

Top 5 Interviewing Tips for Selecting Sales Superstars

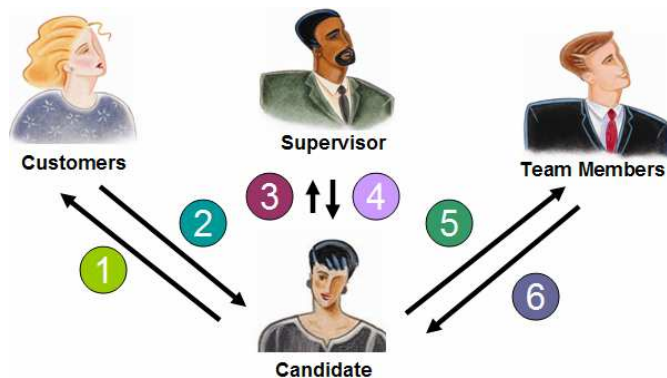
Hiring top performing sales professionals who go the distance is crucial to a company's success. The key to selection begins in the interview process. Here is where even experienced managers make big mistakes. Having been involved with candidate recruitment and selection for nearly 20 years, Execuserve team members have learned quite a bit about what it takes to hire sales superstars. Below we've shared a few of our top interview and selection tips.

#1 - Make the candidate feel uncomfortable.

During the interview process, most try very hard to make the candidate feel at ease. Don't. At some point in the interview, put the candidate on the spot by asking a few tough questions. See how he or she maintains grace under fire.

#2 - Consider the candidate's office environment.

Let's say you're a start-up company looking to build a high-producing sales team with entrepreneurial spirit. You find a dynamite sales rep from a large, established competitor. Keep in mind: this candidate may be used to getting a lot of help from a big support team or farming large, established accounts. Make sure he or she is willing *and* able to make the adjustment.



#3 - Factor in “Six Dimensions of Fit” when making a decision.

Studies have shown that employees don't leave for better pay or benefits; they leave because of personal disputes. To ensure long tenure, look at

how well the candidate will fit with current customers, managers and team members. If you think any of the six dimensions won't be a match, do not make the hire.

#4 – Conduct a behavioral interview. (Bonus: Learn a top recruiter’s favorite question.)

Most interviews consist of a review of past experience with a few canned questions thrown in. (“What’s your greatest strength/weakness?” immediately comes to mind.) Sales people are typically very, very good interviewees. They’re well prepared. They’ve rehearsed all the right answers. Now, as a hiring manager what can you expect to gain from hearing canned answers? Nothing.

The key is to ask questions that help you illicit a strong response. Understand who the candidate really is and how well he or she will fit into your company, your team.

One of our top recruiters has a favorite question, “You’re driving on a deserted road at night. You pull up to a red light. How long do you wait before you drive through the intersection? Why?” We guarantee that the candidate’s answer will tell you infinitely more about him or her than a run-of-the-mill interview question.

We strongly recommend using an interview guide. (Granted, we’re biased. Execuserve is the maker of Hire-Intelligence™, a leading talent management tool used by top sales organizations.)

#5 – Don’t suffer from “Group Decision Syndrome.”

It’s difficult to make a hiring decision alone. That’s why many organizations have several employees interview the candidate. The problem is that everyone seems to offer similar, generic feedback, “Yeah, he seems good” or “I like her.” The reason is that everyone asks the *same questions*.

To avoid this problem, we recommend conducting a panel interview (where all interviewers are in the same room) or reviewing interviewers’ questions in advance to make sure everyone focuses on a different aspect of the candidate’s qualifications, experience and behavior.

About Execuserve

Execuserve specializes in talent management. We offer time-saving recruitment solutions along with Hire-Intelligence™, an online tool that helps companies select, retain and develop key employees. The product of over 15 years research, use and development, Hire-Intelligence uses artificial intelligence to analyze for 36 dimensions of business behavior and produces a detailed profile and interview guide – unique to each candidate. Clients who have used Hire-Intelligence have experienced up to a 86% decrease in employee attrition and a two-fold increase in tenure. For more information, visit www.execuservecorp.com or call (800) 385-1993.

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