

Selecting the right sales person for your team

Getting the right person in the right seat on the bus is easier said than done, especially in the world of sales. Sometimes, it seems like the best sales job the salesperson ever did was selling the sales manager on the notion that they were the person for the job. Unfortunately, all too often sales hires just don't work out. Let's take a look at what contributes to these mistakes as well as what needs to be done differently.

What contributes to the mistake of a bad salesperson hire? Frequently, there is no replacement in sight when a salesperson resigns or a salesperson is fired. Panic sets in and sales managers rush to find a replacement to avoid any interruption in revenue. Little or no effort goes into the job description because the sales manager "knows" what he is looking for. But with no job description or a poorly defined job description, there is no benchmark for comparing candidates. Additionally, the sales candidates are well-trained on how to sell their way into a sales position—in fact, they have made a career of it.

Meanwhile, the sales manager is under pressure to fill the spot and seems to have less time to devote to the process since they are trying to compensate for the loss of a salesperson. This can result in recruiting processes that are unplanned and impulsive. Before the candidates arrive, little forethought went into questioning strategies and/or the hiring managers lack expertise in questioning sales candidates. Background checks, reference checks and secondary reference checks are skipped or treated as a formality. The sales manager finds someone that he likes that is eager to start. Ninety days later the sales manager is shaking his head, wondering what happened to that eager sales candidate that he interviewed three months ago.

How do we remedy the situation? While there are no guarantees, we recommend that you consider the following when hiring new salespeople.

First, follow these four rules:

1. The candidate must be the right fit for your desired culture.
2. The candidate must come with the right motivation, ambition and drive.
3. Given a coachable candidate with the ability to learn, a candidate with an 80% match regarding behaviors and competencies could be good enough.
4. Similar to #3 above, skills should also be an 80% match at a minimum, assuming that you have a coachable candidate that can learn.

Second, do your homework!

1. Define the culture of the sales team that the candidate will join.
2. Define the job description to include behaviors, competencies, knowledge and skills.
3. Develop your recruiting strategy.

Third, follow a process.

1. Develop the job description.
2. Create an advertisement for the position.
3. Recruit candidates.
4. Conduct initial screening.
5. Prepare interview questions.
6. Have the hiring manager conduct initial interviews.
7. Conduct an online assessment.
8. Conduct a second round of interviews.
9. Conduct background and reference checks.
10. Make the selection.

Properly implementing these steps, as well as a proper onboarding program, will significantly improve the likelihood that you will select the right sale person for your team. If you would like to learn more about how to implement these steps, contact David at 214-470-5599 or David@EpochSalesManagement.com.