance or the practice of law, with their real estate business.

Real estate agents generally are independent sales workers who provide their services to a licensed broker on a contract basis. In return, the broker pays the agent a portion of the commission earned from property sold through the firm by the agent. Today, relatively few agents receive salaries as employees of a broker or realty firm. Instead, most derive their income solely from commissions.

Before showing properties to potential buyers, the broker or agent has an initial meeting with them to get a feeling for the type of home they would like and can afford. Then, they take them to see a number of homes that are likely to meet their needs and income. Because buying real estate is such an important part of the average person's life, agents may have to meet several times with a prospective buyer to discuss properties. In answering questions, agents emphasize those selling points that are likely to be most important to the buyer. To a young family looking at a house, for example, they may point out the convenient floor plan and the fact that quality schools and shopping centers are close by. To a potential investor seeking the tax advantages of owning a rental property, they may point out the proximity to the city and the ease of finding a renter. If bargaining over price becomes necessary, agents must carefully follow the seller's instructions and may have to present counteroffers in order to get the best possible price.

Once the contract has been signed by both parties, the real estate broker or agent must see to it that all special terms of the contract are met before the closing date. For example, if the seller has agreed to a home inspection or a termite and radon inspection, the agent must make sure that this is done. Also, if the seller has agreed to any repairs, the broker or agent must see to it that they have been made, otherwise the sale cannot be completed. Increasingly, brokers and agents must handle environmental problems or make sure the property they are selling meets environmental regulations. For example, they may be responsible for dealing with problems such as lead paint on the walls. While many other details are handled by loan officers, attorneys, or other persons, the agent must check to make sure that they are completed.

There is more to agents' and brokers' jobs, however, than just making a sale. Because they must have properties to sell, they spend a significant amount of time obtaining "listings" (owner agreements to place properties for sale with the firm). They spend much time on the telephone exploring leads gathered from various sources, including personal contacts. When listing property for sale, agents and brokers make comparisons with similar properties that have been sold recently to determine its fair market value.

Most real estate agents and brokers sell residential property. A few, usually in large firms or specialized small firms, sell commercial, industrial, agricultural, or other types of real estate. Each specialty requires knowledge of that particular type of property and clientele. Selling or leasing business property, for example, requires an understanding of leasing practices, business trends, and location needs. Agents who sell or lease industrial properties must know about transportation, utilities, and labor supply. To sell residential properties, the agent must know the location of schools, religious institutions, shopping facilities, and public transportation, and be familiar with tax rates and insurance coverage. Agents and brokers increasingly use computers to generate lists of properties for sale, their location and description, and to identify available sources of financing.



*Most real estate agents sell residential property.*

Real estate transactions involve substantial financial commitments, so parties to the transactions usually seek the advice of real estate appraisers, objective experts who do not have a vested interest in the property. An appraisal is an unbiased estimate of the quality, value, and best use of a specific property. Appraisals may be used by prospective sellers to set a competitive price, by a lending institution to estimate the market value of a property as a condition for a mortgage loan, or by local governments to determine the assessed value of a property for tax purposes. Many real estate appraisers are independent fee appraisers or work for real estate appraisal firms while others are employees of banks, savings and loan associations, mortgage companies, and multiservice real estate companies.

During an inspection, real estate appraisers evaluate the quality of the construction, the overall condition of the property, and its functional design. They gather information on properties by taking measurements, interviewing persons familiar with the properties' history, and searching public records of sales, leases, assessments, and other transactions. They then estimate the present cost of reproducing any structures on the properties and how much the value of structures may have depreciated over time. Taking into consideration the location of the properties, current market conditions, and real estate trends or impending changes that could influence the future value of the properties, appraisers arrive at estimates of their value. Depending on the purpose of the appraisal, they may estimate the market value of the property, the insurable value, the investment value, or other kinds of value. Appraisers must prepare formal written reports of their findings that meet the standards of the Appraisal Foundation.

Real estate appraisers often specialize in certain types of properties. Most appraise only homes, but others specialize in appraising apartment or office buildings, shopping centers, or a variety of other types of commercial, industrial, or agricultural properties.

#### **Working Conditions**

Although real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers generally work in offices, much of their time is spent outside the office—showing properties to customers, analyzing properties for sale, meeting with prospective clients, researching the state of the market, inspecting properties for appraisal, and performing a wide range of other duties. Brokers provide office space, but agents generally furnish their own automobiles.

Agents, brokers, and appraisers often work more than a standard 40-hour week; 4 of every 10 worked 50 hours or more a week in 1992. They often work evenings and weekends to suit the convenience of their clients.

#### **Employment**

Real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers held about 397,000 jobs in 1992. Many worked part time, combining their real estate activities with other careers. Most were self-employed, working on a commission basis.

Most real estate and appraisal firms are relatively small; indeed, some are a one-person business. Some large real estate firms have several hundred real estate agents operating out of many branch offices. Many brokers have franchise agreements with national or regional real estate organizations. Under this type of arrangement, similar to many fast-food restaurant operations, the broker pays a fee in exchange for the privilege of using the more widely known name of the parent organization. Although franchised brokers often receive help in training salespeople and in running their offices, they bear the ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the firm.

Real estate is sold and appraised in all areas, but employment is concentrated in large urban areas and in smaller but rapidly growing communities.

#### **Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement**

Real estate agents and brokers must be licensed in every State and in the District of Columbia. All States require prospective agents to be a high school graduate, be at least 18 years old, and pass a written test. The examination—more comprehensive for brokers than for agents—includes questions on basic real estate transactions and on laws affecting the sale of property. Most States require candidates for the general sales license to complete at least 30 hours of classroom instruction and those seeking the broker's license to complete 90 hours of formal training in addition to a specified amount of experience in selling real estate (generally 1 to 3 years). Some States waive the experience requirements for the broker's license for applicants who have a bachelor's degree in real estate. A small but increasing number of States require that agents have 60 hours of college credit—roughly the equivalent of an associate degree. State licenses generally must be renewed every year or two, usually without reexamination. Many States, however, require continuing education for license renewal.

Federal law requires appraisers of most types of real estate (all property being financed by a Federally regulated lender) to be State certified. In some States, appraisers who are not involved with Federally regulated institutions do not have to be certified. State certification requirements for appraisers must meet Federal standards, but States are free to set more stringent requirements. Formal courses, appraisal experience, and a satisfactory score on an examination are needed to be certified, but college education may be substituted for a portion of the experience requirement. Requirements for licensure vary by State but are somewhat less stringent than for certification.

Individuals enter real estate appraisal from a variety of backgrounds. Traditionally, persons enter from real estate sales, management, and finance positions. However, a growing number of people are entering appraiser jobs directly from college. College courses in real estate, finance and business administration, economics, and English are helpful. Many junior and community colleges offer 2-year degrees in real estate or appraisal. Trainee appraisers usually assist experienced appraisers until they become licensed.

Persons who take real estate agent, broker, and appraiser positions are older, on average, than entrants to most other occupations. Many homemakers and retired persons are attracted to real estate sales by the flexible and part-time work schedules characteristic of this field and may enter, leave, and later reenter the occupation, depending on the strength of the real estate market, family responsibilities, or other personal circumstances. In addition to those who are entering or reentering the labor force, some transfer into real estate jobs from a wide range of occupations, including clerical and other sales jobs.

As real estate transactions have become more complex, involving complicated legal requirements, many firms have turned to college graduates to fill positions. A large number of agents, brokers, and appraisers have some college training, and the number of college graduates selling real estate has risen substantially in recent years. However, personality traits are fully as important as academic background. Brokers look for applicants who possess a pleasant personality, honesty, and a neat appearance. Maturity, tact, and enthusiasm for the job are required in order to motivate prospective customers in this keenly competitive field. Agents also should be well organized and detail oriented as well as have a good memory

for names and faces and business details, such as taxes, zoning regulations, and local land-use laws.

Persons interested in beginning jobs as real estate agents often apply in their own communities, where their knowledge of local neighborhoods is an advantage. The beginner usually learns the practical aspects of the job, including the use of computers to locate or list available properties or identify sources of financing, under the direction of an experienced agent.

Many firms offer formal training programs for both beginners and experienced agents. Larger firms generally offer more extensive programs than smaller firms. Over 1,000 universities, colleges, and junior colleges offer courses in real estate. At some, a student can earn an associate or bachelor's degree with a major in real estate; several offer advanced degrees. Many local real estate boards that are members of the National Association of Realtors sponsor courses covering the fundamentals and legal aspects of the field. Advanced courses in appraisal, mortgage financing, property development and management, and other subjects also are available through various National Association of Realtor affiliates.

Many real estate appraisers voluntarily earn professional designations that represent formal recognition of their professional competence and achievements. A number of appraiser organizations have programs that, through a combination of experience, professional education, and examinations, lead to the award of such designations. These professional designations are desirable because requirements for them are more stringent than State standards. Among the more common are various designations awarded by the Appraisal Institute and the American Society of Appraisers.

Advancement opportunities for agents often take the form of higher commission rates and more and bigger sales, both of which increase compensation. This occurs as agents gain knowledge and expertise and become more efficient in closing a greater number of transactions. Experienced agents can advance in many large firms to sales or general manager. Persons who have received their broker's license may open their own offices. Others with experience and training in estimating property value may become real estate appraisers, and people familiar with operating and maintaining rental properties may become property or real estate managers. (For detailed information on property and real estate managers, see the statement elsewhere in the *Handbook*). Agents, brokers, and appraisers who gain general experience in real estate and a thorough knowledge of business conditions and property values in their localities may enter mortgage financing or real estate investment counseling.

### Job Outlook

Employment of real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2005 as a result of the growing volume of sales of residential and commercial properties. Despite this rising demand, however, the large majority of job openings will be due to replacement needs. Each year, tens of thousands of jobs will become available as workers transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. Because turnover is high, real estate sales positions should continue to be relatively easy to obtain. Not everyone is successful in this highly competitive field; many beginners become discouraged by their inability to get listings and to close a sufficient number of sales. Lacking financial sustenance and motivation, they subsequently leave the occupation. Well-trained, ambitious people who enjoy selling should have the best chance for success.

Employment growth in this field will stem primarily from increased demand for home purchases and rental units. Shifts in the age distribution of the population over the next decade or so will result in a large number of persons in the prime working ages (25-54 years old) with careers and family responsibilities. This is the most geographically mobile group in our society and the one that traditionally makes most of the home purchases. As their incomes rise, they also may be expected to invest in additional real estate.

Increasing use of technology and electronic information may increase the productivity of realtors and brokers. More and more real

estate companies are equipped with computers, faxes, modems, and databases. Some real estate companies are even using computer generated images to show houses to customers without even leaving the office. These devices enable one realtor to serve a greater number of customers. Use of this technology may eliminate some of the more marginal realtors such as those practicing real estate part time or between jobs. These workers will not be able to compete as easily with full-time realtors who have invested in this technology.

Employment of real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers is sensitive to swings in the economy. During periods of declining economic activity and tight credit, the volume of sales and the resulting demand for sales workers may decline. During these periods, the earnings of agents, brokers, and appraisers decline, and many work fewer hours or leave the occupation.

### Earnings

Commissions on sales are the main source of earnings of real estate agents and brokers—few receive a salary. The rate of commission varies according to the type of property and its value; the percentage paid on the sale of farm and commercial properties or unimproved land usually is higher than that paid for selling a home.

Commissions may be divided among several agents and brokers. The broker and the agent in the firm that obtained the listing generally share their part of the commission when the property is sold; the broker and the agent in the firm that made the sale also generally share their part of the commission. Although an agent's share varies greatly from one firm to another, often it is about half of the total amount received by the firm. The agent who both lists and sells the property maximizes his or her commission.

Real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers who usually worked full time had median weekly earnings of \$507 in 1992. The middle 50 percent earned between \$323 and \$802. The top 10 percent earned more than \$1,247 and the lowest 10 percent earned less than \$223.

Income usually increases as an agent gains experience, but individual ability, economic conditions, and the type and location of the property also affect earnings. Sales workers who are active in community organizations and local real estate boards can broaden their contacts and increase their earnings. A beginner's earnings often are irregular because a few weeks or even months may go by without a sale. Although some brokers allow an agent a drawing account against future earnings, this practice is not usual with new employees. The beginner, therefore, should have enough money to live on for about 6 months or until commissions increase.

### Related Occupations

Selling expensive items such as homes requires maturity, tact, and a sense of responsibility. Other sales workers who find these character traits important in their work include automotive sales workers, securities and financial services sales workers, insurance agents and brokers, yacht brokers, travel agents, and manufacturers' representatives. Other appraisers specialize in performing many types of appraisals besides real estate, including aircraft, antiques and fine arts, business valuations, and yachts.

### Sources of Additional Information

Details on licensing requirements for real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers are available from most local real estate and appraiser organizations or from the State real estate commission or board.

For more information about opportunities in real estate work, contact:

☞ National Association of Realtors, 777 14th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Information on careers and licensing and certification requirements in real estate appraising is available from:

☞ Appraisal Institute, 875 North Michigan Ave., Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60611-1980.

☞ American Society of Appraisers, P.O. Box 17265, Washington, DC 20041. (This organization may be called toll free at 1-800-ASA-VALU.)

## Retail Sales Workers

(List of D.O.T. codes available on request from the Chief, Division of Occupational Outlook, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, DC 20212.)

### Nature of the Work

Millions of dollars are spent each day on all types of merchandise—everything from sweaters and cosmetics to lumber and plumbing supplies. Sales workers are employed by many types of retailers to assist customers in the selection and purchase of these items.

Whether selling shoes, computer equipment, or automobiles, a sales worker's primary job is to interest customers in the merchandise. This may be done by describing the product's features, demonstrating its use, or showing various models and colors. For some jobs, particularly those selling expensive and complex items, special knowledge or skills are needed. For example, workers who sell personal computers must be able to explain to customers the features of various brands and models, the meaning of manufacturers' specifications, and the types of software that are available.

In addition to selling, most retail sales workers make out sales checks; receive cash, check, and charge payments; bag or package purchases; and give change and receipts. Depending on the hours they work, they may have to open or close the cash register. This may include counting the money in the cash register; separating charge slips, coupons, and exchange vouchers; and making deposits at the cash office. Sales workers are often held responsible for the contents of their register, and repeated shortages are cause for dismissal in many organizations. (Cashiers, who have similar job duties, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Sales workers also handle returns and exchanges of merchandise, perform gift wrapping services, and keep their work areas neat. In addition, they may help stock shelves or racks, arrange for mailing or delivery of a purchase, mark price tags, take inventory, and prepare displays.

Sales workers must be aware of not only the promotions their store is sponsoring, but also those that are being sponsored by competitors. Also, they often must recognize possible security risks and know how to handle such situations.

Consumers often form their impressions of a store by its sales force. The retail industry is very competitive and, increasingly, employers are stressing the importance of providing courteous and efficient service. When a customer wants an item that is not on the sales floor, for example, the sales worker may check the stockroom and, if there are none there, place a special order or call another store to locate the item.

To provide better customer service, some firms employ personal shoppers. Some personal shoppers assist consumers in purchasing a particular item. For example, personal shoppers employed in department stores can assist customers in updating their wardrobes. Others actually choose the item for the client based on information provided. Those personal shoppers who work in food stores may buy groceries and arrange for their delivery for people confined to their homes.

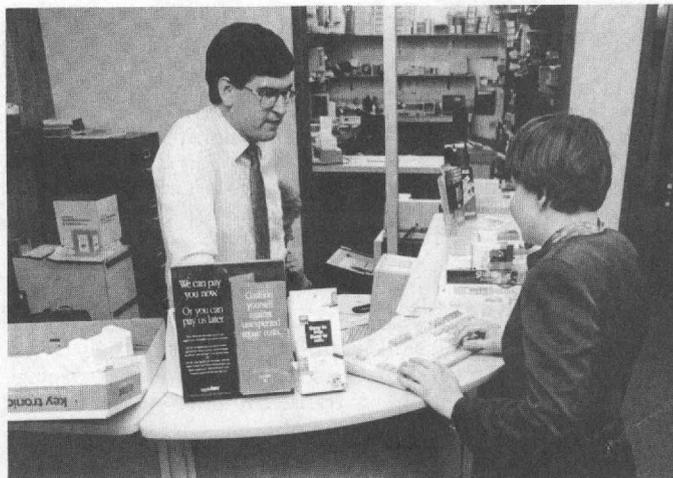
Although most sales workers have many duties and responsibilities, in jobs selling standardized articles such as food, hardware, linens, and housewares, they often do little more than take payments and wrap purchases.

### Working Conditions

Most sales workers in retail trade work in clean, comfortable, well-lighted stores. They often stand for long periods and may need supervisory approval when they want to leave the sales floor.

The Monday through Friday, 9 to 5 work week is the exception rather than the rule in retail trade. Most salespersons can expect to work during some evening and weekend hours and longer than normal hours may be scheduled during Christmas and other peak periods. In addition, most retailers restrict the use of vacation time from Thanksgiving until early January.

This job can be rewarding for those who enjoy working with people. Patience is required, however, when the work is repetitious and the customers demanding.



Many retail sales workers need an extensive knowledge of the products they sell.

### Employment

Retail sales workers held about 4,086,000 jobs in 1992. They worked in stores ranging from small specialty shops employing several workers to the giant department store with hundreds of salespersons. In addition, some were self-employed representatives of direct sales companies and mail-order houses. The largest employers of retail sales workers, however, are department stores, apparel and accessories stores, grocery stores, and car dealers.

This occupation offers many opportunities for part-time work and is especially appealing to students, retirees, and others looking to supplement their income. However, most of those selling "big ticket" items, such as cars, furniture, and electronic equipment, work full time and have substantial experience.

Because retail stores are found in every city and town, employment is distributed geographically in much the same way as the population.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

There usually are no formal education requirements for this type of work. Employers look for persons who enjoy working with people and have the tact and patience to deal with difficult customers. Among other desirable characteristics are an interest in sales work, a neat appearance, and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Before hiring, some employers may conduct a background check, especially for jobs in selling high-priced items.

In most small stores, an experienced employee or the proprietor instructs newly hired sales personnel in making out sales checks and operating the cash register. In larger stores, training programs are more formal and usually are conducted over several days. Topics usually discussed are customer service, security, the store's policies and procedures, and how to work the cash register. Depending on the type of product they are selling, they may be given additional specialized training. For example, those working in cosmetics receive instruction on the types of products available and for whom they would be most beneficial. This training is often provided by a manufacturer's representative.

As salespersons gain experience and seniority, they usually move to positions of greater responsibility and are given their choice of departments. This often means moving to areas with potentially higher earnings and commissions. The highest earnings potential is usually found in selling big-ticket items. This work often requires the most knowledge of the product and the greatest talent for persuasion.

Traditionally, capable sales workers without a college degree could advance to management positions, but today, large retail businesses generally prefer to hire college graduates as management trainees, making a college education increasingly important. Despite this trend, capable employees without a college degree should

still be able to advance to administrative or supervisory work in large stores.

Opportunities for advancement vary in small stores. In some establishments, advancement opportunities are limited because one person, often the owner, does most of the managerial work. In others, however, some sales workers are promoted to assistant managers.

Retail selling experience may be an asset when applying for sales positions with larger retailers or in other industries, such as financial services, wholesale trade, or manufacturing.

### Job Outlook

Employment of retail sales workers is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all workers through the year 2005 due to anticipated growth in retail sales. In addition, numerous job openings will be created as sales workers transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. As in the past, replacement needs will generate an exceptionally large number of sales jobs because the occupation is large and turnover is much higher than average. There will continue to be many opportunities for part-time workers, and demand will be strong for temporary workers during peak selling periods such as the Christmas season.

During recessions, sales volume and the resulting demand for sales workers generally decline. Purchases of costly items such as cars, appliances, and furniture tend to be postponed during difficult economic times. In areas of high unemployment, sales of all types of goods may decline. However, since turnover of sales workers is usually very high, employers often can control employment simply by not replacing all those who leave.

In some geographic areas, employers face a shortage of qualified applicants. As a result, employers can be expected to improve efforts to attract and retain workers by offering higher wages, more generous benefits, and more flexible schedules.

### Earnings

The starting wage for many part-time retail sales positions is the Federal minimum wage, \$4.25 an hour. In some areas where employers are having difficulty attracting and retaining workers, wages are much higher than the established minimum. The following tabulation shows median weekly earnings by class of sales worker in several industries.

Motor vehicle and boats.....	\$479
Radio, television, hi-fi, and appliances.....	415
Furniture and home furnishings.....	354
Hardware and building supplies.....	323
Parts.....	319
Other commodities.....	269
Apparel.....	255

Compensation systems vary by type of establishment and merchandise sold. Some sales workers receive an hourly wage. Others receive a commission or a combination of wages and commissions. Under a commission system, salespersons receive a percentage of the sales that they make. These systems offer sales workers the opportunity to increase significantly their earnings, but they may find their earnings depend on their ability to sell their product and the ups and downs in the economy.

Benefits may be limited in smaller stores, but in large establishments they are usually comparable to those offered by other employers. In addition, nearly all sales workers are able to buy their store's merchandise at a discount, often from 10 to 40 percent below regular prices. In some cases, this privilege is extended to the employee's family as well.

### Related Occupations

Sales workers use sales techniques coupled with their knowledge of merchandise to assist customers and encourage purchases. These skills are used by people in a number of other occupations, including manufacturers' and wholesale trade sales workers, service sales representatives, counter and rental clerks, real estate sales agents, wholesale and retail buyers, insurance sales workers, and cashiers.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information on careers in retail sales may be obtained from the personnel offices of local stores; from State merchants' associations; or from local unions of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

In addition, general information about retailing is available from: National Retail Federation, 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW., Washington, DC 20004-2608.

## Securities and Financial Services Sales Representatives

(D.O.T. 162.167-034 and -038; 250.257-014, -018, -022, and .357-026)

### Nature of the Work

**Securities sales representatives.** Most investors—whether they are individuals with a few hundred dollars to invest or large institutions with millions—use securities sales representatives when buying or selling stocks, bonds, shares in mutual funds, insurance annuities, certificates of deposit, or other financial products. Securities sales representatives often are called registered representatives, account executives, or brokers.

When an investor wishes to buy or sell securities, sales representatives may relay the order through their firms' offices to the floor of a securities exchange, such as the New York Stock Exchange. There, securities sales representatives known as brokers' floor representatives buy and sell securities. If a security is not traded on an exchange, the sales representative sends the order to the firm's trading department, where a security trader trades it directly with a dealer in the over-the-counter market. After the transaction has been completed, the sales representative notifies the customer of the final price.

Securities sales representatives also provide many related services for their customers. Depending on a customer's knowledge of the market, they may explain the meaning of stock market terms and trading practices; offer financial counseling; devise an individual financial portfolio for the client including securities, life insurance, corporate and municipal bonds, mutual funds, certificates of deposit, annuities, and other investments; and offer advice on the purchase or sale of particular securities.

Not all customers have the same investment goals. Some individuals may prefer long-term investments designed either for capital growth or to provide income over the years; others might want to invest in short-term securities that they hope will rise in price quickly. Securities sales representatives furnish information about the advantages and disadvantages of an investment based on each person's objectives. They also supply the latest price quotations on any security in which the investor is interested, as well as information on the activities and financial positions of the corporations issuing these securities.

Most securities sales representatives serve individual investors while others specialize in institutional investors. In institutional investing, most sales representatives concentrate on a specific financial product such as stocks, bonds, options, annuities, or commodity futures. Some handle the sale of new issues, such as corporate securities issued to finance plant expansion.

Financial planners develop and implement financial plans for individuals and businesses using their knowledge of tax and investment strategies, securities, insurance, pension plans, and real estate. They interview clients to determine their assets, liabilities, cash flow, insurance coverage, tax status, and financial objectives. Then they analyze all this information and develop a financial plan tailored to the clients' needs.

The most important part of a sales representative's job is finding clients and building a customer base. Thus, beginning securities sales representatives spend much of their time searching for customers—relying heavily on telephone solicitation. They may meet some

clients through business and social contacts. Many sales representatives find it useful to get additional exposure by teaching adult education investment courses or by giving lectures at libraries or social clubs. Brokerage firms may give sales representatives lists of people with whom the firm has dealt in the past. Sometimes sales representatives may inherit the clients of representatives who have retired.

**Financial services sales representatives.** Financial services sales representatives contact potential customers to explain their services and to ascertain the customer's banking and other financial needs. They may discuss services such as deposit accounts, lines of credit, sales or inventory financing, cash management, or investment services. They may solicit businesses to participate in consumer credit card programs. At most small and medium-size banks, branch managers and commercial loan officers are responsible for marketing the bank's financial services. As banks offer more and increasingly complex financial services—for example, securities brokerage and financial planning—the job of the financial services sales representative is assuming greater importance.

### Working Conditions

Securities sales representatives usually work in offices where there is much activity. They have access to "quote boards" or computer terminals that continually provide information on the prices of securities. When sales activity increases, due perhaps to unanticipated changes in the economy, the pace may become very hectic.

Established securities sales representatives usually work the same hours as others in the business community. Beginners who are seeking customers may work much longer hours, however. Most securities sales representatives accommodate customers by meeting with them in the evenings or on weekends.

Financial services sales representatives normally work in a comfortable, less stressful office environment. They generally work 40 hours a week. They may spend considerable time outside the office meeting with present and prospective clients, attending civic functions, and participating in trade association meetings. Some financial services sales representatives work exclusively inside banks, providing service to "walk-in" customers.

### Employment

Securities and financial services sales representatives held about 200,000 jobs in 1992. In addition, a substantial number of people in other occupations sold securities. These include partners and branch office managers in securities firms as well as insurance agents and brokers offering securities to their customers.

Securities sales representatives are employed by brokerage and investment firms in all parts of the country. Many of these firms are very small. Most sales representatives, however, work for a small number of large firms with main offices in big cities (especially in New York) and approximately 25,000 branch offices in other areas.



*A successful salesperson must be motivated and have good communication skills.*

Financial services sales representatives are employed by banks, savings and loan associations, and other credit institutions.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Because securities sales representatives must be well informed about economic conditions and trends, a college education is increasingly important, especially in the larger securities firms. In fact, the overwhelming majority of entrants to this occupation are college graduates. Although employers seldom require specialized academic training, courses in business administration, economics, and finance are helpful.

Many employers consider personal qualities and skills more important than academic training. Employers seek applicants who have sales ability and good communication skills, are well groomed, and have a strong desire to succeed. Self-confidence and an ability to handle frequent rejections also are important ingredients for success.

Because maturity and the ability to work independently also are important, many employers prefer to hire those who have achieved success in other jobs. Some firms prefer candidates with sales experience, particularly those who have worked on commission in areas such as real estate or insurance. Understandably, most entrants to this occupation transfer from other jobs. Some begin working as securities sales representatives following retirement from other fields.

Securities sales representatives must meet State licensing requirements, which generally include passing the examination and, in some cases, furnishing a personal bond. In addition, sales representatives must register as representatives of their firm according to regulations of the securities exchanges where they do business or the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. (NASD). Before beginners can qualify as registered representatives, they must pass the General Securities Registered Representative Examination, administered by the NASD, and be an employee of a registered firm for at least 4 months. Most States require a second examination—the Uniform Securities Agents State Law Examination. These tests measure the prospective representative's knowledge of the securities business, customer protection requirements, and recordkeeping procedures.

Most employers provide on-the-job training to help securities sales representatives meet the requirements for registration. In most firms, the training period generally takes about 4 months. Trainees in large firms may receive classroom instruction in securities analysis, effective speaking, and the finer points of selling; take courses offered by business schools, such as the New York Institute of Finance, or other institutions and associations; and undergo a period of on-the-job training lasting up to 2 years. Many firms like to rotate their trainees among various departments in the firm to give them a broader perspective of the securities business. In small firms, sales representatives generally receive training in outside institutions and on the job. Many trainees take correspondence courses in preparation for the securities examinations.

Securities sales representatives must understand the basic characteristics of a wide variety of financial products offered by brokerage firms. Representatives periodically take training, through their firms or outside institutions, to keep abreast of new financial products as they are introduced on the market and to improve their sales techniques. Training in the use of computers is important, as the securities sales business is highly automated.

The principal form of advancement for securities sales representatives is an increase in the number and size of the accounts they handle. Although beginners usually service the accounts of individual investors, eventually they may handle very large institutional accounts such as those of banks and pension funds. Some experienced sales representatives become branch office managers and supervise other sales representatives while continuing to provide services for their own customers. A few representatives advance to top management positions or become partners in their firms.

Banks and other credit institutions prefer to hire college graduates for financial services sales jobs. A business administration degree with a specialization in finance or a liberal arts degree including courses in accounting, economics, and marketing serves as excellent preparation for this job.

Financial services sales representatives learn through on-the-job training under the supervision of bank officers. Outstanding performance can lead to promotion to managerial positions.

### Job Outlook

Employment of securities and financial sales representatives is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005 as economic growth, rising personal incomes, and greater inherited wealth increase the funds available for investment. More individual investors are expected to purchase common stocks, mutual funds, and other financial products after seeking advice from securities sales representatives regarding the increasing array of investment alternatives. Deregulation has enabled brokerage firms to sell certificates of deposit, offer checking and deposit services through cash management accounts, and sell insurance products such as annuities and life insurance. Growth in the number and size of institutional investors will be strong as more people enroll in pension plans, set up individual retirement accounts, establish trust funds, and contribute to the endowment funds of colleges and other nonprofit institutions. More representatives also will be needed to sell securities issued by new and expanding corporations and by State and local governments financing public improvements.

Investors increasingly rely on the growing number of financial planners to assist them in selecting the proper options among a wide variety of financial alternatives. In addition, demand should increase as banks and credit institutions expand the range of financial services they offer and issue more loans for personal and commercial use.

Due to the highly competitive nature of securities sales work, many beginners leave the field because they are unable to establish a sufficient clientele. Once established, however, securities and financial services sales representatives have a very strong attachment to their occupation because of high earnings and the considerable investment in training.

The demand for securities sales representatives fluctuates as the economy expands and contracts. Thus, in an economic downturn, the number of persons seeking jobs usually exceeds the number of openings—sometimes by a great deal. Even during periods of rapid economic expansion, however, competition for securities sales training positions—particularly in larger firms—is keen because of potentially high earnings.

Job opportunities should be best for mature individuals with successful work experience. Opportunities for inexperienced sales representatives should be best in smaller firms.

### Earnings

In 1992, median annual earnings of securities and financial services sales representatives were \$40,300; the middle 50 percent earned between \$20,800 and \$47,000. Ten percent earned less than \$14,000 and 10 percent earned more than \$70,000. On average, financial services sales representatives earn considerably less than securities sales representatives.

According to the Securities Industry Association, average annual earnings of beginning securities sales representatives were \$28,000 in 1992. Earnings of full-time, experienced securities sales representatives who served individual investors averaged about \$78,000 a year, while the relatively small number of sales representatives who handled institutional accounts averaged about \$156,000.

Trainees usually are paid a salary until they meet licensing and registration requirements. After registration, a few firms continue to pay a salary until the new representative's commissions increase to a stated amount. The salaries paid during training usually range from \$1,200 to \$1,500 a month.

After candidates are licensed and registered, their earnings depend on commissions from the sale or purchase of stocks and bonds, life insurance, or other securities for customers. Commission earnings are likely to be high when there is much buying and selling and lower when there is a slump in market activity. Most firms provide sales representatives with a steady income by paying a "draw

against commission"—that is, a minimum salary based on the commissions which they can be expected to earn. Securities sales representatives who can provide their clients with the most complete financial services should enjoy the greatest income stability.

Financial services sales representatives usually are paid a salary; some receive a bonus if they meet certain established goals.

### Related Occupations

Similar sales jobs requiring specialized knowledge include insurance agents and real estate agents.

### Sources of Additional Information

Further information concerning a career as a securities sales representative is available for \$1 from:

☞ Securities Industry Association, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

Career information also may be obtained from the personnel departments of individual securities firms.

For information about job opportunities for financial services sales representatives in various States, contact State bankers' associations or write directly to a particular bank to inquire about job openings. For the names and addresses of banks in a specific location as well as the names of their principal officers, consult one of the following directories.

☞ *The American Bank Directory* (Norcross, GA., McFadden Business Publications).

☞ *Polk's World Bank Directory* (Nashville, R.L. Polk & Co.).

☞ *The U.S. Savings and Loan Directory* (Chicago, Rand McNally & Co.).

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## Services Sales Representatives

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(D.O.T. 165.157; 236.252; 250.357-022; 251.157, .257, .357; 252.257, .357; 253; 254; 259 except .257-014; 269.357-018; 273.357-014; 279.357-042; and 293 except .357-018)

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### Nature of the Work

Services sales representatives sell a wide variety of services. For example, sales representatives for data processing services firms sell complex services such as inventory control, payroll processing, sales analysis, and financial reporting systems. Hotel sales representatives contact government, business, and social groups to solicit convention and conference business for the hotel. Fundraisers plan programs to raise money for charities or other nonprofit causes. Sales representatives for temporary help services firms locate and acquire clients who will hire the firm's employees. Telephone services sales representatives visit commercial customers to review their telephone systems, analyze their communications needs, and recommend services such as installation of additional equipment. Other representatives sell automotive leasing, public utility, burial, shipping, protective, and management consulting services. (Information on other sales workers, including insurance agents and brokers, real estate agents and brokers, securities and financial services sales representatives, manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives, and travel agents, appears in other *Handbook* statements.)

Services sales representatives act as industry experts, consultants, and problem solvers when selling their firm's services. The sales representative, in some cases, creates demand for his or her firm's services. A prospective client who is asked to consider buying a particular service may never have used, or even been aware of a need for, that service. For example, wholesalers might be persuaded to order a list of credit ratings for checking their customers' credit prior to making sales, and discover that the list could be used to solicit new business.

There are several different categories of services sales jobs. *Outside sales representatives* call on clients and prospects at their homes or offices. They may have an appointment, or they may practice "cold calls," arriving without an appointment. *Inside sales representatives* work on their employer's premises, assisting individuals interested in the company's services. *Telemarketing sales representatives* sell exclusively over the telephone. They make large numbers

of calls to prospects, attempting to sell the company's service themselves, or to arrange an appointment between the prospect and an outside sales representative. Some sales representatives deal exclusively with one, or a few, major clients.

Despite the diversity of services being sold, the jobs of all services sales representatives have much in common. All sales representatives must fully understand and be able to discuss the services their company offers. Also, the procedures they follow are similar. Many sales representatives develop lists of prospective clients through telephone and business directories, asking business associates and customers for leads, and calling on new businesses as they cover their assigned territory. Some services sales representatives acquire clients through inquiries about their company's services.

Regardless of how they first meet the client, all services sales representatives must explain how the services being offered can meet the client's needs. This often involves demonstrations of their company's services. They answer questions about the nature and cost of the services and try to overcome objections in order to persuade potential customers to purchase the services. If they fail to make a sale on the first visit, they may follow up with more visits, letters, or phone calls. After closing a sale, services sales representatives generally follow up to see that the purchase meets the customer's needs, and to determine if additional services can be sold.

Because services sales representatives obtain many of their new accounts through referrals, their success hinges on developing a satisfied clientele who will continue to use the services and will recommend them to other potential customers. Like other types of sales jobs, a services sales representative's reputation is crucial to his or her success.

Services sales work varies with the kind of service sold. Selling highly technical services, such as communications systems or computer consulting services, involves complex and lengthy sales negotiations. In addition, sales of such complex services may require extensive after-sale support. In these situations, sales representatives may operate as part of a team of sales representatives and experts from other departments. Sales representatives receive valuable technical assistance from these experts. For example, those who sell data processing services might work with a systems engineer or computer scientist, and those who sell telephone services might receive technical assistance from a communications consultant. Teams enhance customer service and build strong long-term relationships with customers, resulting in increased sales.

Because of the length of time between the initial contact with a customer and the actual sale, representatives who sell complex technical services generally work with several customers simultaneously. Sales representatives must be well organized and efficient in scheduling their time. Selling less complex services, such as linen supply or exterminating services, generally involves simpler and shorter sales negotiations.

A sales representative's job may likewise vary with the size of the employer. Those working for large companies generally are more specialized and are assigned territorial boundaries, a specific line of services, and their own accounts. In smaller companies, sales representatives may have broader responsibilities—administrative, marketing, or public relations, for example—in addition to their sales duties.

A sales representative often services a specific territory. A representative for a company offering services widely used by the general public, such as pest control, generally has numerous clients in a relatively small territory. On the other hand, a sales representative for a more specialized organization, such as a standardized testing service, may need to service several States to acquire an adequate customer base.

### Working Conditions

Working conditions for sales representatives vary. Outside sales representatives responsible for a large territory may spend a great deal of time traveling, sometimes for weeks at a time. Representatives who cover a small territory may spend time in the office each day keeping records, preparing various documents, and setting up appointments with customers. Inside sales representatives and telemarketers spend all their time in their offices, which can range from bright and cheerful customer showrooms to cramped and



*Services sales representatives convey their specialized knowledge to their customers.*

noisy rooms. Many outside sales representatives have the flexibility to set their own schedules so long as they meet their company's goals.

Selling is stressful work. Sales representatives face competition not only from other companies but also from their fellow sales workers. Companies generally set quotas and have contests with prizes for those who make the most sales. There often is considerable pressure on the sales representative to perform by the end of every month.

### Employment

Services sales representatives held about 488,000 jobs in 1992. Over half were in firms providing business services, including computer and data processing, advertising, personnel supply, equipment rental and leasing, and mailing, reproduction, and stenographic services. Other sales representatives worked for firms that offer a wide range of other services, as the following tabulation shows.

Total (percent).....	100
Business services .....	53
Computer and data processing .....	10
Advertising .....	8
Personnel supply .....	7
Mailing, reproduction, and stenographic .....	3
Miscellaneous equipment rental and leasing .....	3
Other business services .....	22
Engineering and management .....	11
Personal .....	7
Amusement and recreation .....	5
Automotive repair .....	5
Membership organizations .....	4
Hotels and other lodging places .....	3
Motion pictures .....	2
Health .....	2
Education, public and private .....	2
Other services .....	6

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Many employers require that services sales representatives have a college degree, but requirements may vary depending on the industry a particular company represents. Employers who market advertising services seek individuals with a college degree in advertising or marketing or a master's degree in business administration; companies that market educational services prefer individuals with an advanced degree in marketing or a related field. Many hotels seek graduates from college hotel administration programs, and companies that sell computer services and telephone systems prefer sales

representatives with a background in computer science or engineering. College courses in business, economics, communications, and marketing are helpful in obtaining other jobs as services sales representatives.

Employers may hire sales representatives with a high school diploma if they have a proven sales record. This is particularly true for those who sell nontechnical services, such as linen supply, exterminating, laundry, or funeral services.

Many firms conduct intensive training programs for their sales representatives. A sound training program covers the history of the business, origin, development, and uses of the service, effective prospecting methods, presentation of the service, answering customer objections, creating customer demand, closing a sale, writing an order, company policies, and using technical support personnel. Sales representatives also may attend seminars on a wide range of subjects given by outside or in-house training institutions. These sessions acquaint them with new services and products and help them maintain and update their sales techniques, and may include motivational or sensitivity training to make sales representatives more effective in dealing with people. They generally receive training in the use of computers and communications technology in order to increase their productivity.

Very large companies often prefer to hire sales representatives directly out of college, while smaller companies often prefer to hire individuals with a proven sales record. Smaller companies generally prefer not to incur the expense of providing formal training programs for their sales representatives.

In order to be successful, sales representatives should have a pleasant, outgoing personality and good rapport with people. They must be highly motivated, well organized, and efficient. Good grooming and a neat appearance are essential, as are self-confidence, reliability, and the ability to effectively communicate. Sales representatives should be self-starters who have the ability to work under pressure to meet sales goals.

Sales representatives who have good sales records and leadership ability may advance to supervisory and managerial positions. Frequent contact with business people in other firms provides sales workers with leads about job openings, enhancing advancement opportunities.

### Job Outlook

Employment of services sales representatives, as a group, is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005 in response to growth of the services industries that employ them. However, the projected growth of particular services industries varies, and employment of services sales representatives will not keep pace with industry growth due to downsizing of the sales force in many services industries, and the growing use of various technologies, such as voice mail, cellular telephones, and laptop computers, that increase sales workers' productivity. For example, the continued growth in factory and office automation should lead to much faster than average employment growth for computer and data processing services sales representatives, while faster than average growth is expected among sales representatives in health services. Average growth is projected for representatives who sell advertising, while slower than average employment growth is projected for representatives who sell educational services.

In addition to the jobs generated by this growth, openings will occur each year because of the need to replace sales workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. Each year, many sales representatives discover that they are unable to earn enough money at selling and leave the occupation. Turnover generally is higher among representatives who sell nontechnical services, since they have invested less time and effort in specialized training.

Prospective services sales representatives with a college background or a proven sales record should have the best job opportunities.

### Earnings

In 1992, the median annual income for full-time advertising sales representatives was over \$26,000, while representatives selling other business services earned nearly \$30,000. Earnings of representatives

who sold technical services generally were higher than earnings of those who sold nontechnical services.

Earnings of experienced sales representatives depend on performance. Successful sales representatives who establish a strong customer base can earn more than managers in their firm. Some sales representatives earn well over \$100,000 a year. According to a 1991 survey conducted by TPF & C, a Towers Perrin company, annual earnings of services sales representatives in Fortune 500 companies ranged from about \$39,000 for beginners to \$60,000 for those with 5 years of experience. Experienced sales workers responsible for key clients averaged over \$70,000 a year.

Sales representatives work on different types of compensation plans. Some get a straight salary; others are paid solely on a commission basis—a percentage of the dollar value of their sales. Most firms use a combination of salary and commissions. Some services sales representatives receive a base salary plus incentive pay that adds 50 to 70 percent to the sales representative's base salary. In addition to the same benefits package received by other employees of the firm, outside sales representatives have expense accounts to cover meals and travel, and some drive a company car. Many employers offer bonuses, including vacation time, trips, and prizes, for sales that exceed company quotas.

Because sales are affected by changing economic conditions and consumer and business expectations, earnings may fluctuate widely from year to year.

### Related Occupations

Services sales representatives must have sales ability and a knowledge of the service they sell. Workers in other occupations that require these skills include real estate agents, insurance agents, securities and financial services sales representatives, manufacturers' and wholesale sales representatives, and travel agents.

### Sources of Additional Information

For details about employment opportunities for services sales representatives, contact employers who sell services in your area.

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## Travel Agents

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(D.O.T. 252.152-010)

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### Nature of the Work

Constantly changing air fares and schedules, a proliferation of vacation packages, and business/pleasure trip combinations make travel planning frustrating and time consuming. Many travelers, therefore, turn to travel agents, who can make the best possible travel arrangements for them.

Depending on the needs of the client, travel agents give advice on destinations, make arrangements for transportation, hotel accommodations, car rentals, tours, and recreation, or plan the right vacation package or business/pleasure trip combination. They may also advise on weather conditions, restaurants, and tourist attractions and recreation. For international travel, agents also provide information on customs regulations, required papers (passports, visas, and certificates of vaccination), and currency exchange rates. Travel agents may also plan conventions and other meetings; they are usually referred to as meeting planners.

Travel agents consult a variety of published and computer-based sources for information on departure and arrival times, fares, and hotel ratings and accommodations. They often base recommendations on their own travel experiences or those of colleagues or clients. Travel agents may visit hotels, resorts, and restaurants to judge, firsthand, their comfort, cleanliness, and quality of food and service.

Travel agents also promote their services. They present slides or movies to social and special interest groups, arrange advertising displays, and suggest company-sponsored trips to business managers.



More than 9 out of 10 salaried agents worked for travel agencies.

### Working Conditions

Travel agents spend most of their time behind a desk conferring with clients, completing paperwork, contacting airlines and hotels for travel arrangements, and promoting group tours. They may be under a great deal of pressure during vacation seasons. Many agents, especially those who are self-employed, frequently work long hours.

### Employment

Travel agents held about 115,000 jobs in 1992 and are found in every part of the country. More than 9 out of 10 salaries agents worked for travel agencies; some worked for membership organizations. Many travel agents are self-employed. Nearly one-half of the travel agencies are in suburban areas; about 40 percent are in large cities; and the rest, in small towns and rural areas.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Formal or specialized training is becoming increasingly important for travel agents since few agencies are willing to train people on the job. Many vocational schools offer 3- to 12-week full-time programs, as well as evening and Saturday programs. Travel courses are also offered in public adult education programs and in community and 4-year colleges. A few colleges offer a bachelor's and a master's degree in travel and tourism. Although few college courses relate directly to the travel industry, a college education is sometimes desired by employers. Courses in computer science, geography, foreign languages, and history are most useful. Courses in accounting and business management also are important, especially for those who expect to manage or start their own travel agencies. Several home-study courses provide a basic understanding of the travel industry. The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) and the Institute of Certified Travel Agents offer a travel correspondence course. Travel agencies also provide on-the-job training for their employees a significant part of which consists of computer instruction. These computer skills are required by employers to operate airline reservation systems.

Travel experience is an asset since personal knowledge about a city or foreign country often helps to influence clients' travel plans. Experience as an airline reservation agent also is a good background for a travel agent. Travel agents need good selling skills—they must be pleasant and patient and able to gain the confidence of clients.

Some employees start as reservation clerks or receptionists in travel agencies. With experience and some formal training, they can take on greater responsibilities and eventually assume travel agent duties. In agencies with many offices, travel agents may advance to office manager or to other managerial positions.

Experienced travel agents can take an advanced course, leading to the designation of Certified Travel Counselor, offered by the Institute of Certified Travel Agents. The institute awards a certificate to

those completing an 18-month part-time course. It also offers certification, called designation of competence, in North American, Western European, Caribbean, or South Pacific tours. Those who plan meetings also may be designated as Certified Meeting Professional (CMP). The CMP exam is administered by the Convention Liaison Council. To qualify to take the exam, a candidate must be employed in a meeting management position and have at least three years of meeting planning experience.

Those who start their own agencies generally have experience in an established agency. They must generally gain formal supplier or corporation approval before they can receive commissions. Suppliers or corporations are organizations of airlines, shiplines, or rail lines. The Airlines Reporting Corporation, for example, is the approving body for airlines. To gain approval, an agency must be in operation, be financially sound, and employ at least one experienced manager/travel agent.

There are no Federal licensing requirements for travel agents. However, Rhode Island requires licensing, and Ohio, Hawaii, and California require registration. In California, travel agents not approved by a corporation are required to have a license.

### Job Outlook

Employment of travel agents is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005. Many job openings will arise as new agencies open and existing agencies expand, but most will occur as experienced agents transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force.

Spending on travel is expected to increase significantly through the year 2005. As business activity expands, so will business-related travel. Employment of managerial, professional specialty, and sales representative occupations—those who do most business travel—is projected to grow rapidly. Also, with rising incomes, more people are expected to travel on vacation—and to do so more frequently—than in the past. In fact, many people take more than one vacation a year.

Charter flights and larger, more efficient planes have brought air transportation within the budgets of more people. So has the easing of Government regulation of air fares and routes, by fostering greater competition among airlines to offer better and more affordable service. In addition, American travel agents organize tours for the growing number of foreign visitors. Although most travel agencies now have automated reservation systems, this has not weakened demand for travel agents.

The travel industry generally is sensitive to economic downturns and political crises, when travel plans are likely to be deferred. Therefore, the number of job opportunities fluctuates.

### Earnings

Experience, sales ability, and the size and location of the agency determine the salary of a travel agent. According to a Louis Harris survey, conducted for the *Travel Weekly Magazine*, the 1992 annual earnings of travel agents with less than 1 year experience were \$12,428, from 1 to 3 years, \$15,610; from 3 to 5 years, \$17,975; from 5 to 10 years, \$20,775; and more than 10 years, \$25,007. Salaried agents usually have standard benefits, such as insurance coverage and paid vacations, that self-employed agents must provide for themselves.

Earnings of travel agents who own their agencies depend mainly on commissions from airlines and other carriers, cruise lines, tour operators, and lodging places. Commissions for domestic travel arrangements, cruises, hotels, sightseeing tours, and car rentals are about 10 percent of the total sale; and for international travel, about 11 percent. They may also charge clients a service fee for the time and expense involved in planning a trip.

During the first year of business or while awaiting corporation approval, self-employed travel agents generally have low earnings. Their income is generally limited to commissions from hotels, cruises, and tour operators and to nominal fees for making complicated arrangements. Even established agents have lower profits during economic downturns.

When they travel, agents usually get substantially reduced rates for transportation and accommodations.

**Related Occupations**

Travel agents organize and schedule business, educational, or recreational travel or activities. Other workers with similar responsibilities include secretaries, tour guides, airline reservation agents, rental car agents, and travel counselors.

**Sources of Additional Information**

For further information on training opportunities, contact:

☞ American Society of Travel Agents, Education Department, 1101 King St. Alexandria, VA 22314.

For certification information, contact:

☞ The Institute of Certified Travel Agents, 148 Lindon St., P.O. Box 82-56, Wellesley, MA 02181-0012, or phone toll free 1-800-542-4282.

For information on Certified Meeting Professionals (CMP's), contact:

☞ The Convention Liaison Council, 1575 Eye St. NW., Suite 1190, Washington, DC 20005.

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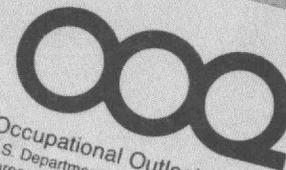
# Occupational Outlook Handbook

U.S. Department of Labor  
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May 1994

Bulletin 2450



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Occupational Outlook Quarterly  
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## Occupational Projections and Training Data

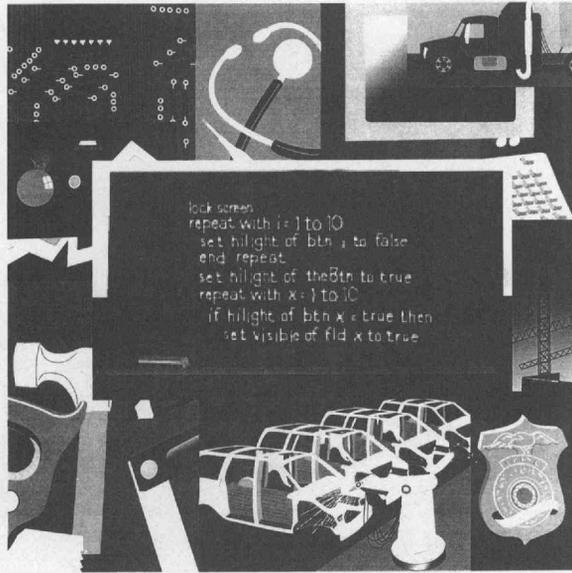
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A Statistical and Research Supplement to the 1994-95 Occupational Outlook Handbook

U.S. Department of Labor  
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### Occupational Projections and Training Data, 1994 Edition

This supplement to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* provides the statistical and technical data supporting the information presented in the *Handbook*. Education and training planners, career counselors, and jobseekers can find valuable information that ranks occupations by employment growth, earnings, susceptibility to unemployment, separation rates, and part-time work.

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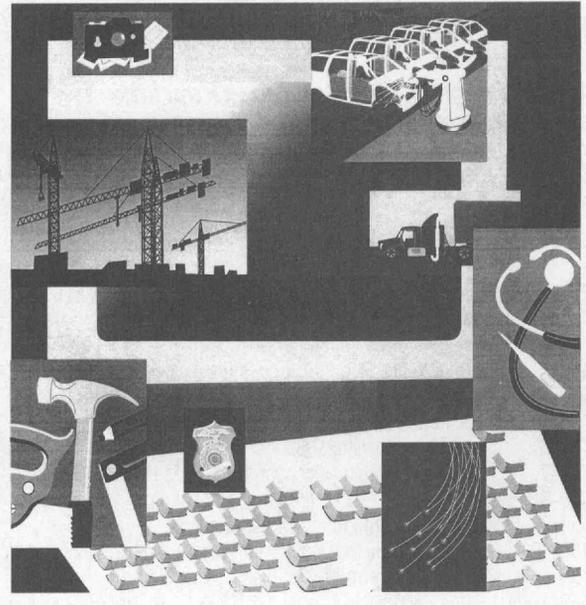
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U.S. Department of Labor  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Bulletin 2452  
April 1994



BLS Bulletin 2452

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