

Tired of Always Finding the Wrong Lid (i.e. the Wrong Salesperson)?



Like many people, I have spent a lot more time cooking at home lately. Recently I was madly looking through my pantry for a lid that would fit the Tupperware container I was holding. I am not alone struggling with this task because there are *so many* different size containers for different uses. Moving beyond my frustration, I found a match for the container my leftovers already fit into perfectly. It took me longer than it should, but I finally found it.

The search for a salesperson is similar in many ways; you know the right person is out there, but finding him or her can take valuable time, and then the result is often disappointing.

Prepare Your Company for the Right Salesperson

We currently have two economies: one economy has industries which are unfortunately highly challenged and will continue that way for some time, while the other economy is remarkably busy, with companies hiring aggressively, trying to attack growing markets and customer opportunities.

Compounding these starkly different economies are industries and companies that also differ, deal sizes and sales cycles that vary, and job descriptions that are seldom well defined and specific enough.

Jaime Crosbie, Founder of ProActivate, a leading national sales talent acquisition firm, comments on this conundrum: "Companies foolishly seek the best squirrel to climb the tree but fail to confirm that they are the *right* squirrel for your company and the job you need them to do."

Wanting to hire the right person is not enough. Crosbie reveals that, although top sales talent is *always* in strong demand, the demand is greater now more than ever. "Well prepared companies do their homework by detailing their sales strategy, and clearly understanding how the role fits into the organization, its goals and sales process," she explains.

Strong companies will tell the candidate a great personal story about how the company differentiates itself and show that the company is ready for their success.

Match Candidates with Specific Roles

If you did an honest assessment, could you conclude that your recent sales hires really did not match the role, or that company expectations weren't well defined? Maybe because the position was not well identified, and there wasn't a clear vision and strategy for success? Have you heard the phrase, "[fast-forward the movie](#)"? In your next hire, will anything be different?

Sales roles, and the required activities, are vastly different. There are inside and outside sales, small or large opportunity hunters, account managers, and product or industry specialists, just to name a few of the different roles.

Do you need a door-opener or closer? A specialist who can speak to other client specialists, or someone with the experience and skills to target and negotiate larger deals? Do not answer "all of the above"! Candidates need to match the specific job role.

Sales Recruiting Tips

To avoid the trap of recruiting salespeople regardless of whether they fit your sales container, follow these sales recruiting tips to avoid hiring your next wrong lid.

1. First, build a new revenue plan for the position accounting for the structure of your sales organization. Detail the expectations and ask this series of questions:

What responsibility does the sales rep play in lead generation?

How much support will be provided in the opportunity development process and in building pricing and solutions?

Does the sales rep need to facilitate client on-boarding, or do they pass off the customer to operations right away?

After on-boarding, will you need them to support operations for months?

What is the specific formula for success?

Keep this in mind: holding the salesperson accountable for customer on-boarding and account management will be detrimental to hunting new business, future revenue and commission adjustments will be necessary.

2. Next, draw up an extremely specific job description and **Ideal Candidate Profile** detailing needed experiences, behaviors, and most importantly, skill sets specific to the sales role itself. Do not get caught up in requiring experience in your industry; open your mind that the lid may fit. Focus on finding good professional salespeople and provide them specific industry and product training – widen your net and be as open as possible.

"In fact, 80% of sales success is based on mindset and we most often are only focused on skillset in talent selection – avoid that mistake!" says Crosbie.

3. Then, build a specific candidate qualification process to ensure you evaluate candidates thoroughly. This should include open ended behavioral-based interview questions focused on skill set and mind set. Absolutely include a simulation evaluation so you can see them in action. Roleplays are a great method.
4. Finally, design an effective compensation package creating and rewarding the focus and behaviors you seek. Ensure the plan generates the right incentive, and consistently rewards performance and behaviors throughout the year.

Increase the commission percentage as the performance increases to celebrate the success. And do not be afraid to creatively reward what you want to achieve. Remember, [owners never go broke writing large commission checks!](#)

Jaime Crosbie attests, “Hiring talented salespeople is the hardest job to fill in any company.” So, hire your next successful salesperson by first identifying the right lid that your company needs.

For more sales leadership consulting and sales management, contact Michael Wills, President of Top Line Solutions, at michael@toplinesolutions.org. For your next great sales hire, Jaime Crosbie, Founder of [ProActivate](#), can be reached at jcrosbie@proactivate.net.