

March 2006: How to Hire a Sales Superstar

How to Hire a Sales Superstar

Two character traits drive the superstar; they are both critical for success, and work together perfectly. The first is empathy and the second is self esteem.

Empathy

Top producers need to bond with others, to find something valuable about every person. They keep looking at their clients' needs in every way, trying to find more and more ways to serve and please the clients. Empathy is a key trait of successful salespeople, and so part of your interview process must be specifically designed to test the extent of their empathy.

Self esteem

Great results come from people with super strong self-esteem. Studies show that 52% of salespeople give up after only one rejection. Only 4% will try more than four times. Yet today, it takes an average of 8.4 rejections to get to a meeting!

Another aspect of a strong self esteem is personal ambition. Hire someone who innovates, expands upon and improves every single task you assign them.

The screening process

When you place an advertisement for a sales superstar, be prepared to search for the right person. Firstly, age and background are not relevant. Secondly, ask for a superstar. For example you could request in your advertisement: Don't even call unless you are an overachiever and can prove it.

There is no need to request a resume in your advertisement. Whenever I run an ad, I spend two hours per day for five straight days doing nothing but screening calls. I make it a point to talk directly to the respondents on the telephone before interviewing them. I ask them, "Tell me why you think you're a superstar." I then deliberately act unimpressed and slightly abrasive. If I intimidate them over the phone, I brush them off quickly. If they can't talk their way into an interview, what makes you think they'll talk their way into a meeting with a client?

The interview: relax, probe, attack

In an interview, the interviewee is the product, so they must present themselves with confidence and assure you that they are the one you're looking for.

Relax: Once a candidate has talked their way in for an interview, begin by giving them every opportunity to show their best side by helping them to relax. Interview candidates in at least two different locations and by at least two different people.

Probe: Explain in the interview that that you 'hire' based upon psychological profile rather than background. Ask about their childhood, their mother, their father, and questions about how they grew up. Ask for situations in which they showed true grit or overachieved in some way. If they become uncomfortable, you don't have a superstar.

Attack: Finally, to discover if they really are a superstar you need to attack. Say to the candidate, "To be truthful, I don't get the impression you're really a superstar." Be tactful, but suggest that your candidate doesn't have what it takes. You will be amazed at how many people crumble under the pressure. Just when you think you have the perfect candidate, you tell them that you don't think they have the stuff and they suddenly agree and thank you for your time. Let that person go. Superstars never crumble.

Reward your superstar

The last aspect to hiring top talent is to create a performance-based relationship with little or no base pay. A superstar will excel under such a reward structure.

How to never get top producers in your company

I once had a client that hired 'by committee'. This is where the salesperson had to be interviewed by the existing staff. The interviewers would all have to vote unanimously or the candidate would not be hired. The result? No one wanted the superstars to get the job because they feared the competition. This company hired a lot of very nice people who couldn't sell.



Contact

722 Anzac Highway, Glenelg,
South Australia 5045

Phone: 08 8376 3644

Fax: 08 8376 3655

Email: invest@properadvice.com.au

Brian Lucas

MFinPlan.CFP.Dip.FP
CPMgr.EO

brian@properadvice.com.au

Chris Parsons, Dip.FP

chris@properadvice.com.au

Testimonials

Dear Brian,

Thank you for the great talk on creating and keeping loyal clients.

I am certainly going to implement the ideas, you talked about.

I specially liked the point of turning your clients into "promoters of your business"

It sounds a great way to get ongoing referrals.

It will be fantastic to report back to you in 12 months time on how successful I have been.

Keep up the good work!

Thanks again

Graeme H