

# A Simpler Way to Recruit and Hire Top Sales Talent

Top-performing sales talent is critical to your organization's success. The stakes are high and recruiting and hiring the right sales professional is a process that can be loaded with anxiety and questions. It doesn't have to be. Just follow this handy guide:



## 1 Determine What You Need and When You Need It

Make sure you have a clear picture of what type of professional will help bolster your sales team. Determine the position first – Sales Manager, Sales Rep, Regional Sales Leader, etc. Regardless, make sure the position to be filled is well-defined, including goals the new hire will be expected to achieve. Next, determine when the position must be filled. (No, yesterday is NOT an option.) Be realistic. Consider your revenue forecast and other competitive market factors, but don't procrastinate. The sooner you start, the more thorough your search can be.

## 2 Do Your Market Homework

Speaking of market factors, consider whether it's necessary to recruit only within your current market or industry. Industry experience is often unnecessary if the candidate has the talent, mindset, and transferrable cross-market skillset to sell your product or service to decision makers. Also, review marketplace data to understand how to structure or update your sales compensation plan. Make sure the new position's salary fits into your current mix and adjust as necessary.



## 3 Consider Your Alternatives

Before spending a great deal of time and energy on the recruiting and hiring process, consider your options. For example, you could turn to a professional sales talent recruiting company that is well-versed in all the disciplines necessary to make a successful hire. Another alternative is to engage the services of an outsourced sales professional. Many companies turn to a sales leadership consultant such as an Outsourced VP of Sales (OVPS) who has proven leadership skills and can help lead the sales organization on a fractional time basis at a fraction of the cost. You could also combine these options by using an OVPS to identify the positions and skillsets necessary to hire and then utilize the recruiting company to find the candidates. The OVPS can then onboard and guide new sales team members.



## 4 Set Your Recruiting Budget So Your Dollars Make Sense

Whether you seek an internal or external sales professional, be sure to accurately budget for the recruiting process. Don't just throw out a number; instead, do your homework. Ask and answer key questions: Are you planning to do marketing and advertising for the position? If so, how much will that cost? Will you engage a recruiting firm? If so, what are the costs for that? Will you do the recruiting and hiring yourself? If so, what costs are associated with the project, including lost-time opportunity costs due to shifting focus away from normal duties during the process?

## 5 Profile and Strategically Target Your Next Sales Superstar

Naturally, it's important to create a profile or persona for your ideal candidate. This begins with a job description detailing required job skills, experience, and education. But go a step further and envision what a successful hiring process outcome looks like. Consider team dynamics as well. It will be important for the new sales professional to quickly become a team player who adds to success without adding drama. Finally, develop a custom recruiting strategy that is aligned with your Ideal Candidate Profile. Focus on strategic platforms and connection points. LinkedIn® is a good place to start, but consider other tools, resources, and venues, too. Determine where top prospects spend their time and target your connections there.



## 6 Prepare to "Sell" Your Company

Remember you're not just recruiting and hiring someone to enhance your organization, you're also "selling" your company to job candidates. The new employee and your company must be comfortable with one another. So, whether it's while job sourcing or during the interview phase, make sure you present your company in the best light with honest differentiators that will entice the candidate to join your team. Make sure your interviewing team is also in alignment on the role and key messages you want to convey.



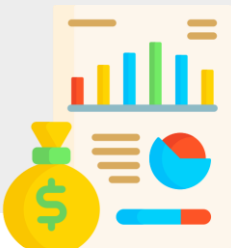
## 7 Get to Know Your Candidates

When you've assembled a slate of top candidates for the position, it's time to interview them. Customize your interviewing methodology to go beyond routine surface-level questions and answers. Instead, prepare questions that will enable you to truly understand the candidate's mindset, personality, and skills. Consider using behavior-based interviewing techniques, including a simulation component, to help evaluate interviewees.



## 8 Make an Offer that Won't be Refused

When the best candidate has been identified, make an offer emphasizing key aspects of your updated compensation plan. Bundle an attractive mix of salary, benefits, and performance incentives that will be hard for elite sales talent to pass up.



## 9 Don't Neglect Proper Onboarding

Recruiting and hiring top sales talent are critical processes, certainly. But even highly skilled sales professionals are likely to struggle or fail if onboarding is weak. Proper onboarding goes well beyond administrative functions and short-term integration into the team; it should also include training – on the company's products and services, market and customer dynamics, sales processes, pipeline reports, and how to use the company's CRM, just to name a few key aspects. While onboarding is often seen as a finite process performed within a specific period, make sure continuing training is treated as a linchpin for sustainable success in the position.



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