



Executive class:

IS YOUR SALES VP DRIVING THE BUS? OR RIDING THE BUS?

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Entrepreneurs and business managers have lots to keep them up at night. Wondering whether the right sales VP is in place should not be one of them. While sales is one of the most measurable professions, CEOs are frequently stumped with how to determine whether their VP is hitting the mark. Here are eight indicators.

- 1 Hitting sales targets.** Is the sales team consistently hitting and exceeding targets? Are your targets aggressive enough? Look at your competitors and other benchmark companies of the same size in the same industry: is your company's revenue growth just keeping pace? Lagging? If your VP is comfortable managing a team that is just keeping even (or worse), you may need to find someone that can turn up the heat.
- 2 Running a tight ship.** Do you have data (sales volume metrics; win/loss analysis; who you are losing to and why) to analyze sales effectiveness? If not, why not?
- 3 Big picture.** Is your VP tactical, focused entirely on making the numbers this quarter, or big picture, and able to capitalize fully on your company's opportunities today and tomorrow? Look for evidence of sales strategy in multi-year sales plans and territory plans.
- 4 Cost of sales.** Is your cost of sales in line with sales productivity? You can find relevant industry benchmarks from financial and industry analysts for your sector.
- 5 Go team!** Your VP needs to be able to build and motivate a team that can achieve exceptional results. Depending on your stage, you may be looking for a player/coach, for someone that can introduce process, or for an effective manager: in every case the ability to hire successful reps and motivate team members will be critical. Most of your team should be at or above targets, and high turnover is an obvious red flag.
- 6 Plays well with others.** What is the sales VPs relationship with the rest of the executive team? Is s/he able to get out of the sales silo to contribute in a meaningful and constructive way to broader management discussions?
- 7 Forecasting.** Your sales VP should be providing accurate forecasts, and should be alerting the CEO before quarter end if the numbers are at risk.
- 8 Customer satisfaction.** Ask your key customers about their experience with the sales organization. How does your VP respond to criticism from your best customers? Does she or he actively support the best accounts and champion their interests to the rest of the company?

About Peak

Peak Sales Recruiting is focused on finding sales professionals for technology companies. Peak's clients are able to hire better performing sales people and executives more quickly. Please visit www.peaksalesrecruiting.com or call (613) 233-8999. The company blog, "The Art and Science of Tech Sales," can be found at www.peaksalesrecruiting.com/blog.

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