



Ten steps to a successful sales recruitment process

How to find your sales stars

Selling has changed more in the past five years than it has in the past 50 years, and this means what it takes to be a successful salesperson has changed.

But we know it's a struggle to find good salespeople – especially in a prosperous job market where all the high-performing ones are already employed.

However it doesn't mean you should give up on finding the right person to join your team (after all – sales need to be made), it's just about making sure your recruitment process is robust enough to source the very best talent out there.

Follow our 10 step guide to making sure the next hire you make is someone who is going to perform, and will stay long term.

Contents

Step one	
Why businesses keep failing to recruit the right salespeople	4
Step two	
What to look for in a successful salesperson	6
Step three	
Sourcing – find and attract salespeople to succeed in your business	8
Step four	
How to use automation to save time when recruiting	10
Step five	
Why you need to use a sales-specific pre-employment assessment	11
Step six	
How to correctly use the information on CVs	13
Step seven	
The phone interview – how to qualify candidates in less than 5 minutes	15
Step eight	
Why you want a challenger on your sales team	17
Step nine	
5 questions you must be asking in the interview	18
Step ten	
After the hire – ramping up and effective sales management	20

Step one

Why businesses keep failing to recruit the right salespeople

Have you ever made a bad recruitment decision? You were certain they would be a sales superstar, but six months later you're trying to figure out how to get rid of them? **Sound familiar?**

Well before embarking on your next journey to find the salespeople for your organisation, it's important to understand why so many hiring managers get it wrong. If you can identify with even one of the points below – then it is time to reassess your sales recruitment.

1. 'Guesstimating'

Without the right tools, experience and knowledge, most sales leaders are hiring someone based on a guess that the individual would do well. 'Hoping' may be a more accurate description for when the final decision is made.

But there is no solid guarantee that this will result in a great candidate coming on board – particularly since [only 26 per cent of salespeople](#) have the right skills, attitude and aptitude to be successful. And once you've hired them, there is really no way of going back without a lengthy, complicated dismissal process (as well as realising you've wasted a huge amount of time bringing on board the wrong person).

2. Emotion and feeling

It is human nature to judge a person's ability by the 'feeling' we get about them. But following our 'gut instinct' is a dangerous trap to get caught in when it comes to hiring a salesperson.



Following our 'gut instinct' is a dangerous trap to get caught in when it comes to hiring a salesperson.



You can't manage something if you can't measure it – and that is where a sales-specific assessment tool comes into play.

Naturally if we like someone's character when we meet them, we look upon everything they do favourably – so it is easy to miss any red flags, or things that would identify that they aren't actually a good salesperson. And on the flipside – just because we don't have anything in common with an individual or aren't particularly fond of them personally, it doesn't mean they can't be a very good salesperson.

3. No process

Without a thorough process to follow when recruiting, you are likely to miss key steps, and not have a consistent way of hiring new salespeople – which is likely to result in less-than-average results most of the time.

It is important to have key elements locked in place – like selection criteria, timeframes and outcome objectives – to ensure you stay on the right track and every new hire goes through the same screening process.

4. Not enough people in the candidate pool

When it comes to sales, we know that numbers matter – maybe you need 100 leads to get 20 prospects, 8 qualified and that are closable customers. And recruiting the right salesperson follows the same criteria – you need a sizable candidate pool to be able to uncover the ones that will be the best suit the position.

5. Lack of experience

A lot of sales managers are in their position because they were good salespeople – but unfortunately this doesn't always equate to them having the right knowledge and experience to lead a sales team, or hire the right new people to come on board.

If a manager is unable to identify and recruit the best salespeople, then this will ultimately result in a failed hire.

6. Not using a sales-specific assessment tool

You can't manage something if you can't measure it – and that is where a sales-specific assessment tool comes into play. This allows you to capture important information around a candidate's sales ability, enabling you to have a more accurate way to understand their level of competence.

7. Ineffective process after hiring

Yes, of course this happens after the fact of recruiting – but an ineffective on-boarding/ramping up process has the potential to completely derail the success of a new salesperson. And through minimal fault of their own, the new recruit is seen a fail. ★

Step two

What to look for in a successful salesperson

If you asked a room full of people about what skills a good salesperson would possess, you would probably hear things such as: confident, friendly, good at negotiating and other generic personality traits, as well as solid sales experience.

But this is all completely wrong.

Extensive worldwide research has shown that there are some very specific characteristics that salespeople need to possess in order to be successful. But if a hiring manager doesn't have this knowledge, they will be unable to recruit the best people for their team.

So what do you need to look for?

Personality

According to the [Objective Management Group](#), there are four key things to identify in a candidate: desire, commitment, responsibility and outlook (which you can [read more about on this blog](#)).

Of course it can be extremely difficult to measure an individual's level of competencies in these four areas, so that is where having the right pre-hire sales assessment in place is critical, and that is something we will discuss in step five.

There are also six, well-documented hidden weaknesses that impinge on a salesperson's capability to succeed – in fact it can have up to a 50 per cent impact on an individual's ability to execute. These are; money weakness, difficulty recovering from rejection, non-supportive buy cycle, self-limiting beliefs, need for approval, and controlling emotions.





And here's the clincher – these hidden weaknesses are very difficult and time-consuming to identify in salespeople without the right sales assessment in place.

The job requirements

It's important to have a clear framework around what makes a successful salesperson in YOUR organisation. Are you looking for a farmer or a hunter? Will they be cold calling or will they have warm leads to work with?

You need to be very specific around the daily tasks involved, because while the difference between cold calling and nurturing an established prospect might only seem minor, they each require a different set of capabilities.

Context of experience

Just because someone has a solid amount of sales experience, it doesn't mean it is the right kind of experience for your business and your sales process.

Sure, the individual might be a super star in their current role where they sell a high volume of low priced consumer products – but what if your organisation is B2B and sells small numbers of expense software? There would be a huge difference between the processes required for each sales pipeline, and it doesn't automatically mean their skills would transfer well from one to the other.

It is ideal to have a profile in place to identify the best salesperson for your business, so you can benchmark candidates against it. This would include who your customers are (CEOs or less-senior positions), what your pricing strategy is and what your selling environment looks like – as these things will all require a certain type of experience for a salesperson to be successful and comfortable with the situations they are placed in.

This will also come in handy when it comes to phone screening and/or interview stage, as by having a clear picture around what you need, you can work out the right questions to ask.

Understand their motivators

Motivation is an interesting thing – as not everyone is driven by the same external and internal factors. So understanding what motivates a salesperson to achieve in their role can provide an extremely helpful head start for you as their manager.

You need to know what will push them to succeed, and consider if that is something your organisation is able to provide for them – because if you can't then they are unlikely to reach their full potential in your team. Of course, the person themselves might not be too sure of what it is that they are actually motivated by, so finding this out might require an assessment. ★

Step three

Sourcing – find and attract salespeople to succeed in your business

Knowing the kind of candidate you want to hire is one thing – but being able to find them is often another thing altogether. So that makes sourcing a critical part of the recruitment process, and one where you have to get your pipeline in order to make sure the best person pops out at the end of the funnel.

The job ad

For most organisations, the first step to sourcing new sales talent is to place a job ad – and this is also where the first mistake of the process usually takes place.

If you look at 9 out of 10 sales job adverts, they will all be pretty much along the same generic lines, all using words such as: motivated, energetic, self-starter... but what does that really say about the specifics of your role? Surely it isn't exactly the same as 50 other sales jobs out there.

So this is where you need to be very implicit about the exact experience you require candidates to have, otherwise you will be flooded with CVs from people who just aren't right. But don't just copy and paste the job description – this is way too heavy for an advert.

Make sure that the ad is mobile friendly – which includes bold headings, bullet points, and using job titles with keywords that are simple, but reflect what people are looking for.

And here's a final, but important note – if you notice you aren't getting the right applicants applying for your job, you need to head back to the advert and change it.





Recruitment is an ongoing process, not just a one-off event, and you need to start treating it as a nurturing process that may take some time (years even) to get the people you want.

As sales expert Dave Kurlan notes in this [article here](#) – tweak it, refine it, and continue to improve it until you start getting the results you want.

Sell your business

We don't mean put your business on the market – we mean make sure you mention the great opportunity available at your organisation. Any successful salesperson is likely to have multiple companies keen to hire them, so you need to stand out from the pack.

It's one thing to say 'we need this, this and this', you also need to explain what's in it for someone who joins your sales team and why they should choose you over all the other opportunities. This is critical in a marketplace that is favourable to job seekers.

Don't be afraid to headhunt

You might be wondering where all the A-Players are hiding – well typically, they are employed and doing so well that they are (or should be) being very well looked after by their employer.

So this is where you need to get brave enough to headhunt – and of course LinkedIn is one of the best ways to approach this process. You can view hundreds of profiles of those people who have exactly the experience you are looking for (think competitors or similar operators in your marketplace), and then approach them

with a soft message about a job they might be interested in at your organisation.

Yes – this is happening on a very regular basis now, as many businesses are realising that to get the people they want, it takes more than just an advert posted on a job board.

Be constantly looking – not just when you need someone

In most businesses today, resourcing is a very streamlined affair. So typically when a job is advertised, the company needed the person yesterday – causing a mad-rush to hire someone quickly to fill the gap. But of course this isn't conducive to allowing you time to find the best person for the job, not the just first okay one to come along that can start tomorrow. But recruitment is an ongoing process, not just a one-off event, and you need to start treating it as a nurturing process that may take some time (years even) to get the people you want.

As mentioned previously, only 26 per cent of salespeople have what it takes to succeed, and when someone from that elite group comes to market, it will only be for a brief amount of time – so this is when you need to capture them.

Be constantly looking for the A-Players, so that you, and your business, will never have to settle for average. ★

Step four

How to use automation to save time when recruiting

Recruitment takes up a lot of time, and because of this there can be a tendency to rush some aspects of the process. But with the right automation, much of the labour-intensive side of things (like sifting through applications) can be significantly reduced.

Many businesses are still doing things the 'old way' – worried that automation can put people off, a good candidate might be missed, or they just aren't sure about how it actually works. However if you think about all the things we currently let technology take care of for us, why would a little assistance with recruitment – to gain more efficient outputs – be put in the too-hard basket?

There are plenty of tools available to help with automation when recruiting, and one of the simplest is to set up rules in your inbox for when applications come through. This will push the email straight through to a selected folder, and have a automatic reply to say thank you for applying, what the process will be from here, and expected time-frames around the next step. This means you can set aside time at either end of the day to focus solely on applications – rather than being interrupted every time a new one comes in.

To step-up your filtering process, you can add a quiz or questionnaire to your job advert that contains specific questions relating to the criteria/experience needed to fulfil your job. For example, software from [Workable.com](https://www.workable.com) allows you to customise candidate screening so you can save time evaluating them later on.

This then enables you to get clear information on a person's skills that they might not have elaborated on in their CV, and means if they don't have what you need,

you can remove them from the process (with a polite email of course).

This initial first step will also assist with setting clear guidelines around what it is you are specifically looking for – keeping you on track and not compromising just because of 'gut-feel'.

The next offering in automation is to have a specific sale assessment tool set up so that those who do have the right experience can be further analysed on their capabilities. We will go into what one of these looks like in step five, but the thing to remember is there are plenty of underlying traits and weaknesses that need to be identified before moving on to the interview stage (which can waste everyone's time if the candidate isn't right).

One thing we will say though is - don't let automation rule the entire process. There needs to be some human/ personalised elements in recruitment, in order to make sure people feel appreciated and respected. Your business brand should be important to you, and this means making sure candidates walk away still feeling positive about their experience with you, even if they aren't successful with their application.

You never know – in five or ten years time, those people could have been coached and trained into superstars and you'll want them to still be open to an opportunity within your organisation. ★

Step five

Why you need to use a sales-specific pre-employment assessment

Using the right assessments in the sales hiring process should always be non-negotiable, as it takes the guesswork out of an extremely important part of recruitment – finding the best people to shortlist and interview.

But there are two critical things hiring managers need to be aware of when it comes to using pre-employment assessments: a generic personality/behaviour-style assessment will not work for sales roles, and not all sales assessment tools are built the same.

One of the leading sales assessment tools was created by the [Objective Management Group](#) (OMG), who have conducted some of the largest worldwide research into sales industry over the past 20 years. From this research, they have then been able to create candidate-screening tools that are able to predict sales success for an individual – with 96 per cent accuracy.

How is this for a statistic? Of the nearly one million salespeople assessed by OMG, 92 per cent of recommended and hired candidates reached the top half of the sales force within 12 months. And 75 per cent of candidates who were not recommended, but hired anyway, failed within six months.

It's not really the kind of data you can argue with – and for those managers and business owners who are frustrated with continually hiring salespeople who end up failing, or not reaching expectations, there is no doubt this information is extremely valuable (especially when you consider the cost involved with making a recruitment mistake and having to re-hire – which, as a conservative



**A generic personality/
behaviour-style
assessment will not work
for sales roles, and not all
sales assessment tools
are built the same.**

figure, has been noted as two-and-a-half times the basic annual salary of the employee).

As well as being able to have factual data in which to make hiring decisions, the candidate assessments also allows you to dramatically reduce the amount of time required for the recruitment process (as detailed here) – in that leaving the majority of the screening to automation, you won't be wasting hours on viewing CVs and having lengthy phone interviews to determine suitability.

So how exactly is a sales-specific assessment different to personality or psychometric testing? Check out the table below (courtesy of OMG):

Leaving the majority of the screening to automation means you won't be wasting hours on viewing CVs.

Sales specific assessment vs. personality/behaviour assessment

Behaviour/personality assessment	Measures	Sales industry specific assessment	What will be measured in a sales specific assessment
Drive or achievement	General need to achieve	Desire	How important it is to achieve success in sales
Resilience	General ability to cope with adversity	Bravery	The sales specific scenarios that will be problematic, unique to your business, and the individual's ability to handle them
Rejection	How the individual reacts to generally not being accepted or not having their ideas to be accepted	Difficulty recovering from rejection	The impact that getting hung up on or getting a 'no' will have when they close and how long it may take to recover
Emotions	Emotional steadiness	Ability to control emotions	The likelihood that when a salesperson is caught off guard or in an uncomfortable situation they will panic and lose control of the sales call
Sociable	How comfortable they feel and how appropriately they behave in social situations	Bonding and rapport	How quickly they develop relationships with their prospects
Confidence	Whether they are a confident person	Record collection	The sales specific beliefs that support or sabotage their sales outcomes
Coachable	Whether they are open to new ideas	Trainable	Whether they have the incentive to improve their sales competencies

Step six

How to correctly use the information on CVs

Even in the digital age – with the likes of LinkedIn and other professional websites – CVs are still an important part of recruitment, but often they are not used in the correct way, which is, of course, the first step in determining whether someone is a potential right fit for the role.

Yes, we can all ‘read’ CVs, but are we really reading them properly? Objectively? Looking beneath face value? The answer is typically that we are not. We see something we like, perhaps someone who mentions all the awards they have won, and take that as a great indicator for their success – but this is exactly where we need to look deeper.

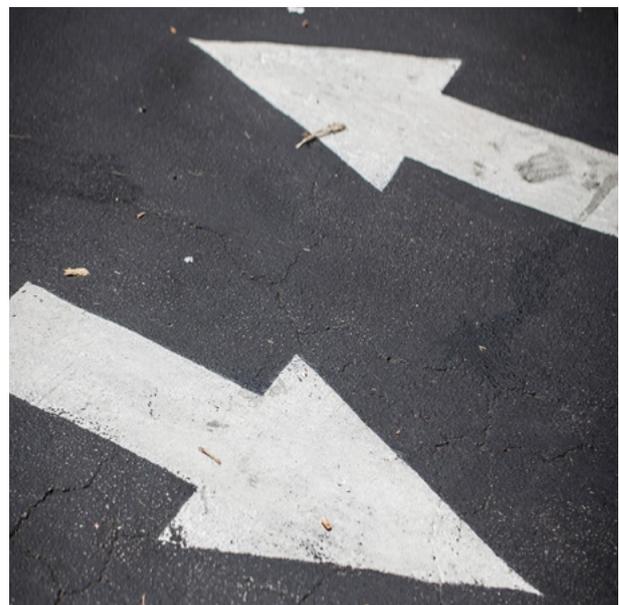
And timing is critical here – why spend your valuable time reading CVs for people that cannot sell in your unique selling environment?

Check out their work history.

This is usually the first place to start when scanning a CV – where have they worked previously? How long for? Are there any gaps in their timeline without a reasonable explanation?

If someone has moved around a lot, yes, they may have a perfectly good reason for it, but they could also have trouble with sales performance. And the companies they have worked for – what service or product were they selling and how does it relate to your business? Do they have the ability to sell with your pricing strategy against your competitors to your customers?

As previously mentioned, sales experience doesn’t always transfer across roles, and you need to check they have skills that closely relate to your sales cycle. Just knowing



Sales experience doesn’t always transfer across roles, and you need to check they have skills that closely relate to your sales cycle.

someone has had a role selling technology isn't enough – was it a device or software? Was it high or low volume? Make sure you can answer all these questions before moving onto the next stage.

How do they set themselves apart?

Just as job adverts for salespeople can often take on a similar appearance, so can the CVs of sales candidates. Are they motivated to achieve, confident and approachable, friendly and able to work autonomously? Of course – but that is so is every salesperson, at least that's what they say.

So look out for CVs that are able to set themselves apart from the rest. Do they provide intelligent, insightful into themselves as a salesperson? Are they able to expand on the words they use to describe themselves by providing examples of experience that proves these qualities? It is not enough to just present a list of positive attributes; they need to be backed up with an explanation.

Are they able to qualify their achievements?

Most salespeople will have a list of achievements noted somewhere on their CV, and while these can look impressive at first glance, they need to always be reviewed with closer scrutiny.

Look out for CVs that are able to set themselves apart from the rest.

Context is critical to get an understanding of what these achievements actually mean, and whether they are indeed notable. For example, someone may say they came top for sales in their region – but how many others were they competing against? And how big was their region? And how much of the award depended on their output – or were they handed hot leads?

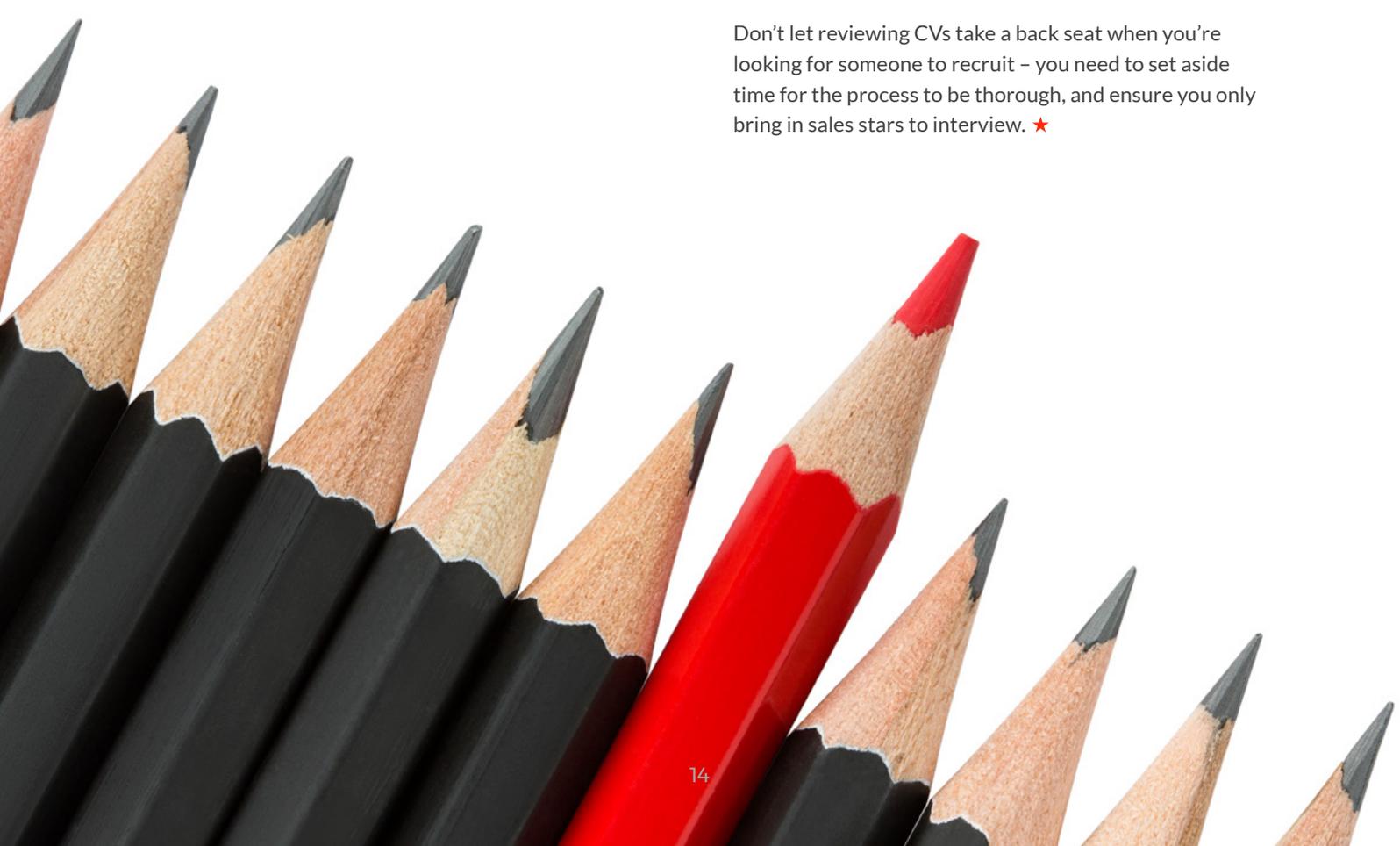
It is important to know what was involved with the attainment of these achievements so that you can gain a better insight into their abilities and strengths.

Don't forget the little things.

The saying may go 'don't sweat the small stuff' but when it comes to reviewing a candidate's CV, you do need to pay attention to the details.

In a sales role, communication is key – both written and verbal – and if they are unable to provide a clear, error-free CV then can you be confident they will be able to deal with your prospects and customers in a professional manner?

Don't let reviewing CVs take a back seat when you're looking for someone to recruit – you need to set aside time for the process to be thorough, and ensure you only bring in sales stars to interview. ★



Step seven

The phone interview – how to qualify candidates in less than 5 minutes

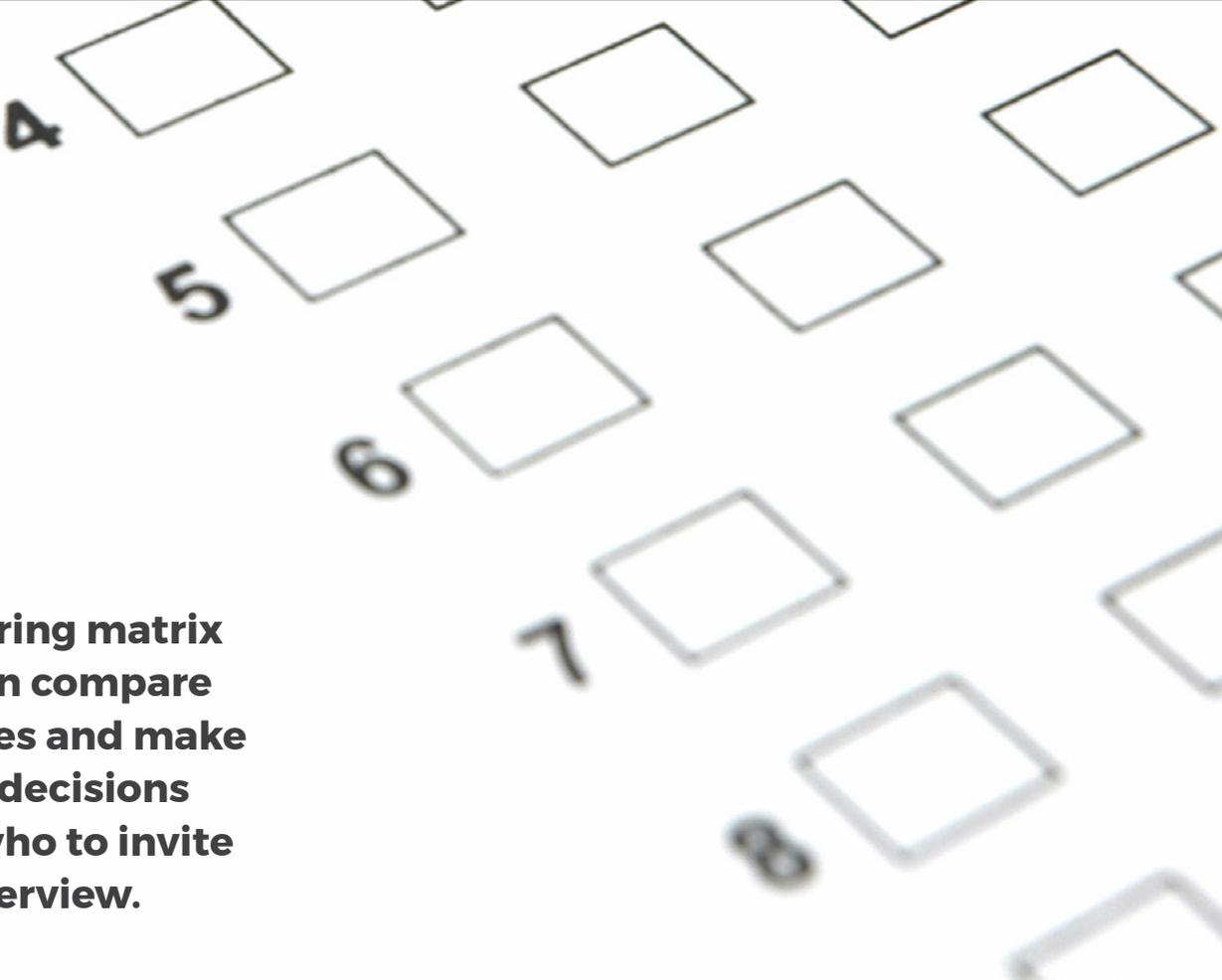
Phone interviews are a must before bringing in someone for a face-to-face interview – it is another way to cut down time spent on recruitment. These should be no longer than five minutes, and this really is plenty of time to get the information you need to make a decision about moving forward to interview stage.

If you have sales assessments in place for candidates, then these phone calls will be about establishing communication abilities and getting a better feeling of their personality – which is still an important thing to get right for your business and sales team.

Once you have gone through their CV in detail, you should have a clear picture on who they are, and an overview of their experience – and you will hopefully also have questions which relate to things mentioned (or perhaps not) in their resume. Have these on hand for the phone call, as this is time to get your answers so you can make a more informed decision around whether or not you want to bring them in for an interview.

This is also a great time to get a feel for someone's personality – do they sound nervous or confident; friendly or cold; enthusiastic or distracted? Remember, you need a salesperson who can communicate clearly with prospects and/or customers, so checking they come across well over the phone is important.





Use a scoring matrix so you can compare candidates and make the right decisions around who to invite for an interview.

Here are four other key areas you should be concentrating on:

1. How professional are they when they answer their phone? If they do not answer the phone, do they return your call in an acceptable timeframe?
2. Do they recall the position they applied for and why did it appeal to them? Also, have they done any homework on your company?
3. How well do they respond to questions? Are they listening and can you understand them i.e. do they come across well over the phone?
4. How assertive are they? Do they establish rapport with you?

It is also a good idea to set up a consistent system to measure performance in the phone interview. By using a scoring matrix, you can then 'measure apples with apples' across multiple candidates, and once you have completed phone screening you will then have some useful data for making decisions around who to invite for a face-to-face

interview. This is also helpful to keep you on track with making calculated hiring, based on the right criteria – not on gut feel (as noted in step one).

In keeping with the goal to hire 'A-Players', don't forget that if they are actively seeking new employment then yours won't be the only job they have applied for. So this means phone screening should be done as soon as possible (after you have confirmed they are suitable for the role – whether with a sales assessment, or a thorough look at their CV). It's best to have an organised plan in place around timings so that you can ensure every application is dealt with in an appropriate time-frame, reducing the risk of losing out on securing sales stars who are snapped up by someone else.

As a final note, don't forget that phone screening should be kept to a maximum of five minutes. This is to ensure you keep them streamlined, and of a similar context – as well as not wasting your time on people that can't be qualified in that amount of time. ★

Step eight

Why you want a challenger on your sales team

The word ‘challenger’ means different things to different people.

Some may see it as being competitive, and some might think of it as a form of aggressive behaviour. But when it comes to sales, there is no doubt that the challenger is someone you want to have on your team. Why? Let us explain.

A survey of 6,000 sales reps across different locations and industries was carried out by [CEB](#) – a leading best practice insight and technology company – and they found there were five dominant approaches to selling that sales reps will fall into.

- **Relationship Builders** focus on developing strong personal and professional relationships and work hard to resolve tensions in the commercial relationship.
- **Hard Workers** will make more calls in an hour and conduct more visits in a week than just about anyone else on the team.
- **Lone Wolves** are deeply self-confident. They are the rule-breaking cowboys of the sales force who do things their way or not at all.
- **Reactive Problem Solvers** focus on post-sales follow-up, ensuring that service issues related to implementation and execution are addressed quickly and thoroughly.
- **Challengers** use their deep understanding of their customers’ business to push their thinking and take control of the sales conversation. They’re not afraid to share even potentially controversial views and are assertive—with both their customers and bosses.

On face value, most people would probably say that relationship builders would be the most valuable player on a sales team (perhaps with the hard workers following close behind). And sure, that may have been the case 10,

Customers have changed the way they buy, and that means there needs to be a change in the way salespeople sell.

or even five years ago, but the fact is, customers have changed the way they buy, and that means there needs to be a change in the way salespeople sell.

So the outcome of all of the above? That ‘challengers’ are the most successful salespeople, due to four main capabilities (as outlined by [The ChallengerTM Selling Model](#)):

1. They teach their customers
2. They tailor their sales message to the customer
3. They take control of the sale
4. They build constructive tension

The key takeaway here is that learning to identify challengers is extremely important for the hiring process – particularly for complex sales environments. But it is also critical to note that need for approval and/or a non-supportive buy-cycle (hidden weaknesses mentioned in step two) have the ability to derail a challengers success.

The only way to overcome this risk? By doing a pre-hire sales-specific assessment that test for their roadblocks. ★

Step nine

5 questions you must be asking in the interview

Want to find the very best salesperson for your business? Leave your emotions and feelings at the door when it comes to interviews. Why? **Because this is the where most managers will fail in the recruitment process.**

Sure, there are some really likeable people out there that are very good salespeople, but there would be as many (if not more) who are wonderful people, but have no sales ability whatsoever. So you can't let your 'gut instinct' lead the charge when it comes to making hiring decisions, well, not if you want to find a successful salesperson.

Yes, there are many questions to ask in an interview – but which ones will give you usual information to help you determine if they would be a good fit?

1. Get them to bring along sales stats

Ask the candidate to bring their sales pipeline, critical ratios, and calendar to the interview and from here you can ask some detailed questions such as “what was your best month?” And “what drove sales in that month?”

If you then look at this information, and reference the calendar – is there matching activity there to validate that revenue sold? This is a perfect way to ensure that what you are being told is indeed correct. Hopefully a majority of the time it will be, but it is your job to filter out embellishments.

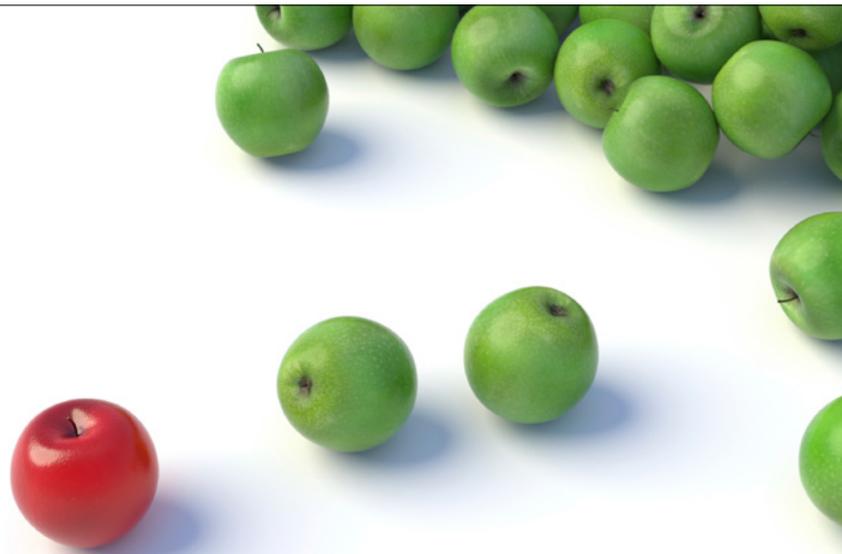
2. What questions should I be asking you that will demonstrate that you're the right candidate?

This may have some candidates stumped – but the best ones will be able to come up with a good answer that shows they can think on the spot, something that is



Ask the candidate to bring their sales pipeline, critical ratios, and calendar to the interview.

After meeting with a variety of candidates, you will no doubt have stand-outs – but just remember to recognise where gut-feel comes into play.



always required of salespeople out in the field in front of prospects and customers.

It is also a great way to see whether they understand what makes someone a successful salesperson. Look for candidates who are able to offer something new and original.

3. Why have you been successful? And what could you do to be more successful?

While the first half of the question allows them to describe what makes them a good salesperson, the second part provides an opportunity for the candidate to open up about any areas of weakness that they may have.

Being able to have this self-awareness of any areas for improvement doesn't necessarily need to be a red flag either (we all have them) but if they can identify them, and perhaps provide insight into how they could overcome them, then there might be a possibility of managing this weakness if they do come on board.

Of course, this question could also uncover some real problems, and will mean you can not move any further with their application.

4. What's the best example you can give me about overcoming adversity? What did you learn?

Again this is a good 'on-the-spot' question, requires real self-awareness into times they have struggled. It

is probably best to ask for work examples here, but a personal story could still be appropriate. What is important is getting an engaging insight into what they learnt from the experience – how this relates to who they are today.

5. What's the single most important thing about you that you've changed? And why did you change?

For someone to realise they had an area of weakness, and were able to take steps to remedy it, means they have the ability to change when required. By understanding this about a candidate, you can know whether they will be able to adapt to the unique sales process, and their selling style, for your business.

This is a key strength for an individual to have, and getting a good answer to this question will provide valuable insight for your decision-making.

After meeting with a variety of candidates, you will no doubt have stand-outs – but just remember to recognise where gut-feel comes into play, and how it isn't actually able to accurately predict whether a salesperson will be successful or not.

It is important to try and make rational decisions based on facts, knowledge about [mindset vs sales skills](#), and if possible – using a pre-hire sales assessment. ★

Step ten

After the hire – ramping up and effective sales management

Right in step one we covered the reasons why businesses fail at hiring successful salespeople, and the last point made was that, after bringing someone new on board, the on-boarding process then fails to help them to achieve.

Some might say, “well if they are A-Players, then they should be self-starters who can self-motivate” – but this is an unfair approach to take, and is not taking responsibility for ensuring a salesperson has the best foundations for success. Every new sales rep needs time dedicated to ‘ramping up’ and becoming familiar with everything it takes to be successful in sales in your business.

But wait – how long do you allow for the ‘ramp up’ process? Is it not actually enough time, or is it drawn out much too long? Understanding this really is key to making sure you are providing the right allocation to everyone that comes on board.

Dave Kurlan from the Objective Management Group has a formula that he uses to calculate ramp-up time:

Add your sale cycle in months to your learning curve in months and then add an additional 30 days. So, if you have a six-month sale cycle, and a three-month learning curve, your baseline ramp-up time will be 10 months. Complicating the matter even more is the fact that some salespeople will not ramp up exactly as the formula suggests, based on three additional factors:

1	Years of sales experience	—	Fewer years	=	Longer ramp up
2	Years in the industry	—	Fewer years	=	Longer ramp up
3	Compatibility (found on Objective Management Group's Sales Candidate Assessment)	—	Lower compatibility	=	Longer ramp up



You can do everything right from one to nine, but if you miss out the importance of the after-hire activity, then you will continue to fail at hiring successful salespeople.

After you have worked out the time required for a new salesperson to get up-to-speed with your business, the next step is being completely honest with yourself: do you have a sales process that is thorough (and that mirrors the exact things that your top-performers do in the field), a pipeline that produces results, and solid sales management capabilities? Because without these aspects, how can you expect anyone to succeed?

In fact – Kurlan says that the sales manager is usually the biggest determining factor of sales success, and should be the first place to look when it appears salespeople aren't working out.

“Are your new salespeople being micro managed or at least closely managed? They should be. Particularly if they are in a remote territory. Do your new salespeople know what is expected of them in the first 30/60/90

days, how they will be measured and how they will be held accountable?

“And what about KPIs? Sales managers that manage results (history) are months behind when it comes to being able to impact a salesperson using coaching and accountability. However sales managers that manage activity (today) can see into the future and change it.”

So here's the clincher, and what wraps up this whole 10 step process together – you can do everything right from one to nine, but if you miss out the importance of the after-hire activity, then you will continue to fail at hiring successful salespeople.

The question is – are you okay about wasting valuable time and money on rolling out recruitment every few months to continue to get the same average results? ★

Want to know more about hiring sale stars for your business? We'd love to help.

Feel free to pop in, give us a call, send us an email, or request a free consultation with one of our sales development experts.

We're a friendly bunch but we are very serious about helping businesses achieve better sales results.

We'll even calculate your ROI to ensure that working with us makes financial sense in every respect.

North American Sales Office

 614-551-9858

 fniekamp@ventassolutions.com

 8214 Tillinghast Ste 100
Dublin, OH 43017