

Finding Awesome Sales People

For many businesses in this economy, a good way to boost sales is to hire more salespeople. Perhaps you let some go during the downturn or are building despite the sluggish economic rebound. Whatever the reason, there are a lot of talented people out there looking for a new position, so all you have to do is find them.

The right salesperson can boost your bottom line, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance valuable customer relationships. There are three kinds of bad salespeople: those that are just not good at it, those that are good at certain types of sales, and those that are working for your competition. The trick is to find salespeople that will fit into your business and office culture, mesh well with your existing and potential clientele, and build your customer base in a positive way.

To begin with, make lists of what you need in a salesperson. List what you expect the person to be able to do, what types of personality traits you need, and describe exactly what the job is. Also fully flesh out the compensation package and details. Describe the sales cycle at your company - is it short- or long-term, rotating in days, weeks or months? What is the usual approach, or style, your sales team (or yourself) uses when dealing with customers?

The most common reason for turnover in a company's sales force is a lack of understanding for just the basics at that company. Clear-cut compensation packages, straight-forward sales style information up front, and clear descriptions of the cycle are very important. Before you hire, your potential salesperson should know and understand all of these.

Next, work your network. Your current sales staff or even people not on your sales staff but working for you are a good start. Often, current secondary sales positions (front desk, repair or follow-up technicians, etc) make excellent salespeople with just a little training. There's often a lot of potential talent right there on your payroll. Current sales staff will also know many others in the business and may have good options for you. Even employees at your clients may be a good choice in some circumstances - especially if you know of a customer who's having to cut back and let some staff go. Everyone you regularly do business with may be a source for referrals or new hires, in fact. Use your network.

Troll job fairs at the local college or in your industry. Headhunters are also a good bet - they're not cheap, but they're good at finding you the right person. Hiring temporary workers from staffing agencies is also often a good choice, as it allows you to vet the employee without fear of a lawsuit or other problems if it doesn't work out.

Finding the right salespeople is usually far better and easier if you don't resort to the old 3-line classified. Spending hours vetting candidates who walk in the door with a resume and a desperate look in their eye is no fun and a waste of time. There are far better ways to go about it.

