Sales Recruiting 2.0

How to Find

Top Performing Sales People, Fast

Eliot Burdett & Brent Thomson

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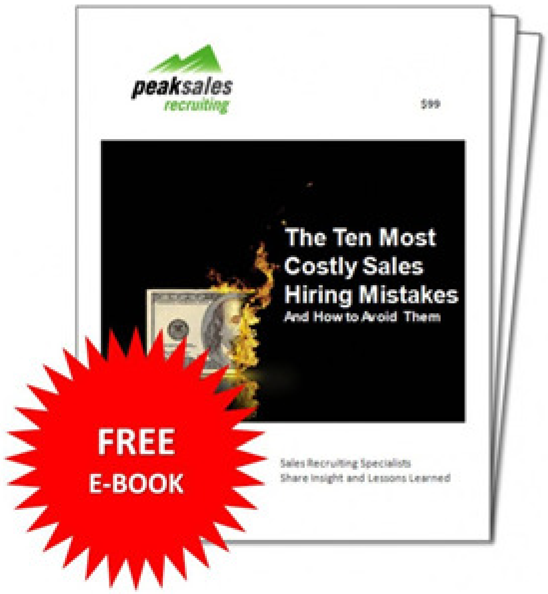

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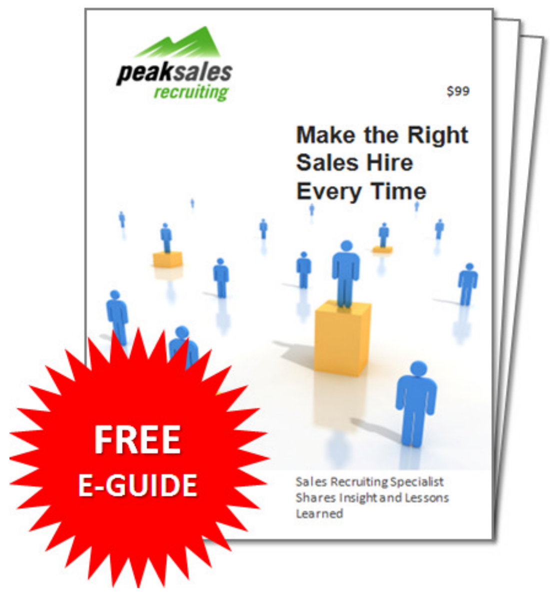

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Why you need to read this book

“You are only as good as the people you hire.”
Ray Kroc

You take great pride in building and leading high performing sales teams so you know that this is one of the hardest challenges a sales leader can face. You know the competition for talent has always been fierce.

And you know success can be hard to achieve because of these brutal facts:

> *Fact: 55% of the people earning their living in sales should be doing something else.*
>
> *Fact: Another 20-25% has what it takes to sell, but should be selling something else.*
>
> *So, <u>75-80% of salespeople are selling something that they are not suited to sell.</u>*

(Source: How to Hire and Develop Your Next Top Performer)

Read that again—75-80% of salespeople are selling something they are not suited to sell or shouldn’t be in the sales field at all.

While the Internet makes it easier for you to get access to more potential hires, it also makes it easier for your competition to get access to the people you want. The Internet has made it harder for most companies to find and hire the people they want. And that's assuming they know what they are looking for in the first place.

Why Bother?

"If you think hiring professionals is expensive, try hiring amateurs."

Larry Bossidy

We could not agree with Larry more. Hiring the wrong person can cost the company hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenues, annoyed or lost customers, market share, damaged reputation, compromised morale, management, hiring and retraining costs and initial lost training costs. And lawsuits. The issue is worse because of the following

Fact: companies turn over as high 30% of their sales force every year.

(Source: The Truth About Turnover – Gallup Management Journal - 2002)

That is why we concentrate on integrating the new hire as much as finding them. Hiring the right people is important, but so is supporting them once they have been placed into a sales position. A whopping 65% of sales hires fail when there is not a systematic process in place to guarantee results. Even with processes, sales teams with more than 40% of representatives below target are the norm. Those aren't our numbers; they come from CSO Insights, 2007.

The costs of this performance gap annualized are astronomical for any sales organization. In fact, the estimated costs for each bad sales hire ranges from 75% to 150% of the representative's annual quota!! That cost burden is unsustainable for most firms. Firms in some industries (tech for example) are not even around anymore because they could not absorb an inefficient hiring procedure. High costs coupled with lost sales are a direct result of bad hires.

This cost, these lost amounts of money can be fatal to virtually any company, no-matter what their size. A company will experience both direct and indirect costs for each and every bad hire that is brought into the organization. Direct costs can often be seen, felt or measured, whereas indirect costs often refer to long-term impact of a single decision or group of decisions. Direct costs first.

Direct Costs

- Lost revenue (lost and delayed business). This is easy to quantify. Take a failed hire and subtract what they actually sold from their quota. That is the minimum cost of a bad hire. A better measure is to take your top performer and subtract his results from the results of your recent failure. That is the REAL cost of lost revenue resulting from a bad hire.
- Extra training and management required. Also, easy to quantify. Just divide your training budget by the number of hires. Then multiply that by the percentage of failures. That is the money you wasted on training somebody who just walked out the door. The cost of management is also easy to figure—just ask your sales manager how much of their time is spent working with under performers. You will be shocked because it is a lot. Take that wasted management time as a percentage of the sales budget and you have your management cost of bad hires.
- Costs of turnover (firing and replacing). Not so easy to quantify because it could be huge. Lawsuits, triple damages, juries unsympathetic, if not hostile, to business, discrimination—not fun to think about, almost impossible to determine. Plus, there is a morale cost. Failure seeps into an organization and poisons the environment. Finally, failed hires rarely speak highly of their former employers and they spread it around—to their friends, to their customers, to their new company and, the new form of communication, the Internet. Something bad on the Internet is forever.

Indirect Costs

- Long term impact on market share and brand (lost customers and brand loyalty). A constantly churning sales force propels you backwards, not forwards. New faces are not necessarily good things, especially in the B2B sales where there is often more complexity and need for knowledge. Customers don't care if there is a new face at Starbucks every day but a sales rep who is there every day and knows his stuff is absolutely a requirement for making that first sale, the second, the third and so on.
- Impact on morale (leading to lower overall performance of other team members and higher turnover- ultimately the loss of the best salespeople). The morale cost is a real cost. Failure poisons a company. Your good employees, as well as the bad ones, can get caught up in a revolving door and they may start looking for the exits. The most effective tool against this is making the right hires in the first place.

Now we know how important it is to bring in the right talent to a sales organization and the costs, direct and indirect, of not doing so. But why is it still so challenging to accomplish? Let's take a look at what a good recruiter realizes and the challenges she will face, when going after that really good sales pro.

The Traditional Approach to Sales Recruiting

If it is so hard to argue that hiring well is important, then why are so many organizations so lousy at hiring well? They are employing outdated and haphazard approaches that don't work. With the exception of access to online resume databases, recruiting approaches have not changed much in decades. In the context of hyper competition, the traditional approach to recruiting puts an emphasis on simply making the hire. Searches are erratic and ad-hoc and there is typically an absence of structure to the hiring process and while there may be several milestones and interviews required to assess each candidate, any tests are usually informal, rules are often applied inconsistently and decisions are made based on subjective analysis. This is not a recipe for success and organizations that take a more structured approach to sales hiring are the exception, not the rule.

Consequently, most companies are failing miserably at hiring sales. When companies should be building teams of sales professionals that become consistent and reliable producers, instead we are seeing unprecedented levels of missed targets and staff turnover. The economy may be partially to blame, but the trends began long before the downturn.

We want to help you reverse the trend within your organization so you can lead your field.

Imagine the impact of hiring only people suited to be selling your product or service?

What would happen to your sales results if you hired only reliable and consistent producers able to meet or exceed their sales targets?

What if you didn't have to spend so much of your time managing and herding the sales force to do things they don't seem to want to do?

What if you didn't have to worry about losing your best performers or getting rid of the un-performers?

Sales Recruiting 2.0 - The Right Sales Recruiting Approach

We are here to share Sales Recruiting 2.0 with you because recruiting is one of the most important, if not the most important, tasks within any organization.

Sales recruiting should not be about filling seats. The goal of any sales organization is to hire someone for a specific role that will meet or exceed targets and expectations, ultimately generating profits for the organization.

Sales Recruiting 2.0 begins with the belief that every sales role is unique, requiring salespeople with unique characteristics.

The basic aim in recruiting is to match the best talent available for a specific role within the company. In sales recruiting in particular, there are key characteristics that will improve the likelihood that recruiting efforts will results in finding the best talent available to fill the open position. In this revealing book, you will learn the advanced tools and techniques that the leading sales recruiters utilize in the sales industry to locate, interview and hire the best talent. Knowledge is power and learning the tools will enable you to build better teams, faster, and make you more valuable to your organization whether you are the Chief Executive, sales manager or in-house recruiter. And if you don't have time to read all the specific techniques and strategies we will share in this book, here are the key elements of Sales Recruiting 2.0 that you need to know:

1. Know the sales environment
2. Know the role
3. Develop a candidate profile that includes skills, experience and sales DNA
4. Develop an extensive search strategy
5. Look everywhere- you have to hunt the top percentile
6. Have a screening approach that lets you compare proof
7. Use third party assessments to test assumptions
8. Reference checks
9. Don't settle- you only want "A" players
10. Set hires up to succeed – thorough on-boarding and integration programs
11. Keep Score

By understanding and implementing each of these Sales Recruiting 2.0 techniques, you will experience the benefits of a successful sales recruiting program in your organization. Whether you do it yourself, or with us as your partner, the key to success is to follow the steps faithfully. This book is written for you. To help you find the right talent, that will drive your sales higher, faster.

Enter the Life of a Sales Recruiter

Chapter 1

“If we weren’t still hiring great people and pushing ahead at full speed, it would be easy to fall behind and become a mediocre company.”
Bill Gates

A recruiter’s role is tough at the best of times, but to be a sales recruiter means facing some unique challenges in finding and assessing talent.

The Top 10 Challenges Sales Recruiters Face

1. Most salespeople know how to sell - Therefore, they are going to put the best possible spin on their accomplishments when meeting with recruiters. The challenge to the recruiter is to determine if there is substance behind the spin.

2. It can be very difficult to spot the ‘right’ personality in candidates to the untrained eye.

3. The recruiter has not properly characterized what they are looking for.

4. The hiring benchmark has been established too low.

5. Sometimes the best candidates do not screen well.

6. It is natural to be drawn to extrovert candidates, even if they are not the best match for the job position.

7. It can be challenging to perform accurate reference checks on candidates--Confidentiality has placed strain on the ability for a recruiter to check past employment records for candidates.

8. It can be challenging to verify the salespersons past performance history.

9. Hiring salespeople requires an understanding of sales and preferably sales training whereas recruiters do not need the same training to hire for different roles.

10. The pressure of hiring quotas can cause recruiters to hire the wrong talent for a position.

Identifying Peak Performers

A basic misconception about recruiters is that the job is easy—make a few phone calls, take somebody to lunch, check out a few references and serve the prospect up to the hiring manager. Go back and reread the Top Ten Challenges. Not so easy after all. What is in fact required, is a combination of research, setting the correct profile, matching prospects to profile and then reconciling your mind with your gut.

One recruiter commented *"we have to hunt people down, wedge ourselves into their busy schedules, try to make an assessment while convincing them to share their time with us, and try to convince them to not only take a new position, but hope they stay and perform. It is all about control, but we are talking about humans, and humans aren't overly predictable."*

We're not trying to get your sympathy; we're just trying to be honest about our approach and how seriously we take the job. Now that you understand some of the challenges faced by good and competent recruiters in identifying the right salespeople for your specific roles, you now need to understand how to spot the Peak Performers in the interview process.

Peak Performers are those salespeople who will not only excel within the sales organization, but will remain with the organization over the long term. We feel this so important that we will repeat it—Peak Performers are those salespeople who will not only excel within the sales organization, but will remain with the organization over the long term. Learning how to spot Peak Performers among many sales candidates is an essential skill for a recruiter, and you the hiring manager, to learn and master.

Specific personality traits are the real indicators of sales superstars, the Peak Performers. But, like most important things in life and business, researchers still struggle to define what the important sales traits are. Some call it 'drive' (Croner), while others point to a combination of 'talent, engagement and customer loyalty,' (Smith and Rutigliano) or 'empathy and drive' (Mayer and Greenbery). No matter which definition you choose to accept, we have learned the most important thing to realize and recognize is that there are specific personality characteristics that differ between top performers and average performers.

Here is what we have learned and what we live by--

Fact: 80% of all sales are made by only 20% of the sales force.

For any sales recruiter, locating those who will rise to the top 20% of the sales force is a top priority. But, what characteristics comprise these top performers?

At Peak Sales Recruiting, we label the sales personality traits of the successful 20% the "DNA of Peak Performers."

Peak Performers will produce superior results in any and all circumstances! They consistently meet and exceed targets, they reflect the desired brand of the organization, they outsell their peers by a factor of 2x or more and they focus on the customer's requirements. Peak Performers are your IDEAL candidates for sales positions.

The DNA of a Peak Performer is critical in sales, but it can be challenging to evaluate.

Experience	Sales Skills	DNA
Important	More important	Most important
Easy to evaluate	Harder to evaluate	Harder to evaluate

But what is the definition of a successful DNA? What really is the Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) of a successful sales candidate?

The DNA of a Peak Performer is the sum of the key traits they possess and which they have in their possession either genetically, through education and learning, or through successful job experience.

The DNA of a Peak Performer

Here are the key traits found among Peak Performers:

- Peak Performers have an inquisitive nature, a nature seeking to understand as much as possible about their customers, their business and their decision making process.
- They are disciplined and follow systems to find, develop and close business.
- Peak Performers remain positive in the face of adversity; they don't allow rejection to deter them from achieving their goals.
- They focus on positive results for their customers rather than on their selling activities.

- Peak Performers act with a sense of urgency and a high desire to achieve their goals, typically striving to achieve more than the minimum and to be at the head of the pack within an organization.

Companies that can recruit and screen for these traits will be much more successful in hiring top salespeople than those who focus only on past experience and pure sales skills.

Let’s expand, drill down, on these traits to really understand, and recognize, a Peak Performer:

Results Oriented- A Peak Performer has a burning need to achieve. He is ambitious, disciplined and will make sacrifices to reach success. He is excited by goals, the bigger the better, and never loses sight of what he has been hired to do. A Peak Performer understands the impact of his actions and can tell you how much he has added to the bottom line. It’s the same personality trait that allows an effective salesperson to articulate the positive impact, in business terms, to the customer of a purchase decision.

Positive in Outlook and Disposition- Peak Performers are confident and expect to win. They have thick skin and don’t take things personally. They believe that a ‘no’ from a prospect is more often not the end of the road, but an objection that needs to be overcome. They have short memories for failure and believe failures happened to them, not because of them. They are optimistic, and assume the next win is just around the corner.

Competitive- Good salespeople are competitive. They keep score and they know where they stand, against their own past performance and against others on the team. They are excited by pressure, and operate with a sense of urgency.

Systematic- The best salespeople have a systematic, disciplined approach to winning business. Regardless of the specific sales methodology or system they employ, this means that they don’t waste time on business that is not qualified. They understand that success in sales in an equation whereby a certain set of inputs will lead to certain outputs, and they have a methodology for moving a prospect along the sales cycle step by step. These representatives are highly efficient with their time and spend time on activities that produce results.

Customer Focused- the best salespeople are intensely focused on their customers' goals and requirements, can often articulate them as well, if not better, than the customer. They are very service oriented and operate in good faith because they care about their customer's success. Customers reward them with loyalty.

Another take on the Sales DNA can be found in the book "Never Hire a Bad Salesperson Again"

> *"Over 80 years of research in the sales sector has found that the most important trait common to the DNA of nearly all successful salespeople is drive. Drive is the passion that causes great salespeople to get up early, stay up late and make whatever personal sacrifices are necessary to close business. It is the inner fire that determines not just whether a salesperson can sell, but whether they will sell."*

By Dr. Christopher Croner and Richard Abraham,
Originally published on Sales & Marketing Management online

Now we know what we are looking for. We have a profile so we can ID the perfect candidates. We know their DNA. We are ready to go on the hunt. Not quite—one more issue must be addressed which is relevant to our industry.

The Good the Bad and the Great

A big part of a successful recruiting program is the recruiters themselves. A recruiter who can predictably find outperforming sales reps will recognize that:

Experience+ Skills+ "DNA"= Future Success

The candidate's background, skill sets and DNA will determine their future success. Many recruiters fail to focus on the DNA of the candidate, solely relying on their previous experience and current skill sets. What is the DNA of a successful candidate? We will get to that important definition in a minute but first it is the combination of these three factors that ultimately determines whether the candidate will be successful in the role that they are filling.

The formula of "Experience+Skills+DNA" is the success formula for the candidate. The formula for a great sales recruiter is a bit more complex.

A great sales recruiter will:

1. Understand that all sales roles are different across sectors, requiring different skills, experiences and "DNA" of a candidate for those different sectors.

2. Avoid wasting the customer's time with basic questions about their business and about the role. In all the cases where we refer to customers, we are referring to your customer—your company.

3. Know that the goal of sales recruiting is not to make a placement, but to achieve the customer's sales, profit and growth targets.

4. Save the customer time and money be shielding them from days and weeks of searching and screening.

5. Be professional and positively represent the customer's brand when speaking to a particular candidate.

We told you it was a bit more complex so take a break and glance again at the first five characteristics of a good recruiter, and especially a great recruiter.

6. Have an applicant tracking system with notes about previous interactions and assessments with a particular candidate

7. Perform resume screening on the customer's behalf and only present highly qualified candidates who all get interviewed.

8. Have tools and processes at their disposal to assess characteristics of the candidates' skills and personality traits.

9. Expose the customer to superior sales professionals, who are usually successful for another employer, many times a competitor.

10. Know that a qualified candidate has not only the right skills, experience and 'DNA', but also appropriate motivations to take the job and the commitment to join the company to sell.

5-10 are the toolbox the recruiter brings to the project. Performing these tasks takes time and skill. You have them but you also have a lot of other projects on your agenda. The successful recruiter can handle these tasks, freeing up you and your time.

11. Work hard and match urgency levels to that of the customer so that candidates are presented within the customer's schedule.

12. Be discrete and only discuss customer details with qualified candidates.

13. Perform background checks and reference checks early in the process and inquire beyond the point of references.

14. Have a strong network that will not only provide referrals but also provide background and reference information on candidates sought by customers.

15. Shepherd the candidate through the interview process, closing them at each step.

These five separate the good from the bad recruiter. Good recruiters "work hard", adopt your "urgency levels", they are "discrete", "perform background checks", they "have a strong network" because they have been doing this for years and they "shepherd."

16. Be so familiar with the role and the sector that they can act as a consultant to the customer on the role specific strengths and weaknesses

of each candidate and the likelihood of they will exceed sales targets working for the customer.

17. Have internal or external customers who are happy to provide references.
18. Be able to negotiate salary and compensation plans like an expert.
19. Not recruit customer's employees (if an external recruiter).
20. Be honest and disclose all information that is relevant for hiring successfully and achieving business goals.

Those last five speak for themselves.

B2B Salespeople

Now that we have determined the characteristics of successful salespeople, the challenges in finding and hiring them, and the role of a successful recruiter, it makes sense to speak about recruiting for B2B sales specifically. This extra step is necessary because selling to businesses can be radically different from selling to other types of buyers.

"Sales is sales, right? In truth, nothing could be further from the truth. Selling in the B2B (business-to-business) marketplace requires fundamentally different skills from what it takes to sell cars, cosmetics or other consumer products. And while you're still dealing with people, the situation and the context of their decisions are entirely different."

Jill Konrath

Author of Selling to Big Companies

As a result, hiring B2B salespeople requires a different type of candidate to achieve the desired levels of success.

What is B2B selling?

With some few exceptions, in the context of recruiting, B2B means selling to the following buyers:

- companies that will use the product or service
- companies that will resell the product or service
- government agencies
- not-for profit organizations

And as Konrath explains corporate sales often involve significantly higher dollar values than consumer sales and as a result, organizations invest considerable time assessing a proposal versus their current situation and alternatives, quantifying the value, evaluating risks and negotiating the best agreement. To succeed in B2B sales requires performing research on a prospect prior to initiating contact, developing a compelling, relevant value proposition, developing and implementing campaigns to get the attention of a prospect, engaging prospects in business-oriented conversations and continually advancing discussions through a buying process.

Is B2B sales hiring different?

Because the B2B sales role is typically more complex, hiring for a B2B sales position is drastically different than hiring for any other sales position. The salesperson is selling to meet the needs of both the corporate agenda and the personal agenda of the buyer as well as the personal agendas of other stakeholders in an organization. The salesperson must also work within the confines of corporate budgets which are usually inflexible, placing an emphasis on price. Many times there is also a procurement process which can create an even playing field for all competitors.

Some fields, such as technology and science-based industries, are dynamic and rapidly changing on a day-to-day basis. Technology of today is often obsolete tomorrow. Tech sales individuals have to be comfortable with change and be adaptable.

Since buyers are often experts in the domain in which they work, most B2B sales roles require a steep learning curve for new hires to master. This translates to significantly higher training costs for new hires than in other industries. As a result, this increased investment in hiring B2B sales representatives 1) significantly increases the risks of hiring poorly and 2) raises the required return on investment for each sale to each customer.

All of these differences between B2B sales and consumer sales positions require the use of the formula:

DNA+ Skills+ Experience= Success

The balance of the advice in this book focuses on B2B hiring situations as they are more challenging and encompass all other hiring more simple hiring situations.

1.0 vs. 2.0

Chapter 2

“The future is rapidly approaching. “
Lou Adler

The results speak for themselves. A low percentage of reps on any team are achieving their sales targets. Traditional approaches to hiring sales are not engineered to predictably choose the right person, which in turn creates the enormous challenges for businesses. Applying Sales Recruiting 2.0, on the other hand offers the following benefits to businesses:

1. Sales Hiring requires considerably less time and effort
2. Sales Hires have a high chance of meeting targets and sales expectations
3. Sales staff turnover is reduced or eliminated

The following chart summarizes some of the other comparisons between traditional sales recruiting and Sales Recruiting 2.0

Sales Recruiting 1.0	Sales Recruiting 2.0
Goal is to make a hire	Goal is to hire performer who will consistently achieve quota and contribute to the business
Hiring based on job description	Hiring based on role /selling environment with scoring criteria to evaluate candidates
Advertise on Web and Job Boards	Actively target specific companies and networks
Interview candidates that apply to job postings	Only interview a select few of highly qualified candidates
No interview process	Interviews / Behavioral and Competency Tests / Role Plays / Assignments
Candidates shortlisted based on arbitrary rules	Candidates rank based on score against criteria
Validate employment record	Thorough behavioral background checks to test capabilities and assumptions
Do not track success	Keep a hiring scorecard
Low success rate for making good hires	Achieve 100% at target
Expect 15-30% turnover	Expect 0% turnover

At this point, we have gone over the traditional approaches to sales recruiting, the challenges that a good recruiter faces in finding that right hire for you and what makes up that right hire, the Peak Performer.

The remainder of this book is designed to explore in detail the top elements of Sales Recruiting 2.0 to enable you, and your company, to achieve initial, and then ongoing, success in hiring top performing sales professionals.

Know the Sales Environment

Chapter 3

"Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories."
Sun Tzu

One of the keys to succeeding in sales recruiting is to know the selling environment of the sales function that you are recruiting for. That sounds like it is directed to the outside recruiter. It is the first rule we live by but should also be the first rule for you as well, if you are recruiting for your own organization. You may think you know your company but you have to really know it. You need to get inside the head and in the shoes of your sales group to really assess, accurately, their needs. Every sales role is different, even when they are within the same organization. So, in order to select the most suitable sales candidate, you must first understand the sales environment that the person will be joining.

This is not as hard as it appears; you just need to do some homework. Begin by becoming familiar with the following sales environment characteristics:

Offering

What types of products or services are currently offered by the department and/or organization? What specific products or services will the sales representative you are interviewing be selling? Will the sales representative be offering customized products and services for each client, or will the offerings be standard for all customers? What new products and services are in the pipeline for the sales force to become familiar with and what training will be needed?

In addition to learning the basics of what products and services the company offers, you should spend time becoming familiar with each offering. During an interview with a candidate, especially during the final interview stages, the topic will come up. Your ability to confidently explain and answer questions will instill trust and confidence in the eyes of the candidate. You are the representative of your company—knowledge and competence is required.

Path to Market

How are the company's products and services offered to prospects and current customers? Are they sold direct, through indirect sales channels or embedded? Spend time to not only learn what sales channel or channels the organization uses, but also about the sales process. A timeline, or schematic, of the path to market is a great marketing tool for recruiters.

Sales Approach

What is the organization's sales approach; solution selling, relationship selling or transactional selling? Solution selling is used to provide a map of how to assist the customer to get what they are looking for, and it is a total end sales process. Relationship selling focuses on building rapport with clients and on working with them long term through client service. Transactional selling is typically lower relationship, focusing on a single sale with generally little to no follow up beyond it. By understanding the sales approach, you will be better equipped to select the best candidate for the position. We have found over the years that excellent sales people tend to gravitate to one of these different sales approaches. Determining your company's approach and matching it to a candidate with the same strength makes the process a lot easier and a lot more productive.

Sales Cycle

Is the sales cycle immediate, a few hours, a few days or a few months? Various products and services will require different sales cycles to sell. And, salespeople will often possess different skill sets to match each sales cycle. Some do better when the cycle is short and there is almost immediate gratification while others are more like team members willing to go the whole season.

Deal Size

What is the average sales size? Is it $50, requiring a high volume of sales of a salesperson to meet their annual income goal? Or, is the average sale $5,000, requiring a smaller number of sales per month. Candidates will almost always ask the average deal size. And, the Peak Performers will want to know what the deal sizes are so that they can begin to work backwards to their required activity level to reach their target income levels.

Goal Size

Does the sales organization require a sales quota? What is it and what is the current percentage of salespeople who achieve it monthly? You will want to thoroughly understand each of these questions and have data on the organizations success in relation to these quotas when trying to attract Peak Performers. The good ones are going to ask so be prepared.

Territory

Do or will salespeople have territories? If so, how are they divided? And, how does the organization handle or manage when a sales representative gains a referral in another representative's territory? Some territories are divided geographically, some by client size and some are given to salespeople when they are hired, including current clients. Conversely, some companies do not assign territories at all, giving ultimate freedom to their representatives.

Sales Responsibility

Different organizations define the role of the salesperson differently. Some organizations expect their salespeople to both generate leads and convert them while others provide the leads and simply expect their salespeople to follow up. So, as you are developing a firmer understanding of the sales role you are hiring for, be sure to clearly understand the requirements and expectations of the salespeople within the organization--are they territory developers—hunters--or are they account managers-- farmers? And, looking ahead, what roles or advancement opportunities are there for sales managers and senior executives?

Market Stage

Is the business sector well established, offering proven products and services to the marketplace? Or, is this a new company up with little brand presence established? Have the products been tested and to what extent? Market stage is directly related to the company stage.

Company Stage

Some salespeople are comfortable with and well equipped to manage selling and building a brand in a start-up situation where there is often have less internal infrastructure and support systems to assist the sales person in doing their job, while others are more suited to work in an established environment. Understanding the company stage will enable you to best match candidates to the opportunity.

"A strong brand like Dell, Xerox or IBM, can actually carry a weak sales force. "

Selecting Superior Performers,

As we noted, this aspect of Sales Recruiting 2.0 requires a fair amount of work on your part. It is well worth it as it forces you out of your department, your territory, to gain a large amount of knowledge about your own company. You are the first person the candidate will meet from your organization and you need to know your organization in depth to attract the candidate in the first meeting.

ACTION LIST

- Assess your selling environment your selling environment against the 10 characteristics
- Be as detailed as possible
- Develop a Profile of your selling environment

Know the Role

Chapter 4

"Information is not knowledge."
Albert Einstein

Now that you fully understand the selling environment of your organization, you must clearly define the sales role in terms of both behaviors and activities. Simply put-where does this sales position and the person in that position fit in the organization? People want to know where they stand—who is the boss? Who do I report to? In effect, who am I and what am I in the company?

We do this process by answering simple, but absolutely, important questions starting with "What is the sales position title?" This is the beginning point to the collection of data you will need to be able to clearly explain the role to every candidate.

There are many different forms of sales roles including:

- Sales representative
- Account executive
- Sales manager trainee
- Sales manager

Some of these roles can be described as “hunter” roles while others can be described as “farmer” roles. Farmer and hunter roles require separate skill sets of salespeople to become successful in the roles. Farmers are those who typically manage an existing client base or an existing book of business, adding to the book through passive networking, referrals from existing clients and through account up-selling opportunities. Hunter roles involve all of those job functions as well as the responsibility of lead generation. Lead generation is typically the weakest skill set of most salespeople so if this is required in a sales role, extra care and attention needs to be placed on locating the best candidate match for the position.

Direct Sales vs. Channel Sales

How are the products and services sold; through direct sales or channel sales? Channel sales refer to the method of distributing a product or service and include:

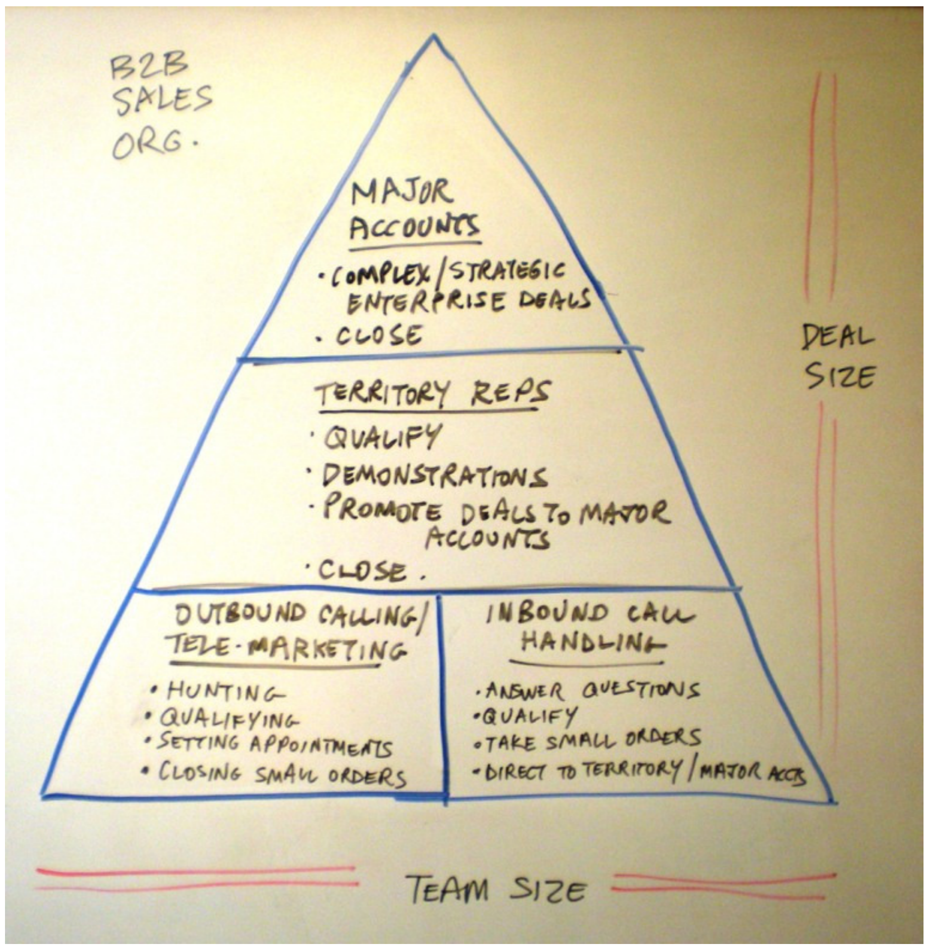
- Direct mail advertising
- Newsstands
- Direct marketing
- Retail locations
- Sales force

Direct sales refer to the sale of a product or service through presentations or personal explanation and can be performed over the phone or in person. It is important to grasp a full understanding of the type of sales process used as salespeople who excel in direct sales are not generally effective in channel sales and vice versa.

Inside Sales vs. Outside Sales

Where do salespeople physically generate their sales; inside or outside of the office? Inside salespeople generally either make sales through telemarketing or in face-to-face meetings with prospects in their home office. Outside salespeople typically are on the road, meeting with potential prospects in their places of business.

Salespeople are typically partial to one of these methods of sales, so it is important to ask what their expectations are and to accurately describe the daily activities and expectations of the role to the candidate.



ACTION LIST

- Profile existing top performers
- Define required skills experience and DNA

Develop a Candidate Profile

Chapter 5

"Time spent on hiring is time well spent"
Robert Half

The profile is made up of three parts—

- Skills
- Experiences
- Sales DNA

To hire the most suitable salesperson for a particular role, it is best to identify what skill sets and characteristics currently define success in the role. If the business is established and you are adding to or replacing someone within the existing sales team, the task is fairly easy because you can develop a current profile of what an ideal candidate would look like from the best performers of your current team.

Choose the top performers and consider some of these questions as you develop your ideal candidate profile to begin recruiting:

- What are their strengths or weaknesses?
- What is their educational background and is there any common denominator in those educations?

- What is their level of experience and what roles did they work in prior to filling their current role?
- Is there a current work ethic common to the group?
- How would their current colleagues describe them?
- How would their current supervisor describe their work habits and work behaviors?
- What levels of results are they achieving in the role?
- What is their personal income level generated from the role?

Don't just look at the best. In addition to the top performers, you should also profile what average and below average performers like by asking the same questions. You will soon see characteristics and behaviors exhibited by both groups and these factors will differentiate the winners. By developing an accurate 360-degree profile of the role, you will be able to better spot Peak Performers designed specifically for the role you are trying to fill.

Once you have developed the initial profile of the current salespeople in the role, you will want to take a more technical and deeper dive into the role itself. What specific skills are required to perform well in the role?

Consider if the following skills are required in the role:

- Cold calling leads
- Developing leads through networking, referrals or other sources
- Calling leads to schedule appointments
- Telemarketing direct sales
- Ongoing client service
- Negotiating contracts
- Developing custom sales proposals or selling existing product or service packages
- Solution selling, relationship selling or transaction selling skills

Is the sales process simple or complex? Should the candidate have experience in transactional selling, solution selling or relationship selling? What level of sales experience should the candidate possess?

The Selling Environment and Experience

People who have successfully sold in a certain selling environment are often predisposed to do well in a similar selling environment, so to expand your candidate pool and increase the chances of finding the top performer you need, more quickly, look beyond your industry and direct competitors. Look for people that have experience in a selling environment similar to yours.

Scorecard

Once you have developed a clear picture of the existing sales force as well as the skills required in the position, you can develop a scorecard to measure each candidate that you will be interviewing for the role. When you are interviewing, it can be easy to be drawn to a particular candidate due to their passion or charisma, causing you to forget to logically assess their DNA and skill sets. Working from a scorecard to compare each candidate side by side and to the top performers currently in the role, will enable you to compare apples to apples and to logically assess whether a candidate is the best match for the position or not.

Your scorecard should be comprised of:

Mandatory/Must Have Characteristics or Categories & Nice to Have Characteristics

Which DNA and skill set characteristics are non-negotiable? For example, if a candidate has over 10 years of experience in solution selling and you are interviewing for a transactional position, is this enough to disqualify the candidate for the role?

What is your organization specifically looking for in a candidate? Use the input you have received from everyone involved in the search to come up with the sample scorecard. - We recommend going one step further-- create a scorecard for the initial candidate screening and a separate scorecard for the final interview process. Criteria on the scorecard should require a binary yes or no answer to eliminate subjectivity. For example:

Subjective: Must have been successful in a direct selling role.
Binary answer required: Must have successfully attained quota in a direct selling role.

Subjective: Must have experience in B2B selling.
Binary answer required: Must have at least 5 years of experience in B2B sales.

Candidate Scoring

	Experience	Must Have
1		
2		
3		

	Skills	Must Have
1		
2		
3		

	DNA	Must Have
1		
2		
3		

Total Score

	Other Qualities	Nice to Have
1		
2		
3		

Bonus Score

Figure 1 - Candidate Score Card

There are two major benefits of doing this work. The first is that you only do it once. The scorecards will always be on your computer, in your files, to be used in the next search, then the next search and so on. The second benefit is huge. When you have done the work to break down the candidate profile and the job profile in terms of measurable attributes, you will often find more candidates, more qualified candidates. This unexpected result comes from as-seeking people with experience in a similar selling environment rather than people from the same role in the same sector. The net effect is a larger pool of qualified candidates, which means you will be selecting better-suited candidates, and candidates more likely to excel in the specific role that you are hiring for. Some hard work but it pays huge dividends.

ACTION LIST

- Benchmark existing top performers
- Develop “mandatory” and “nice to have” criteria for each characteristic
- Build a Scorecard to be used in screening all candidates

Plan to Succeed

Chapter 6

"It's easy to make good decisions when there are no bad options."
Robert Half

If you want to find and hire Peak Performers, you are not going to find them responding to traditional employment ads or visiting you at a career fair. Top performers, by definition, are 99% of the time, gainfully employed and busy working with their current list of customers. So, in order to recruit them, you will need to develop a different, more imaginative, search strategy.

To start, consider this seemingly simple question, "Where can I find Peak Performers?" While many traditional search methods for employment include newspapers, online search companies and career fairs, what other opportunities exist to capture qualified candidate leads? Brainstorm for ideas in your area of whatever area you are recruiting in or for.

Here are some brainstorming places, traditional and new--

- Career websites
- Classified ads
- Social networking sites such as Linkedin or Zoominfo (these sites are good sources for developing your leads list for potential job candidates, networking sources, hiring managers and senior peers)

- Career fairs
- Recruitment firms
- Networking organizations and industry organizations
- Online resume search tools that provide a constant stream of resumes to review
- Your network-- work to drip leads, information and requests to those within your network to capture leads
- Industry conferences, training sessions and courses

Once you have developed a comprehensive list of opportunities to generate candidate leads, you will need to develop a system to regularly communicate with them. A simple filing system—a file for industry conference information, a file for professional associations, a file for recruiters and so on is the basis for creating a plan of action to warm up the leads. Note--cold leads need to have a longer process of warming up than a direct candidate referral and thus a bigger file.

Some tools that you can utilize to warm up leads include email templates, mailed brochures or other literature and phone calls. When you are developing each of these tools, keep in mind that you want to develop a targeted script for top performers, not a generic script for hiring. Each script should be matched to the venue where you found the lead and included in that file.

Sample Phone Intro Script

The key is to be brief and impactful. If you reach someone by phone at their office, they likely won't be able to speak, so you will need to contact them at another time and you have to give them enough of an incentive to want to speak with you again.

> Hello Name,
> This is [Your Name] and I am calling about an exciting career

opportunity with a fast growing company in the Internet sector. I may have reached you at a bad time. Is now a good time to speak or is there another time and number I can reach you at to tell you more?

Sample Email Intro Script (can also be used for LinkedIn and other social networks)

Note email is passive in that people can ignore your email or not respond within your deadlines, but it is a good way to reach people if contact by phone is not possible.

Dear Name,

My firm has been engaged to fill a Business Development position at a fast growing company in the Internet sector. I have included some brief details below and you are interested in learning more, please contact me. I will be happy to share more details. If you are not interested in this opportunity at the moment, please feel free to keep my contact information handy in case we can help you in the future.

Position Brief

- Develop business from major accounts in North Eastern United States
- Company is market leader in XYZ sector with many product awards
- VP Sales has pedigree background
- 100% of the current reps are at target
- Work environment promotes teamwork and customer service
- Competitive compensation

Please contact me to learn more or reply by email to let me know when might be a good time to speak in person.

Regards,
Your Name
Recruiter and Career Consultant

ACTION LIST

- Identify the locations that the top performers you need are likely to exist
- Develop the scripts that will be used to engage candidates
- Develop the tests that will be used for the initial candidate filtering

Hunt for the Stars

Chapter 7

"No matter how successful you are or how clever or craft, your business and its future are in the hands of the people you hire."
Morita Akio

Applying Sales Recruiting 2.0 means you are not simply seeking to make a hire, but to hire a top performer who will consistently meet or exceed quota. Thus it follows that you are seeking the most elusive type of candidates to track down for any role--they may, in actual probability will not, respond to your repeated calls or emails. You will have to become persistent and a sales hunter in order to not only, capture their attention for an initial discussion, but to convert them into interested job seekers.

A good fisherman knows that to catch a shark you can't put your line into a pond. You have to go where the sharks are.

"From a practical standpoint, only 20 to 25% of candidates are actively looking at any one time. This is a high-end estimate, with 15 to 20% more likely, and in normal economic times probably around 15%. This means that 80% of most candidates aren't looking.

I'm concerned that too many recruiting managers are aiming at the wrong target. It doesn't take a lot of brain power to prove the case that there are more top-10-15% performers among those people who aren't looking than those who are. So why are we spending so much effort to find candidates we don't want to hire, even if we're doing it more efficiently?

Lou Adler

Keep one thing in mind when you are looking for the best talent available--they are likely the candidates who are gainfully employed and are likely happy in their current positions. So, you will most likely not find their resumes in the standard locations of online job sites or at a career fair. As noted, you will need to develop a different and imaginative recruiting strategy to locate and attract these candidates.

To start, you may want to consider attending networking functions in your immediate geographical area. Top performers will be found here because they are looking for something, customers. By participating in networking events, you will meet a variety of contacts that may be future sales candidates or, just as important, links that can help to put you into contact with future candidates. The approach is simple, just tell the truth—"Hello, I'm in Human Resources and our growing company is looking for top notch sales talent with experience in the field." This will get around a room in a hurry and you will have a lot of leads in a hurry. To locate networking events in your area, search the local newspaper, online by typing "your city networking organizations" or "your city professional organizations."

In addition to local professional organizations and networking organizations, you will also want to develop a network of professionals within the industry and without that can help locate ideal candidates for you. While this strategy is more long term in nature, by working to develop a solid network, you will be at the head of the line for top candidate information. Use a lead database system to communicate regularly with your network about which positions you are hiring for and what characteristics the ideal candidate should possess. Send out regular emails or mail correspondence with this information to encourage your contacts to send you referrals. The key to making this a successful tactic is to give back as well. You are looking for help but so is your counterpart. When you ask for something, try to offer something in return so your email doesn't end up in the electronic wastebasket.

Critical Success Factor- Work the Numbers

On many search projects we will engage between 100-200 candidates, filter out all but 50, and do in-depth interviews with 10 or 20. This can be very time consuming and there is always risk that the process eliminates good candidates too early.

One of the most critical success factors in sales recruiting is to "Work the Numbers". The law of averages dictates your chances of finding the right candidate. The more people that you speak to and search for, the larger pool of possibilities you are creating. So, when developing your recruiting strategy, cast your net wide for possible candidates and build into your schedule time to screen a high volume of candidates. The same is true for your network contacts as outlined above. Spread your net. Just as you build time into your schedule to screen a greater number of candidates, build in time to grow your network. It is through working the numbers that you will find the best candidates.

Critical Success Factor- Disqualify Quickly

The key to productive recruiting is to spend as little time as possible with unqualified candidates. This means a recruiter will have to pass on many candidates who are well qualified for other roles. You will want to eliminate unqualified candidates during the first interview and the script that you utilize should support the purging process. It is best to be polite and to let them know that you would like to stay in touch, but that right now your top priority is to focus on your companies open position.

Being forthright and honest will pay dividends. You are not wasting the candidate's time, you are not wasting your time and you are giving the candidate a chance to refute your conclusion that he/she is not qualified for your position. Your preliminary conclusion is probably correct but you may have missed something. The candidate may convince you after you give them a chance to sell something in person—themselves.

Get Social

When companies typically think of getting online to find candidates, they think of mining Monster or placing an ad on Linkedin. This is passive and virtually guaranteed to ensure you get mountains of unqualified applicants, mediocre performers and castoffs from other companies. While networks like Linkedin, Plaxo, Xing and Zoominfo are useful, increasingly valuable candidate leads can be found by mining blogs, online communities and twitter. On these networks you can learn about sales leaders from and interact with them directly. You can develop relationships with established professionals for future requirements or to gain access to their own network of contacts.

When placing any kind of ads online to increase awareness of an employment opportunity, ads should be written to be found using search engine optimization techniques, and what's in it for the candidate should be emphasized over the skills required.

Leverage Your Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

"With the rise of Web 2.0, social media, blogs, Twitter, and LinkedIn, it's pretty obvious that finding the names of potential candidates will have little value, but nurturing them and having them follow you will have tremendous value.

This is why building a pipeline of prospects kept warm by robust CRM systems will be critical."

Lou Adler

Systems that store data related to the candidates you interact with can be highly valuable for providing you access to the right candidate at the right time. Still today, in this electronic age many companies approach hiring a completely analog fashion. Place an ad, collect the resumes, print them, make notes on the paper copy, file them, hire and then throw away all the files. What a waste.

A well functioning recruiting function knows that someone who is not chosen today may be perfectly qualified for a role in the future. The notes from interviews can be invaluable when the details of original meetings are long erased from memory.

The data you collect is easily augmented by the ATS themselves as most systems will automatically pull in information from the Internet such as Linkedin profiles and updates, facebook pages, pictures and tweets.

Furthermore, many applicant tracking systems provide email and social networking tools to stay in touch with candidates, expand relationships and maintain goodwill as well as online portals to let the candidates update their own information.

ACTION LIST

- Hunt for passive candidates by putting less emphasis on traditional job advertising methods
- Develop relationships with candidates before they enter the job market
- Be creative to capture and keep their attention
- Find ways to communicate with passive candidates on an ongoing basis

Screen for Proof

Chapter 8

"Resumes can't tell you whether someone will fit into a company's culture."
Howard Schultz

In recruiting, people often say that they rely on their gut instinct when making a hiring decision, which is rather like saying that you rely on your ears to tell you when it is safe to cross a busy street. While the 'gut', like your ears, is an important component in the screening process and it should be taken into consideration, our experience and professional opinion is that gut alone is a very poor indicator of future performance in a sales position.

Without a standardized screening process for all applicants, you are relying primarily on your gut instinct to make your final hiring decision. While this may prove effective some of the time, and we all remember those rare occurrences when it does, we and others have proven time, and time again, that proof of performance and temperament trumps theory or gut instinct when hiring Peak Performers.

Sales Recruiting 2.0 relies heavily on several key factors to improve sales hiring results.

Critical Success Factor – Eliminate Gut. The purpose of the screening methodology is to select candidates that meet the criteria, based on proof, past experience and demonstrable success rather than a feeling that they would fit. The approach should enable you to test all candidates in exactly the same manner so you can eliminate biases and make an objective "apples to apples" assessment.

Here are the top 3 reasons why you should never hire on gut when it comes to sales roles:

- The costs, both direct and indirect, of a poor sales hire are astronomical
- The "gut" is an emotional response. The person in front of you may bring to mind someone that you used to know, and this may spell a positive or negative 'gut' reaction that has nothing to do with what the candidate brings to the table. In the confines of even an all day interview, it is impossible to thoroughly get to know a person, so it is natural to use our own internal picture, our gut, of who this person is to fill in the blanks.
- Salespeople are very skilled at making good first impressions

Our gut reaction is not an avoidable factor. It is always there and should be but it has to be tempered with our brain. The next time you feel yourself falling prey to making a decision based upon gut, step back and ask yourself if you have the proof required to hire this individual.

What are some methods that you can utilize to work around or with your 'gut' instinct in hiring sales professionals?

- Do your homework on references.
- Feel free to ask for about an actual business case or have the candidate do a product presentation for you.
- Ask the same question multiple times in multiple ways. Be on the outlook for inconsistencies.

At the end of this recruiting process, hopefully you will still want to hire the candidate. But by adding in the extra checks and balances, you will have proof in support of your hiring decision. If this extra work saves you from only one bad hire, you will have saved yourself a huge amount of time, effort and grief. And, you will be saving your company substantial amounts of money. Your gut is still there and valuable but supported by a rational system of evaluation. The perfect situation is having two qualified candidates who have made it through your system of checks and balances. Now your gut can make the final decision.

The Interview Process

The interview process will differ from company to company but it is amazing to us how many companies we deal with that do not have a process, a standardized process, at all. This is critical because the process is, or should be, the rulebook for hiring. An interview process will enable an organization to screen candidates with consistency, ultimately leading to an efficient process that attracts the top percentile of salespeople into the positions we are trying to fill. Creating a resume screening process and clearly defining the interview steps create the foundation for a successful interview process, and consistent hiring of Peak Performers. The process starts with the resume review.

Resumes

A resume is the first impression for all candidates. And, while it is certainly more important to make a hiring decision based upon interview and assessment results, there are several key factors and considerations to look for when reviewing resumes. When reviewing a resume, look for and keep these in mind:

Work History - Is their work history relevant to the position you are looking to fill? What levels of accomplishments has this candidate achieved during their career? In addition to the job titles listed, what job functions and responsibilities has the candidate been involved with that would contribute to their success in the role that you are hiring for? Look for gaps. There shouldn't be any. If there are, flag them for discussion in the actual interview process.

Length of Time - Does the candidate frequently change jobs? If so, this could potentially be a red flag. Or, has the candidate held a steady position within a firm?

Presentation- Does the candidate's resume present professionalism? Is it neatly organized, easy to read and free of grammatical or spelling errors? Some managers, the good ones, will toss a resume that contains any grammatical errors on the grounds that if a candidate makes errors in the simple process of putting together a resume, they will make mistakes on the job. Harsh but true.

Development—does the candidate have visible signs, like promotions or awards, of progressing upwards in an organization?

Scan the resumes of potential job candidates to complete an initial sort. However, be careful not to screen out Peak Performers by mistake. If your recruiting process is organized and well structured, you will be able to effectively weed out unqualified candidates in the early stages. A few tips. Separate the screened resumes into three piles—the definite no's, the "possibles" and the really good. Use an extra sets of eyes—have a colleague review, quickly, your possible and really good piles. Keep the job description close at hand during the review process. A candidate does not have to have everything in the description but they should have a lot.

Once the resume screening is complete, it is on to the interview process.

Three Stage Candidate Screening Interview Process:

1st Interview – High Level Qualification

This interview should take no more than 10 minutes and should focus on the non-negotiable elements of alignment between the candidate and the company's requirements. A few question examples:

a. Tell me about your current role? (Are the duties in line?)
b. What's missing in your current role? (Are they open to a move?)
c. What is your current compensation? (Are they in line with client compensation?)
d. How much of your quota is net new? (Are they a hunter/farmer, what is the role?)

This interview is usually performed over the phone which will allow you to qualify more candidates in a shorter period of time than meeting them all in person at this stage.

Key to Success – avoid selling the job. While you may need to share a bit of information about the role, it is best to not sell the position and in so doing compromising the assessment. The focus needs to remain on the candidate and why they are suited to be considered for the role.

2nd Interview – Skills and Experience Screening

This interview will be lengthy (approximately 1 hour) and should focus on understanding the candidate's specific skills and experience as it matches up against your company's criteria. There is also an opportunity to test for other attributes such as confidence and creativity. It is important here to use open-ended questions to allow the candidate to tell you about their background without being influenced by the opportunity itself. A few question examples:

a. What market segment have you sold to? (SMB, Mid-market, Enterprise?)
b. Tell me about your sales methodology? (Do they have a structured approach to selling?)
c. What are you (have you been) selling? (Commodity/transactional /Solution)
d. Tell me about your areas of specialization? (Verticals, products, etc.)
e. Why have organizations hire you onto their sales team? (Provides clarity about their value)
f. Did you achieve quota? Which years, if any did you miss quota? (It is good to ask this question multiple times and in different ways, as there is often

a tendency on the part of some candidates to say they hit quota when in fact they may have missed on some or all years)

g. Why did you leave? Were you released from your duties (Many candidates will imply separation was their decision when it in fact wasn't)

h. Where do you want to be in five years? (People, not surprisingly, hate this question. But it is used so much that the candidate should have an answer. If not, they are probably not a good hire.)

i. If you had to get 3 rhinos into a VW Beetle, how would you do it? (Creative thinking)

3rd Interview – Behavioral Interview

This interview focuses on understanding what motivates and drives the candidates to behave the way they typically do in their function as a sales professional. Questions do not allow for theoretical answers to scenarios (for example "what would you do if"), but instead focus on the way candidates actually do behave in certain contexts:

a. How would you describe your approach to selling in the past? Please give examples. (Are they tenacious, collaborative, or aggressive?)

b. What do you consider your strength and weaknesses? Give examples of how you have leveraged these to win business in the past.

c. Tell me your worst professional experience? Tell me about a time that you lost a sale? What happened next? (Indicates how they bounce back from failures)

d. What sacrifices have you made to achieve your goals? Please share details.

e. Tell me about a time you had to overcome a resistant prospect. Did you succeed and how? Tell me about another similar situation. (Indicates whether they have persistence, and optimism. Asking the same question multiple times allows you to see if the experience was the exception or the norm).

f. If I worked with you in the past, would I consider you competitive? Give examples of why I might consider you this way.

g. How would former managers describe you (third party questions, reduce the tendency on the part of some candidates, to overstate achievements and capabilities as if the answers will be cross-referenced)

Interviewing Tips for In House Recruiters:

Game-plan:

- Always enter each interview with a discovery objective relevant to search and scoring criteria, a script (i.e. icebreakers, questions and close) and a time allotment. Put all this on paper and take it to each interview so 1) you do not forget an item or issue and 2) you have created a level playing field for evaluating all candidates.
- To all extents possible, eliminate subjectivity. The goal is not to pick someone you like, but someone who will become a leading sales professional for your company. Hopefully you will like the person as well but that is just an added benefit, not the main purpose of the interview.
- Past behavior/experience in relevant situations is best predictor of future behavior – this should be a major focus of your script

Questions:

- Don't get sold. You should have several questions for each issue you want to address. The questions should be asked in several different ways and never expose the objective of the question (candidates will often answer what they think will get them a positive assessment even if the answer does not reflect the truth).
- Don't telegraph answers you are seeking; let them talk (ask them to pitch, ask for metrics)
- Use a mix of open and closed ended questions.
- Seek proof when answers are given (i.e. You said you were competitive. What exactly defines competitiveness? What do you mean?)
- Probe deeply and ask questions several times over in different form to ensure the answers are truthful and consistent.

Tone:

- Let the candidate know that you represent the company and must make a recommendation based on full information. This will accomplish two goals—you are not personally attacking, or appearing to attack, the candidate by asking in-depth questions and you will be viewed as being serious in trying to achieve the best results for your company. The candidate will respect this conscientious attitude.
- While building rapport with passive candidates is important, it is also fine at certain points in the interview to ask pointed questions that make your candidate uncomfortable, within reason, as this will indicate how they operate under pressure.
- All this being said, you do not want to be perceived as the Grand Inquisitor. Be professional, friendly in tone, and business like.
- Always meet the candidate in person unless impossible!!

Lying in Interviews

Unfortunate as it may seem, the reality is that a lot of candidates will over state their accomplishments during the interview process. We cannot tell you how many times we have heard outrageous statements that could not be substantiated. Research shows that some people are very proficient at not telling the truth and it may be difficult to detect lies from these people. Research also shows that there are no certain physical clues other than a change in someone's behaviour when they are being honest and telling lies – such as providing less detail, hedging, speaking faster. So to mitigate the ability for candidates to lie, early in the interview we ask questions that will receive an honest answer, and then we look for changes in behaviour when we ask more sensitive questions. We also like to ask the key questions multiple times to make sure the answer is always the same.

The Final Step—Test for DNA

As recruiters, we see lots of sales people. We have helped our clients hire many, and we have rejected many, many more. Companies typically evaluate experience first, skills second, and most will never formally evaluate the candidate's personality.

We have learned to do it the other way around. In our experience as sales managers and sales recruiters, we have come to value a candidate's sales personality traits, the sales DNA, first. If we see what we like, we assess skills and finally experience. Here is some of what we look for, and, we believe, what you should look for in the DNA test.

- ☑ **Do you crave insight into the customer?** The best salespeople are intensely focused on their customer's goals and requirements. They learn them and can articulate them as well, if not better because they are salespeople, as the customer. Lots of salespeople say they are good at "building relationships." For excellent salespeople, this is not a chosen behavior; it is an insatiable need to understand the necessities to make their customers successful.

- ☑ **Do you have a system?** The best salespeople have a systematic, disciplined approach to winning business. They don't waste time on business that is not qualified, and they have a methodology for moving a prospect along the sales cycle step by step. This system allows them to be highly efficient with their time and increase their success rate.

- ☑ **Are you positive in the face of adversity?** Peak Performers are confident and expect to win. They have thick skin, they don't take things personally. They believe that a "no" from a prospect is most often not the end of the road, but an objection that needs to be overcome. They have short memories for failures and believe failures happened to them, not because of them; they assume the next win is just around the corner.

☑ **Are you persistent in pursuit of the deal?** The best candidates we see are not content to sit by and wait for the phone to ring, and -- even in the recruitment process -- we expect to hear from them again and again until they have "closed" the deal. A good salesperson believes she is doing the prospect a favor by following up regularly. Good salespeople focus on closing deals and solving problems because they believe they can.

☑ **Are you results-oriented?** Lots of candidates say they are results-oriented. A Peak Performer, for whatever reason, has a burning need to achieve. He is ambitious, disciplined and will make personal sacrifices to reach success. A Peak Performer understands the impact of his actions. He can, and will, tell you how much he has added to the bottom line. It's the same personality trait that allows an effective salesperson to articulate the positive impact, in business terms, of a purchase decision to the customer.

☑ **Are you a sales leader?** Good salespeople are competitive. They keep score and they know where they stand if they are not number 1. They need to be ahead of the pack.

☑ **Do you operate with integrity?** The best salespeople defy the "slippery sales guy" stereotype. They care about their customer's success, and they maintain good relationships. They operate in good faith because they care about their customer's success. They are honest and earn their customer's trust. Customers reward them with repeat business. They understand that the sales process is a relationship, not a one-time event.

ACTION LIST

- Develop a screening process that focuses on proof that candidates will be successful on your team
- Script each meeting and interview

Testing Tools and Assessments

Chapter 9

"I always delight in telling people that there are two types of sales managers in this world: those who *have* hired a dud and those who *are going* to hire a dud"
Brian Jeffrey, Salesforce Assessments

Many people in the recruiting profession are unfamiliar with third party sales assessments and, as a result, do not leverage these valuable selection process tools. To increase predictability in candidate selection, Sales Recruiting 2.0 makes extensive use of a variety of assessment tools

A third party assessment, simply defined, is any methodology that provides subjective information obtained using testing or screening tools developed by independent third parties and used in a hiring decision. There are a variety of assessments that can be utilized with the most common being:

- Screening questions
- Resume review
- Background checks and reference verification
- Skills and competency tests
- Behavioral and temperament testing

What Benefits Can An Assessment Provide?

The primary purpose of an assessment is to provide a firm or a recruiter with information relevant to 1) the knowledge level of a candidate and 2) their predicted job performance within a specific role. Some other benefits of an assessment include:

- **Ability Measures-** These test a candidate's cognitive abilities in chosen areas.
- **Simulations**- A role play, marketing or sales exercise, or a mock phone call are only a few examples of simulation types used to assess a candidate's specific skill sets.
- **Situational Judgment**- Measuring the candidate's ability to make critical and correct decisions.
- **Knowledge Tests**- These tests often provide the candidate with a simulated work environment, requiring the candidate to respond to and solve relevant problems.
- **Personality Tests**- These are the most widely used assessment as they examine the candidate's personality traits and, ultimately, their likelihood of achieving success within a specific career or job role.

Assessments are never 100% reliable for producing a top performer but when utilized as a *key* part of the overall interview process such as interviews, role-plays, background checks; assessment tests can provide additional useful insight and are an important component in evaluating potential sales hires.

Choosing an Assessment Type

When considering an assessment type there are many variables to take into consideration. Some of these include:

Relevance - Is the assessment relevant to the industry and to the job that you are recruiting for?

Validated - Does the assessment accurately predict performers and measure specific indicators? What methods of data validation does the assessment rely on when producing results? And, do these results and validated data support your recruiting process?

Technology - What psychometric methods does the assessment rely upon? And, does the assessment come with technical guidelines and explanations for its determination and interpretation of data?

Friendly to the Candidate - While ultimately the data is being used by you to assist you in your hiring decisions; it is crucial that the candidate have a positive experience while taking the assessment. It will not serve your purpose to have great data but candidates who are not pleased, or worse, mad about the process. Ask about the assessment's length, the number of questions, how interactive it is and the total time required to complete it when selecting one to utilize.

Integration- Does the assessment integrate successfully into your current recruiting process?

Competency Based- What core competencies or traits is the assessment linked to and are they relevant to sales and the specific role types that you are looking to fill.

Customer Support- What type of support is provided with the assessment? Will you have access to assistance if you have technology issues and/or questions about implementation?

Choosing the assessment that best matches your recruiting needs is an important component of your overall hiring process. Take the time to thoroughly research and assess each program prior to selecting one to integrate into your system. Always keep in mind the impact of a battery of tests on the candidate. Don't over do it. No one likes being under the microscope and assessments, especially psychological and trait testing, have the potential for alienating the candidate. They also have the largest potential for error—a strength can often be interpreted as a weakness.

Choosing an Assessment Vendor

In addition to an assessment, you may consider choosing an assessment firm to manage this stage of your recruiting process. If you are considering an assessment vendor make sure you:

1. **Define your Needs-** Before considering or approaching an assessment vendor, define your objectives as clearly as possible. Are you trying to more closely screen candidates? Are you trying to reduce candidate turnover? Next, you will want to take a close look at your operational parameters--what is your budget, how fast do you need assessment results and what kind of technology support will you need to implement the assessment process?

2. **Research Vendors-** Once you have clearly defined your assessment objectives, you can begin to search for matches that offer the products and services that you are seeking. Consult with and compare several different assessment companies or agencies prior to making your final selection. Things to consider as you compare assessment vendors include:

- **History**- Are they established? What is their track record within the sales industry? Do their assessment *tests* pinpoint the key characteristics that you are looking to in sales candidates?

- **Metrics Focused**- How does the assessment translate into business success or results? A strong assessment vendor will be able to answer this question with quantifiable results.

- **Technology**- Is the assessment vendor technology centered? What type of technology would be required of you to implement the assessment into your recruiting process?

- **Staffing**- Is the assessment company properly and fully staffed? What kinds of volume can the assessment company process and how quickly can they turn around the results so you can proceed quickly with the hiring process?

3. **Perform Due Diligence**- Narrow down your choices to no more than three firms and carefully examine and question each finalist to fully understand their process, their results history, their successes and, if possible, get testimonials and referrals from other clients prior to making your final selection.

This is all a fair amount of work but by doing so you are laying the groundwork not only for this hire but also for future hires. The value generated by doing Third Party Assessments and doing them correctly will more than offset the time and money spent upfront.

ACTION LIST

- Select an assessments based on their success at picking the right people for your role
- Do not use it to select candidates, but instead that to help validate your assumptions on candidates

Get Thorough with References

Chapter 10

"A single lie destroys a whole reputation of integrity."
Baltasar Gracian

Reference checks on candidates are performed by a surprisingly small number of firms and recruiters. They are however, an important component of results oriented sales hiring and all companies would be wise to invest in thorough background checks before hiring candidates. The amount of information that can be obtained during the reference checks is often so critical to successfully selecting reliable performers, that this is one of the most important steps in Sales Recruiting 2.0.

Some companies will complete this process on their own, while others will outsource it. Whether or not they are done in-house or not, it is the structure that matters. A reference check can, in many cases, be as important as the interview itself. As a result, they should be scripted and structured with a focus on proof. Unfortunately, many who perform this function do so with little concern about the accuracy of the information they are collecting or for the usefulness of the information.

For example, it is not uncommon for the checker to email a former employer with a few basic questions such as:

Your name and coordinates have been provided as a reference for: [candidate name goes here]

Could you please answer the following questions by replying to this email no later than April 2, 2010.

Thank you.

What is your relationship with the candidate?

1a: Is the candidate dependable, does he/she respect work hours?

0 - Never
1 - Sometimes
2 - Usually
3 - Always

1b: Have there been problems with absenteeism with the candidate?

0 - Many Problems
1 - Occasional Problems
2 - Rarely Problems
3 - Never Problems

2a: Does the candidate require the manager/supervisor to regularly assign tasks, or does the person seek out work on their own?

0 - Always requires assigning
1 - Occasionally requires assigning
2 - Seldom requires assigning
3 - Never requires assigning, always seeks out tasks

As you can see, this is nothing more than a simple, generic set of questions which will provide little information or insight into a specific candidate's background, past performances or skill sets. More importantly, most companies will not respond. Legal departments frown on giving out information beyond confirmation of employment and employment dates, if that much.

Why Reference Checks can be Misleading

Reference checks can provide valuable candidate information when performed effectively. However, most recruiters find that they often obtain misleading information for a variety of reasons, including:

- The references included on the candidate's resume are chosen specifically to provide only positive feedback on the candidate.
- Some, if not all, references have been coached by the candidate on what they should say in the event that they are contacted.
- Some of the references may be friends or former co-workers and are not even in a position to comment on the candidate's work habits or what it is like to employ them.
- Ineffective recruiters don't select the best, most probing, questions or language to solicit honest responses from the references that they are contacting.
- Even the simplest of information can be challenging to verify; i.e. employment dates if there has been inaccurate reporting.
- Reference checks generally are not structured to ask for performance data. They typically focus on employment history, job titles and whether the applicant left on positive terms.
- Many companies—here comes the Legal Department again-- instruct their executives to not answer when prompted for references to protect themselves against potential privacy violations or litigation from previous employees if the responses are less than positive.

Metrics and Measurement Inaccuracies

When recruiters are verifying references, there are potential metrics and measurement errors that can occur including:

- What is requested of the reference is not put into quantifiable terms, so no clear distinction can be made as to whether the data is positive or negative about the candidate.
- There are no tracking measurements in place to compare future job performance of hired candidates to their original reference information or scores. Such a measuring system creates a link and a purpose for performing the reference checks.

Reference Process Errors

In addition to potential issues with the information or data collected during a reference verification, there are also numerous process errors. Despite who performs the reference check on a candidate, there are several common process errors, including:

- There is no specific person within a recruiting firm designated to performing reference checks, so it becomes challenging to develop systems and measuring guidelines. Assigning one person or team to conduct the checks builds knowledge and expertise along with a uniform approach to the task.
- Little to no training is given in the area of reference checking.
- There are no distinctions in the process of checking references of salespeople or sales leaders, defining specific processes for different job roles.
- The reference check is not recorded, so the information is virtually unused in the hiring process. This is the biggest error we see. Reference checks are done but there is no record to put in the system. .
- Personal references are often checked but the majority of the responses are only positive, providing no clear direction on the candidate's future performance capabilities. This is just human nature—a candidate is not

going to give a reference that will give a bad reference. This fact adds importance to drawing up a list of probing questions and personnel with expertise in doing reference checks who can rapidly learn to 'read between the lines.'

- Many reference checks are performed without a structure or planned questions. See the previous point.
- Reference checks are often considered to be pass/fail without qualifications and standards for each individual component or question asked.
- Reference checks are often not updated during employment, just performed initially at the point of hire.

When performing reference checks, it is important to speak to former managers to understand what it is like to employ this person. If you are hiring for a managerial role, you will want to seek references from former subordinates.

When formulating your reference check questions, consider the following probing questions to ask managers or supervisors

1. Describe the performance of the candidate compared to their peers in the same role.
2. Compared to their peers, how much time did you spend supervising the candidate?
3. Is the candidate comfortable in seeking help or advice when it is needed?
4. Was the candidate ever promoted? And, if so, after how long in their job role?
5. What drives or motivates the candidate?
6. Describe a time in which the candidate experienced conflict with a co-worker or client and how they handled it.
7. Describe both the candidate's strengths and their weaknesses.

8. Let me describe to you what the candidate is currently interviewing for. Based on this information, do you believe that this candidate is a strong fit for this position? And, why or why not?
9. Describe a time in which the candidate made a strong and timely decision. What was the circumstance and what was the outcome?
10. Describe the candidate's presentation or public speaking skills.
11. Why did the candidate leave your firm?
12. Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to share with me about the candidate?

Since references are so often coached with answers designed to make a candidate fit a desired profile, wherever possible ask some of the behavioral questions that were posed in the interview. Asking details will serve to get past the coaching and into the truth. Be prepared to be stonewalled. You may get lucky and have an open and honest discussion but the managers will probably be under orders to only provide proof of employment and employment dates. In those cases, the following group can provide important insight.

Questions to Ask Peers

While certainly the information that you can obtain, if possible, from a previous employer is important when creating a candidate reference file, so is the information from their peers. In addition, peers usually are freer and more willing to talk and give opinions than managers and supervisors.

Here are some sample questions to use when obtaining references from the candidate's peers:

1. What would you say is the candidate's driving motivation?
2. Is the candidate viewed by you and others as someone who makes timely decisions? What examples can you share to support this?
3. Describe a time in which the candidate worked successfully in a team environment. What was the situation and outcome?
4. What level of performance can be expected of this candidate? And, what evidence or past examples can you give in support of this opinion?

5. Do you believe this candidate has strong or weak interpersonal skills? Why or why not?

An added benefit, to you, of peer reference checks is an increase in contacts and potential future candidates.

As you develop your list of reference check questions, consider the specific role that you are recruiting for and the ideal answers that you are hoping for when you ask the questions. Construct a reference check form with all of the questions listed and a ranking system that each reference checker can use. Once the reference check is completed, a score for this portion of the interview should be given by you after reviewing with the reference checker and the reference check should become a part of the candidate's employment file.

Note: Before you or anyone in your firm begins to check references, it is advised to have the candidate sign a release form. This can be helpful in gaining candid information from references as the candidate is waiving their rights to legal action based upon the information obtained during the reference check. Before you make any reference check calls, also be sure that in addition to the release form, that you verbally notify the candidate that you will be checking references. The release form should be written by, or at least approved by, your Legal Department and a signed copy sent to the Legal Department before any reference check is started.

When checking references, the phone is your best tool. While you certainly can gain information through sending a letter or an email, the best recruiters will make personal phone calls. The personal phone call will enable the recruiter to listen to voice tone and answers to specific questions, allowing them to modify their questions or to probe more deeply as required to gain the specific information that they are looking for on the candidate.

Always avoid asking any reference check questions with regards to age, race, or gender during this portion of the interview. And, at all time, consider the privacy of the candidate as you are asking questions. Because you are asking humans to evaluate other humans, there is always the danger of misinterpretation and the chance to offend someone. Legal problems are rare but do happen. That being said the numerous advantages and knowledge learned from doing thorough reference checks far outweighs the amount of work involved.

Don’t Settle for “B” Players

Chapter 11

“Hire people who are better than you are, then leave them to get on with it. Look for people who will aim for the remarkable, who will not settle for the routine.”
David Ogilvy

Even if you are tempted to hire someone to meet your quota or your deadline, don’t do it if it is not the best hire for the opportunity. Hiring the wrong person can cost your company hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of dollars in lost revenues, annoyed or lost customers, damaged corporate reputation, compromised organizational morale, management turnover and increased hiring or retraining costs. Making a bad hire only takes a minute. Unwinding the damage caused can take months, if not years. Most companies cannot afford bad hires, yet recruiters who are not disciplined, who don’t understand the consequences of a bad hire, who are trying to reach a sales quota and, most importantly, don’t use a system to make hires still do so.

Let’s put some numbers to the cost of a bad hire. And they are not our numbers but those developed and calculated by Croner and Abraham (37-31), for a company where the sales quota of the best salespeople is $1.5 million, and sub-par performers are delivering half of that ($750,000). Their study resulted in an annualized negative impact of having a poor performer on the team at $1,360,000. Let's repeat that—the cost of one negative hire is almost $1.4 million. Per year! The cost is the sum of lost revenue, lost customers, and extra management costs. The costs of delaying action are $2.6 million over 2 years. And so on for years.

This methodology can be applied by you to your organization by following these steps:

1. What does a top performer expect to generate in revenues for your firm?
2. What does an average performer in the organization expect to earn for the firm?
3. Subtract the average performer's production from the top performer's production. This is referred to as the revenue performance gap.
4. Consider soft costs to the organization, typically about 10% of the top performer's revenue. Soft costs are generally indirect costs to the organization of a bad hire.
5. Are there any additional management training or time costs of the poor performer in question #2? It is estimated that a sales manager can spend anywhere from 10% to 30% of their time with low performers. Choose a percentage and apply it to the average sales manager's salary within the organization.
6. Add the steps 3, 4, and 5 together to determine a number.
7. This is the estimated gross profit loss of a single bad hire for the organization.
8. If you want to take the exercise a step further, you can multiply the total costs of the bad hire to the organization over the number of years you allowed or the organization allowed this bad hire to remain in the organization.

If you did the numbers right, it is the right number. If you want to make it bigger, throw in some legal costs.

Having quantified the downside of a bad hire, let's go looking for and getting the 'A' player.

Working to hire the best individuals is not a new idea; most organizations around the world recognize the importance and value of a great hire. But, not all sales environments can attract the best talent, nor can the recruiters. The best salespeople are attracted to solid companies, well-recognized brands and positive organizational cultures. Top salespeople are looking for an opportunity in which their strengths match the companies and where they can become a valued asset.

Making it even more difficult for the recruiter is the environment--while in every job market it is challenging to hire superstars or Peak Performers, it is especially challenging to hire them in a struggling economy. Quite naturally, successful salespeople are often more inclined to remain in their current jobs, waiting for the economy to rebound. In a booming economy, hiring Peak Performers is also challenging. When the job market is hot, Peak Performers have the ultimate choice in where they wish to work. So let's neutralize the economy as an issue—if it is hard in bad times and hard in good times, it is just hard. Hard doesn't make it impossible it just makes the process, well, hard.

No matter what type of economic situation we are faced with, the most important thing to remember is that in order to hire a Peak Performer for a specific job, the organization and the recruiting process must also be Peak. Peak Performers are less tolerant of weak or unorganized recruiting processes and they are unwilling to work for a sub-par organization.

So look within your organization and evaluate your processes and your abilities. If you have liabilities be honest with the candidate—we have this problem and that is why we are looking for someone like you, a Peak Performer, to fix it. To attract 'A' players on a consistent basis, you must be, or on the path to be, an 'A' organization.

Set Up to Succeed

Chapter 12

"Employees who have gone through some sort of on-boarding process — one that is more than the usual paper-processing bureaucracy — report feeling better connected to corporate strategy and to the company culture."
Kevin Wheeler

You have gone through all the processes, developed a system, done reference checks, you did the interviews, made the offer, they accepted—your job is done. Not really. One last vital job needs to be done and done well. You must ensure that the new hires integration into the company is planned, organized and smooth. The new employee orientation phase or process is often referred to as "on-boarding integration". With the old adage of 'you never get a second chance to make a first impression' being true, it is important to make sure that each new hire is welcomed, valued and that their first impressions are positive.

On-boarding refers to several key components:

- Creating a strong employee welcome
- Affirming to the employee that they have made the correct career decision
- Affirming to the employee that they will fit into the organization long term

- Building a relationship with the employee
- **<u>Setting them up to be productive as quickly as possible</u>**

On-boarding is a structured way to allow new employees to successfully acclimate to the organization. While an orientation may be a component of on-boarding, the total on-boarding concept is further reaching. While official on-boarding refers in many cases to the first days or weeks within a new position, a successful recruiter will actually encourage the candidate to begin this process before they walk into the office on their first day. And continue it throughout their time with the company.

Step One--Recruiters should encourage candidates to do the following prior to their first day of employment:

Research - It will be helpful if you can assist the candidate in learning more about the company, about its mission statement, products, values and corporate structure. Other topics to encourage the candidate to research prior to their official start date include:

- Current industry issues
- Sales and marketing strategy
- Lead generation strategy
- Specifics regarding products and services
- The organization's culture
- Media clippings on the company
- Company and industry websites

The new hire will know a lot of this already but having it laid out for them prior to that first day will ease the awkwardness of the coming first day.

Development Plan Review- Most top candidates are concerned and interested in their development plan and training program upon arrival into the company. Review the training program with the candidate and offer suggestions on things that they may be able to do in order to gain a head start prior to their official first day.

Meet the Team- If possible organize informal team meetings where the candidate can meet co-workers, staff and supervisors.

Human resources or a hiring manager is typically assigned to new hires and are responsible for managing the job of on-boarding. The most effective managers in this role utilize a checklist for new hires, allowing them to ensure that all components are completed for the new hire's initial day, their first week and their first months of training.

A new hire doesn't want to walk in that first day and find chaos. Or worse, indifference. The on-boarding manager must make the first day as pleasant and encouraging as possible. Here are some sample checklists to use when preparing for a new hire's first day:

Week 1:
- Complete HR paperwork
- One-on-one sessions with department reps
- Pre-Sales/Sales/Contracting process reviews
- Access to Sales force Automation/CRM/Research tools
- Review of initial presentations/value proposition/use cases
- Review product/service elements and references
- Review of territory
- Get list of accounts to begin researching

Week 2:
- Practice initial presentation and discuss understanding of different value propositions with sales management and peers
- Initial role play
- Sit in on 3-4 meetings with existing reps
- Debrief with the account exec and sales management after each call
- Finalize account lists
- Begin calling accounts - peers and sales management provide feedback
- Set activity goals for current and following week (incl. calls, meetings)
- Presentation to senior management team member

Week 3 - 6:
- Build pipeline
- Discuss feedback/experiences every other day
- Role play several times each week using different customer scenarios
- Sit in on 1-2 meetings with existing reps
- Discuss progress against objectives, additional tools/training required to be successful (at the end of week 4 and week 6)

Week 6-8:
- Build pipeline
- Evaluate vs. High Level Expectations after 2 months
- Average approximately X calls per day after week 2
- Have an average of Y meetings a week after week 4
- Have identified N+ qualified opportunities after 2 months.

Following these checklists are important and not to be overlooked or assumed that somebody will get these things done. The new hire is making an impression but so are you and you represent the company.

It may seem obvious, but it makes sense to cover the small things such as making sure the new hire has a desk, functioning workstation, email and phone. Too often these things are not properly taken care of, which creates a poor impression and potential frustration for the new hire. Employee manuals, welcome messages and introductions to other staff are also useful to ensure a soft landing.

Keeping in mind that the goal is for the organization to retain their Peak Performers, it is highly recommended to become familiar with the factors that could cause them to leave. The reasons for a Peak Performer to leave are strongly correlated to the following.

The most common mistakes/issues that will cause Peak Performers to leave an organization are:

1. Frequent changes to the compensation plan
2. A reduction in commission rate if the representative produces big sales and big commissions
3. Penalizing the sales team for poor post sales delivery
4. Refusal to compensate the sales representatives on certain types of sales that generate desirable profits for the company
5. Failure to support them with proactive product management, strong product development, professional delivery and effective support
6. Investing nothing in marketing and brand recognition
7. Making them spend a lot of time completing reports and doing other non-selling activities
8. Hiring sub-par sales reps and keeping poor performers on board
9. Stepping in to take over accounts which reps have worked hard to acquire and develop
10. Focusing on hours and activities instead of results
11. Forgetting to be a cheerleader ~~that distracts~~ to get everyone over their daily rejections
12. Requiring reps to make cheap travel arrangements which waste valuable selling time
13. Not providing best practices and resources such as objection handling scripts and reference material
14. Asking reps to lie to customers and prospects in order to close more business
15. Avoiding coaching and constructively helping the reps be bigger producers
16. Refusing to leave your office and visit customers
17. Paying commissions late

18. Taking credit for closing deals the reps close
19. Implying that selling is the easy part of a company's success

The integration process is one of the most important but, unfortunately, most ignored of the ten top tools of successful hiring of sales people.

Keep Score

Chapter 13

"Checking the results of a decision against its expectations shows executives what their strengths are, where they need to improve, and where they lack knowledge or information. "
Peter Drucker

Most companies can tell you how many hires they have made and perhaps the turnover rates, but few companies can tell you how many sales hires made in the last year or quarter successfully achieved quota. This is a shame for it implies they really don't care whether their hiring programs are actually effective.

As we stated early on, Sales Recruiting 2.0 aims not only to make sales hires, but to deliver sales results to the organization by hiring sales performers that will consistently meet or exceed their targets. Keeping detailed stats on the success of hires indicates that there is a return on your investment in a structured sales hiring process and gives you an opportunity to adjust and improve your process over time.

Some of the best advice on this topic comes from Jack Welch who advocates the Hiring Batting Average (HBA):

"Here's how it works. Every candidate for a job at your company must be interviewed by at least three people in the organization beyond the hiring manager, and each interviewer must sign off with a "Hire" or "Don't Hire" vote.

No maybes allowed. Fast-forward six months. Every new hire gets evaluated by his manager on how he has performed against expectations: below, meets, or exceeds. Soon enough, and with enough critical mass, you can start to compare every interviewer's "Hire" recommendations with actual performance. For instance, say a manager named Emily has approved 10 candidates and, six months out, eight of them are performing at or above expectations. Emily's hba would be .800. That impressive score lets you know Emily is a first-rate evaluator of talent, and she should be rewarded accordingly. By contrast, say Emily's colleague John has given the nod to 12 hires and, after six months, only four are working out, for an hba of .333. Keep John in his day job and away from picking people!"

Beyond tracking success, The HBA also delivers two other powerful benefits: Gets busy employees to actually engage in the interview process—"*brain and soul"—;* interviewers tend to stay in closer contact with the people to whom they've given their "hire" stamp, even providing mentoring and coaching.

If you don't keep score, you don't know if your hiring programs are actually helping your company be successful and you can't make continuous improvements to your process. You need to keep score.

Summary

Most conclusions are mere restatements of the key factors in the book. We won't put you through that because the book, and each element of Sales Recruiting 2.0, speaks for itself. If you get stumped or forget or need to know an action item, just go to that secret or section and reread it. Simple enough.

We do want you to go away with one conclusion foremost in your mind—a successful hire is not the result of luck. A successful hire is the result of utilizing a structured system. The systematic approach laid out in Sales Recruiting 2.0 will 1) provide you a course of action to follow, step by step, to successful hiring, 2) eliminate guesswork and relying on your gut, 3) enable you to recruit performers who will consistently meet or exceed their sales targets, and 4) make you very valuable to your organization.

We would love to hear from you if you have questions and feedback, or if we can help you advance your sales hiring success. For further reading or to contact us please visit our blog at:

Peak Sales Recruiting | www.peaksalesrecruiting.com/blog

Thanks for reading.
Eliot Burdett & Brent Thomson
Peak Sales Recruiting Inc.

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About Sales Recruiting 2.0

If you care about achieving high sales growth and building a team of top performing sales professionals, Sales Recruiting 2.0 will be a vital tool for you.

Recruiting is one of the most important, if not the most important, tasks within any organization. The basic role of a recruiter is to match the best talent for a specific role within the company. In sales recruiting, there are key characteristics that will improve the likelihood that a recruiter will select the best talent available to fill the open position. In this revealing book, you will learn the tools that the best recruiters utilize in the sales industry to locate, interview and hire the best talent.

About the Authors

Eliot Burdett has over 20 years experience in launching and building companies and is a leader in the field of sales performance and team building.

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