

# 12 TIPS TO HIRE AND RETAIN TOP-PERFORMING SALESPEOPLE



1. Clearly define the selling role, skills required, and what will constitute success. A seller might have the skills to excel at generating new business, but struggle to renew existing clients, or vice versa. **Clarity on what the role** is and is not will help fill your recruiting pipeline with more qualified candidates.
2. Communicate what makes your company a great place to work. Your products and services have a value proposition, and so does your company. Articulating **what makes your culture unique**, cleaning up your GlassDoor ratings, highlighting competitive compensation, and spotlighting what percentage of your sales team exceed quota are all great ways to help candidates envision thriving at your company.
3. Write a job posting that stands out. Start by **describing the ideal candidate** first and the role last. This will help your job posting stand out from hundreds of other similarly worded listings.
4. Be prepared to **pay for top talent** and make that known in the job posting.
5. **Use a skills assessment** where the questions are asked in a sales context and is designed specifically for evaluating salespeople. Sales-specific assessments identify 72% of top performers, 3x better than just relying on a traditional interview.
6. Keep your **interview process short** and set expectations upfront to win the best candidates. Top candidates are off the market in 21 days.
7. Make sure your interview process simulates what it's like to sell your product or service. Most salespeople are great at selling themselves (see sidebar), that doesn't mean they will be great at selling your product. Use the interview process to **gauge how the candidate responds** to resistance, competition, skepticism, and ambiguity about next steps.
8. Run candidates through a **structured interview**. Each person on your interview team should screen for a key aspect the job (i.e., engineer screens for the candidate's technical expertise). You must use the same questions, sequence, process, and scorecard with every candidate.
9. **Use a scorecard to stay objective**. The scorecard should list the skills and behaviors required for the job. At the end of the interview, each interviewer must complete the scorecard and all discussions about the candidate should start with a review of their scorecard.
10. Make sure your job offer clearly spells out **what success looks like** and what it takes to get fired.
11. Have a First 90 Days Onboarding Plan ready before your new hire starts. Orientation is not onboarding. Your **90 day plan** should systematically train the new hire on your company's technology, products, customers, positioning, and establish a daily cadence for deal review, and coaching.
12. Make sure your sales managers are **actually** coaching. **Daily coaching** leads to a nearly +20% improvement in measurable selling skills. Unfortunately, only 30% of sales reps report being coached weekly or more frequently.

**GET A CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT TO  
IDENTIFY MORE TOP PERFORMERS**



## HIRING SALESPEOPLE IS DIFFERENT

Most companies experience more success when filling non-sales roles than sales roles. Why? It's because salespeople are different, and a successful sales hiring process needs to speak to unique challenges of the sales role.

All jobs come with challenges, but salespeople will face these unique challenges:

- **COMPETITION:** While salespeople try to persuade prospects to buy their company's products or services, competitors will also be attempting to get those same prospects to buy from them instead.
- **REJECTION:** Sales is the only professional role where regular "No" is a core part of the job.
- **HOSTILITY:** Sellers must build relationships with prospects who are skeptical, rushed, disinterested, or even hostile.
- **COMPLEXITY:** B2B sales is including more and more decision makers. Sellers must know how to address concerns from a wide variety of functional stakeholders.
- **FALSE POSITIVES:** Many salespeople are better at selling themselves than your company's product or service. Because selling requires quickly establishing rapport and demonstrating credibility, many salespeople can "hack" an interview process even if they lack the skills to succeed in the role. Companies need a better way to identify and retain top salespeople.

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