

Sales Director Interview

Part of: Habit 2 – Sales Leader

Why you need it: Hiring the right sales leader for your business is make or break.

People

02

Read time

10
minutes

Level

Simple

Audience


MD & 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: Sales Leader](#)
- [People Overview](#)
- [Sales Excellence](#)
- [Sales Excellence toolkit](#)

Sales Director Interview Guide

1. Value-Add Business Model Comprehension and Experience

- Tell us about a value-add distribution business you've worked in. What was the value-add, and how did it shape the sales strategy?
- How do you differentiate a value-add model from a pure product distributor in the eyes of the customer?
- How do you measure and protect the value-add in a competitive market?
- Share an example where the value-add was under pressure — how did you defend or evolve it?

2. Growth Strategy

- Share an example where you doubled (or significantly grew) a business — what were the strategic moves behind that growth?
- How do you balance growing existing accounts with expanding into new ones?
- What's your approach to launching into a new market or vertical?
- When organic growth has stalled, what diagnostic steps do you take?
- How have you continued to deliver growth in market downturns?

3. Customer Intimacy and Staying Close to the Customer

- How do you personally stay close to customers as a sales leader?
- What systems or routines have you put in place to ensure the voice of the customer is heard throughout the business?
- Share an example where deep customer understanding led to a breakthrough win or retention success.
- How do you gather, use, and share customer insights to shape sales strategy and execution?
- How do you balance customer intimacy with the need to scale the business and grow fast?

4. Customer and Market Segmentation

- How have you successfully segmented customers and markets to target the best opportunities?
- Walk us through a time when smart segmentation helped you outperform competitors.
- What signals do you look for when identifying new target segments for growth?
- How do you balance focus (core segments) and experimentation (new segments)?

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5. Sales Process: Design and Embedding

- Describe how you have designed a sales process to move customers from interest to action — what worked, what didn't?
- How do you embed 'magic touches' into the sales process to differentiate the customer experience?
- How do you ensure sales process design makes it easier for both the customer to buy and your team to sell?
- How do you collaborate with operations, service, and technical teams to deliver consistently for customers?
- Price can be a hard conversation — how do you train and support your teams to win price in a competitive market?
- Share an example where your team won business at a premium because of process excellence.
- How have you used technology to improve Sales Process or customer experience?
- Describe how you've successfully grown share of wallet with major customers?

6. People: Building a Winning Sales Organisation

- How have you structured a sales organisation for high growth? What are the key roles and why?
- Tell us about a time you transformed sales capability — how did you assess, upgrade, and build the team?
How did you manage the risk of disruption to customers?
- Give an example of when you created a culture of accountability, performance, and energy?
- How do you design incentives that drive the right behaviours without creating unintended consequences?

7. Execution

- What do you expect to see in a well-executed sales organisation?
- How do you design and run a high-performing funnel or pipeline management process?
- How do you spot early signs that the sales funnel or pipeline health is weakening?
- What KPIs do you believe matter most in managing a sales organisation toward growth and profitability?
- Describe the sales performance routines (meetings, reviews, dashboards) you have used to drive consistency and discipline.
- What's your philosophy on CRM and data discipline in the sales organisation?

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8. Leadership Style

- How would your team describe your leadership style in a high-pressure, high-growth environment?
- How do you build and maintain a hunter mindset in the team without creating burnout or churn?
- Share an example where your understanding of human motivation helped a struggling performer turn around.
- How do you stay close to the action without becoming a micromanager?
- Tell us about a time you had to be bold and brave in your leadership — what was at risk, and what was the outcome?
- How do you balance humility and boldness as a senior leader?
- Describe a time when you led a sales organisation through a significant market shift.
- How do you balance core execution with innovation and experimentation in your sales approach?

9. Performance Execution and Financial Discipline

- What's your approach to managing the P&L — what numbers do you live and die by?
- Share a time you shifted the financial performance of a sales organisation — what levers did you pull?
- How do you ensure growth is sustainable and not just a short-term spike?
- How do you ensure you invest in future growth whilst maintaining P&L discipline?
- How do you coach your team to think commercially, not just in terms of deals won?

10. M&A Experience

- Have you been involved in integrating an acquisition from a sales perspective? What were the biggest challenges?
- What's your approach to assessing the commercial health of an acquisition target?
- How do you balance protecting the core business while bringing a new acquisition onboard?

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Closing Challenge

What would your first 90 days look like to put us on track to double our business in 3–5 years?

Model-Specific Questions

Longer Sales Cycle (Complex/Consultative)

- How do you design sales processes and teams for long, complex sales cycles?
- How do you maintain momentum in a long-cycle sale and prevent opportunity drift?
- How do you coach your team to build consensus across multiple decision-makers?

Transactional (Fast-Moving/Volume-Based)

- How do you optimise for speed without losing quality in a high-volume, transactional sales model?
- What routines do you put in place to manage a high-velocity funnel and prevent lead wastage?
- How do you encourage repeat purchases and loyalty in a fast-moving environment?

Marketing and E-Commerce

- How do you see the role of marketing in supporting a high-performance sales organisation?
- Share an example of how sales and marketing collaboration led to accelerated growth.
- What's your approach to integrating e-commerce as a channel within a broader sales strategy?
- How do you balance traditional sales activities with the growing importance of digital and e-commerce touchpoints?