

Salesperson Interview

Part of: Habit 2 – Sales Leader

Why you need it: Hiring the right sales people for your business is key to achieving sales excellence

People

02

Read time

10
minutes

Level

Simple

Audience


Sales Leader
& HR

Benefit

**Hiring
Tool**

About this guide

- This is a bank of questions
- Use or adapt the questions that are most suitable for your business and the role.

Tips for success

- Objective evaluation
- Focused hiring priorities
- Raise the bar – is this leader capable of doubling your sales?

What you'll get out of it

Structured interview that will give you the most value from your time with the candidate.

Useful links

- [People: Capability](#)
- [People Overview](#)
- [Sales Excellence](#)
- [Sales Excellence toolkit](#)

Salesperson Interview Guide

Instructions

This tool is a guide for interviewing a salesperson in a Diploma business.

Select questions suitable for your business context.

Focus: Attitude, alongside skill

Evaluation: ensure evidence based evaluation.

1. Attitude and Mindset (Hunter, Competitive, Driven, Resourceful)

- Describe the last time you pursued a customer or opportunity that seemed unlikely. What drove you to keep going?
- Tell me about a time when you were told “no” — what did you do next?
- What motivates you most — winning new business, beating a target, or solving a customer’s problem? Why?
- How do you stay motivated during a long or difficult sales cycle?
- Give an example of how you’ve solved a customer or internal problem creatively without a big budget or obvious resources

2. Customer Intimacy (Deep understanding of customer needs)

- How do you get under the skin of what a customer really cares about?
- Describe a time when you discovered something critical about a customer that they hadn’t explicitly told you.
- What methods do you use to understand a customer’s business beyond the obvious?
- Tell me about the most surprising insight you ever uncovered about a customer’s real pain point.

3. Value Proposition Development (Tailored Solutions)

- How do you tailor your sales approach or solution to different types of customers?
- Describe a time you built a sales pitch around a customer’s unspoken needs rather than their stated ones.
- What do you believe makes a value proposition truly compelling?
- How do you test whether a customer is really seeing the value you’re offering?

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4. Relationship Building Skills (Trust and Influence)

- Tell me about a customer relationship you built from scratch. What was your first move?
- How do you handle a customer who is difficult to connect with?
- What's your strategy for maintaining relationships once a deal is closed?
- Give an example of a time you turned a sceptical customer into an advocate.

5. Confident and Bold (Negotiation Courage)

- Describe the toughest negotiation you've been part of — what made it tough, and how did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time you had to push back against a customer request.
- When you feel uncomfortable in a negotiation, how do you manage that feeling and still perform?
- How do you know when to walk away from a deal?

6. Discipline (Consistency)

- What routines or habits do you have to keep yourself consistent day to day?
- Give an example of when you delivered results by sticking to a process rather than chasing perfection.
- How do you stay productive even when you're not feeling 100% motivated?
- Tell me about a time you made progress by “doing the work” rather than waiting for the perfect plan.

7. Learning and Open to Feedback (Coachability)

- Tell me about a piece of tough feedback you received. What did you do with it?
- How do you seek out opportunities to improve your sales skills?
- Whose sales style have you observed or learned from — what did you pick up?
- Describe a time you adapted your approach based on feedback or observation.

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8. Alert and Responsive (Proactive Problem–Spotting)

- Tell me about a time you spotted a problem early and took action before it became critical.
- What signs do you look for that indicate a deal might be going sideways?
- How do you stay close enough to your pipeline/customers to react quickly when needed?

9. Planning and Organising (Effective time use)

- Walk me through how you plan your week to manage both prospecting and closing activities.
- Describe a time when careful planning directly contributed to a win.
- What tools or methods do you use to stay organised and ahead of deadlines?
- How do you prioritise when everything feels urgent?

10. Commercial Acumen (Sales contribution to business)

- What KPIs beyond your sales target do you keep an eye on, and why?
- Describe how you balance winning deals with making sure they're commercially viable for the business.
- How do you decide if a piece of business is worth pursuing?

11. Target Delivery (Exceeding Goals)

- Tell me about a time you exceeded a tough sales target. What was key to your success?
- How do you reset after missing a target or losing a deal?
- What's your approach to goal setting for yourself beyond company targets?

12. Teamwork (Collaborating for Customer Success)

- Give an example of a time you worked closely with technical, service, or support teams to win or grow a customer.
- How do you balance individual targets with teamwork?
- Describe a time when collaboration helped you win a deal you couldn't have closed alone.

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13. Ethics (Doing Business the Right Way)

- Have you ever faced a situation where winning a deal would have required compromising your ethics? What did you do?
- What does ethical selling mean to you?
- Describe a time when you prioritised doing the right thing over hitting your target.

Technical Skills

14. Technical Knowledge and Application (Credibility, not the Engineer)

- How do you balance having enough technical knowledge without overwhelming the customer?
- Describe how you prepare yourself to sell technical products you're not an expert in.
- Tell me about a time you had to work with technical experts to close a deal.

15. Lead Generation and Prospecting

- Describe your approach to finding new leads.
- How do you qualify prospects quickly and effectively?
- What's the most creative method you've used to generate new business?

16. Consultative Selling and Storytelling

- How do you move a customer from initial interest to feeling that you're the right partner?
- Tell me about a time you used a story or analogy to help a customer see the value in your solution.
- Describe your approach to asking questions that uncover deep customer needs.

17. Negotiation, Value-Selling and Closing Skills

- Walk me through a recent negotiation where price was a major issue. How did you protect margin?
- Describe how you position the value of your solution rather than justifying the price.
- What are your strategies for closing deals that seem stuck or delayed?
- Tell me about a time you turned a pricing objection into a value discussion.