



Championship material

One of the most important but least popular jobs a sales manager must do is recruit effective salespeople. It amazes me how sales managers try to achieve this. It's often left to a junior member of staff to carry out the initial screening and then the final interview is fitted in some time when there is space in the diary! Sales managers claim they never have time to recruit people properly, but they always seem to find time to repeat the exercise six months later.

A properly planned recruitment campaign can save a company both time and money. There are eight steps to a well-planned recruitment exercise, and I will try to deal with each one in detail.

1 DEFINE

You know what you want – a salesperson to cover the North London area selling widgets. Easy? No – not really. There are many other areas to consider when you are actually defining what the job in question is all about, the successful candidate and how he will have to sell.

Is it a quick, emotive sale, with little or no technical involvement? Is your company selling FMCG-type products, where the ability to build-up and maintain long-

Employing top sales professionals is essential for the success of any business venture. ROGER SUMMERFIELD FInstSMM highlights eight practical steps for recruiting the best

term personal relationships is vital? Maybe your team sells a technical product and the ability to deal with technical people over a long-term selling cycle is vital. These different functions require different salespeople with different temperaments. Good psychometric testing can help you better define the person who is most likely to be best suited for each different sales role.

Where is the person now, and what is he looking for? Is he seeking a management opportunity? Is he frustrated and looking for a change? Is he keen to have a sales career? This is all vital data when you arrive at the next step – compiling the advertisement.

2 ATTRACT

What is the current level of unemployment in your area? Perhaps it is quite low. Now ask yourself what the level of unemployment of quality people is. *Nil* in most regions! This introduces yet another question: “Why should someone good work for you?”

It seems a foregone conclusion that the salesperson you want is currently employed elsewhere, so you must

6 VERIFY

It would seem that most sales managers tend to trust what applicants tell them and, provided it sounds reasonable, very rarely verify facts or dates.

If it's relevant, check up. Some recent research by the Risk Advisory Group, conducted on 900 CVs reviewed during the last quarter, showed discrepancies in over 50 per cent of them. There was a 20 per cent increase in lies or inaccuracies about previous employment and an 86 per cent rise in false information about academic qualifications!

7&8 DECIDE AND OFFER

A decision, subject to satisfactory references and verbal offer, should be made on the evening of the final interviews. The longer you leave it, the more opportunities this quality person has of being offered a job with another company – possibly even one of your competitors. You train your salespeople to close for an order, so why not close the applicant for a decision? If the answer is 'no', you still have an opportunity to go back to the others on your shortlist if they meet your requirements.

Time scales

It amazes me when I hear sales managers tell me it can take six to eight weeks to make a recruitment decision, and then wonder why the best applicants have already taken other jobs. Research has shown that the top applicants start to disappear ten to 14 days after the advertisement was published.

The ten-day cycle featured on page 29 looks good, and it is not just a theory – it really works! If you plan your recruitment campaign properly, then use psychometric and occupational testing to dig below the façade, and interview for character traits in depth, you won't have to find time in another six months to repeat the exercise. ■

Check if your advert will work!

The author will assess your recruitment advert FREE of charge. See contact details below.



SPECIAL OFFER!



ROGER SUMMERFIELD FInstSMM has 40 years of national sales and sales management experience and is Principal Associate of Buckinghamshire-based Holst Group, the UK suppliers of the McQuaig psychometric and occupational testing systems.

0845 456 4000 www.holstgroup.co.uk
