



Hire Better Sales Reps In Six Steps

Finding 'A' players will result in higher product sales

By Jim Peduto

If you are like most distributors, your hiring process looks like this:

1. Place an advertisement (online or print)
2. Review resumes
3. Interview
4. Hire

The process is perfect . . . unless your goal is to hire "A" players.

To actually recruit and hire successful salespeople, your hiring process should follow these six steps:

1. Identify The Ideal Candidate: This is the most important step. Ironically, most companies either give it short shrift or skip it all together. The key is to identify the experiences that candidates must have in order to succeed at your company, selling your products, in your markets.

2. Posting: Use your "ideal candidate" description for your job posting. The best approach is to describe the candidate you are looking for in terms of his or her experiences and accomplishments. Your ad might begin, "You must have prior success selling janitorial supplies to senior management of large companies in a highly competitive market" and end with "you must have prior income of at least \$65,000." You will attract far more ideal candidates than the typical ad that reads, "Successful, well-known company has an opening for a goal-orientated salesperson. We offer health care, expenses, 401K, salary plus generous commission, limited travel."

You have to nail the posting — get it wrong and the wrong people will apply for the position.

3. Assess: The sooner the better. Our statistics show that assessing candidates immediately upon receiving a resume identifies 50 percent more


hirable candidates than delaying assessment until later in the process. The best results come from using customized, sales-specific, predictive assessments to identify the candidates who are most likely to succeed. If the assessment isn't predictive and you can't rely on it, you'll waste your time with the wrong candidates.

4. Qualify: Just as in sales, qualifying the candidate is both important and essential. You will only qualify candidates who, according to the assessment, are hirable. Your objective is to determine whether the candidate actually meets your requirements. Plan on a five-minute phone interview. Ask the candidate to explain how they meet the criteria in your posting. Are the candidate's responses supported by specifics?

Do you want to continue speaking with the candidate or are you inclined to want to end the call? Try cutting the person off abruptly to see how he or she handles your put-off. Award points for the various criteria, and score each candidate appropriately based on how he or she meets your criteria.

5. In-person Interview: Since you already know the candidate's capabilities you can focus on other things like eye contact, self-presentation, spontaneity, presence, charisma, sincerity, warmth, intelligence and how you would feel about this candidate representing your company.

6. Hire And Onboard: Distributors should have an individualized, 90-day onboarding process. This will help ensure your hires become productive as quickly as possible. The onboarding process both develops selling skills and eliminates each individual's weaknesses.

You must be patient enough to do these steps all over again if you don't find an "A" candidate. A year from now you will be happy that you did it right the first time. 



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