

The importance of selling/engaging candidates during interviews and how to do this?

Contents

The importance of selling/engaging candidates during interviews and how to do this?	1
Stability And Flexibility	2
Don't tell them sweet little lies: Sell the truth	2
Balance It Out	2
Make It Private	3
Don't Get Too Engaged	3
Use Role Play	4
The Interview Itself	4
Stay Cool Under Fire	4
Conclusion	4

Have you ever lost a great candidate because a candidate turned down a job? Or worse, took a counteroffer? It may be because either you personally or your organisation were unable to engage or sell the candidate the job on offer.

Therefore, to be successful an 'offer process' must be created that builds a compelling case for the candidate clearly reinforces why they should accept your role and offer above all others.



and

When a candidate is presented with multiple job offers it seems like the one most often pick is the one where the employer really sold the company. However candidates CAN and will always be picky. It is very common that too many companies take their own selling points for granted and just don't bother spelling them out.

Furthermore, if you can talk about social events, teambuilding and investment in people you stand a much better chance of making the company a more attractive proposition than simply focussing on the job and how it fits into the corporate structure.

A great number of employers are forgetting and failing to 'sell' and 'engage' candidates... So how and what should you be "selling" to potential employees during the interview process?

Stability And Flexibility

In the current economy, it could be seen that applicants are not always in the position to be as “picky” as they once were, but there are standard things that they are looking for. Stability is essential. There are many candidates that may have been laid off by one company after another.

Providing great benefits and flexible time options offer wonderful selling points – especially to those applicants that have families and/or are single parents.

Explain that your employees are your most valuable asset and an asset that you treat well. Yes talk about all the necessity points that need to be discussed but do *not* under communicate that you value your employees and the lives they live. This is probably an underused “branding” point right there! Employee appreciation lunch, Christmas parties and simple “thank you’s” go a long, long, long way and mean more than most realise.

Don't tell them sweet little lies: Sell the truth

I believe it doesn't serve anyone to sell a potential employee promises that cannot be fulfilled– the truth is better otherwise you may find yourself repeating the process and employing with another susceptible candidate. Making promises that are unable to be fulfilled will get both the employer and employee nowhere. Sell the *truth* about the position but do so with *excitement*. This will help engage the candidate. It could be worth evaluating hiring managers to ensure that your company brand is being demonstrated effectively during interviews.

Balance It Out

The following are samples of question styles found in well-balanced interviews. Generally, different combinations of questions used during interviewing help to provide variety which in turn helps engage interviewees. Please bear in mind that the position for which candidates are being interviewed for will influence the questions that will be asked.

1. Open-ended Questions

This type of question, which is intended to allow the applicant to do most of the talking, draws out attitudes and information. Examples are:

- What do you know about our company? Our industry?
- What are your strengths and how do they relate to our company?
- What are your biggest accomplishments, work, sales achievements, non-work, during the past few years?
- What new skills or capabilities have you developed over the past year?
- What do you feel would be your biggest contribution to our sales department? Our Company?
- Is there anything that you would like to tell me or add to your previous answers?

2. Probing Questions

This type of question allows the applicant to do the talking and is intended to clarify facts and attitudes. Examples are:

- Do you enjoy talking to people on the telephone?
- Why are you leaving your present position?
- How well do you take criticism?
- How well do you react to direction from a supervisor?
- Is working under pressure a problem?

3. Close-ended Questions.

Questions that are phrased to evoke yes or no answers should not dominate the interview. However, sometimes, it is useful to pin down an applicant's response. Examples are:

- Are you able to work overtime when necessary?
- Would you be able to accommodate a change in your work shift?
- Are you able to travel 50% of your work time?
- Are you willing to relocate?

Make It Private

Arrange a private room with a desk or table and at least two chairs. An unused office or conference room where the candidate will not be interrupted is absolutely necessary! The room must remain private for the entire duration of the interview. This will help relax the candidate which consequently will enhance their engaging abilities. A comfortable, relaxed, engaged interviewee makes a happier and more successful interview.

Don't Get Too Engaged

Develop a standard set of questions and ask all of your candidates the same if not similar questions. It is extremely easy to not cover everything you wished to if your method is to create questions on the spot - especially if your candidate is very engaging and interesting. Ten is a good number of questions to aim for (give or take a few). You want to be able to compare the answers of all candidates to see who is a good fit for your organisation and *engage* the candidate not *overwhelm* them with a huge amount of questions. Conversely you don't want to send them to sleep and with only a handful of undemanding basic questions.

Use Role Play

Perform a mini-role play. Salespeople will be expecting to answer typical interview questions like “what are your biggest strengths?” and “what are your biggest weaknesses”. It’s a lot harder to role play and fake it with a “canned answer”. Instead, ask the candidate how he or she would handle specific sales scenarios that would relate to the environment that your company works within.

The Interview Itself

Although you will be asking the majority of the questions remember to give the candidate openings to ask their own – see if they are able to turn the interview into a mutually comfortable conversation (this helps engagement and relaxation). If not, find a point within the interview where you are able to throw out some open-ended questions that will allow the candidate to open up and get beyond pre-prepared answers. This will enable you to really get to know him or her on a more relaxed level. An example could be “Tell me about a project you are very proud of”.

Stay Cool Under Fire

Due to the nature of a selling environment most sales roles involve a great deal of pressure however *don't* use “stress interviews” to measure this quality – they don’t work simply because you can’t replicate “real-world” stress in an interview. As an alternative, ask candidates to describe how they handled the most stressful situation that they’ve ever encountered.

Conclusion

Top-level sales candidates are just as rigorous and discerning about the company that they choose to work for as the hiring manager is about them – and sometimes even more so. Therefore the hiring manager mustn’t just simply ‘recruit’ but they should actively market and sell themselves to candidates throughout the entire recruitment process. You could even view each stage of the process as a customer relationship management opportunity building consensus with the candidate through each part of the process.

If you are able to do this well the success rate of hiring first choice candidates will measurably increase. A comfortable and relaxed candidate will make for a better interview which will inevitably enable you to pick the candidate that is right for you.