

20 Things That Every Employer Should Know About Salespeople

1. Before recruiting have a recruitment plan and ensure you can answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you expect your new recruit to achieve in the first year?
 - b. How much will they cost in the first year?
 - c. What will their first month of employment look like? i.e. training, induction, shadowing successful staff, being shadowed in initial meetings, etc.
 - d. How will I train, coach and measure them?
 - e. What skills, qualities and experience will they need to have?
 - f. What are the 'must haves', 'like to haves'?
 - g. What's will their style and approach be like?
 - h. Why will they want to join our business?
 - i. Why will they love working for you as a boss?
 - j. What will retain them in your business for the long term?
2. Salespeople are expensive. Remember a field salesperson will be basic salary, commission, NICs on the total earnings, car lease, fuel for x 000's of miles, expenses and whatever benefits you offer. How many deals will they need to earn the GP to cover this?
3. It is really unlikely that your new recruit will walk into your business with an order book – this is totally unrealistic in most circumstances.
4. Getting the proposed new sales staff member to suggest their own measures (Key performance indicators) at a second interview is a really good way to set realistic targets. Get them to walk you through a typical week/month – new client meetings, quotes out, conversion ratios, etc. based upon their previous experience
5. A £12K basic and £100K OTE is unlikely to enable you to recruit a quality sales applicant. Most salespeople look to cover their cost of living with their basic and the OTE pays for the nice things in life – holidays, the new conservatory, etc. A stressed out salesperson wondering how they're going to feed their family this month is not an effective one.
6. It is unlikely that a 'big hitter' in a large organisation will hit the same revenue levels if they join a small organisation
7. It's better to hire the top salesperson from a small business into a large business than to hire the top salesperson from a large business into a small business. However if the top salesperson from a small

business is used to doing everything in the 'sales process' they will probably need coaching on compliance, structure and working with support departments

8. Sometimes a 'big hitter' in a large organisation will struggle in a small organisation as they will not have the same brand, support departments and resources to draw upon. Sales staff that have never worked in a large business may not have done large elements of your 'sales process' before (as they probably had support teams there to make the appointments, write the proposals, etc)
9. Warning – bad salespeople can often make really, really, REALLY good interviewees. Have a solid recruitment process
10. Salespeople can often be surprisingly bad at 'selling themselves'
11. It is rare to see a CV of someone that hasn't met their sales target (and if they state in their CV that they didn't meet their target then they're probably very good)
12. Salespeople probably need to be loved more than the staff of any other department – they love to be recognised
13. Cars are important to a field salesperson. You may feel it petty but having an unsafe and uncomfortable vehicle could make your new recruit head for the exit door pretty quickly
14. Most salespeople like gadgets. Therefore having a decent spec laptop and the ability to access the CRM system from the latest Smartphone is important to them
15. Salespeople, perhaps more than any other staff, need to be continuously measured and given constant feedback
16. Salespeople walk away from businesses where they are not regularly reviewed and given constant feedback
17. Salespeople are very incentive driven – give them constant targets and rewards. Often it's not the prize that drives them it's the simple fact that they achieved what you asked them to do.
18. Many salespeople are overtly confident but inwardly cautious. In my experience many can be quite 'needy' and require regular reassurance that they are brilliant!
19. Despite being more goal oriented than most staff it is quite common to interview salespeople that do not plan their careers and futures. Work with them on long term goal setting to retain them.
20. Good salespeople leave bad sales managers not bad companies