

SALES TACTICS SERIES

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10,000 sales people



Great Sales People
Interview
Questions

How to identify the
right characteristics



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How to identify the
right characteristics

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Interview questions & score card

The complete 22 characteristics of a great salesperson.

Read why these characteristics are important at: OnePageCRM.com/sales-resources

1. Coachability

- “Tell me about a time when you knew you were right but you still had to follow directions.”
- At the end of the interview ask “How do you think you did?”
This shows how self-aware they are, which has proven to be a strong success factor in sales. Then give your feedback. This gives you a chance to see how the candidate takes feedback and how coachable he/she is. In their second or third stage interview do they demonstrate taking on your feedback and addressing any issues?

2. Great salespeople can break down complexity (teach).

- “Tell me a story about: why you want to move, mistakes you have made, etc.”
Explicitly use the word ‘story.’ If they can’t tell a story, then that’s a red flag suggests sales author and podcast host Andy Paul.
- “Explain something to me”.
Perhaps the last product they sold or the market they sold to.

3. They can write.

- Ask the salesperson to write an outreach email to a sample prospect. Or even before you meet them, you can use the candidate’s cover letter for the position.
- Check their writing ability by running the text through tools like Grammarly, or Hemingway Editor.
Yesware suggests running it through the Flesch-kincaid readability test, which is designed to indicate how difficult a reading passage in English is to understand.

4. Know how to handle customer objections.

- Tell me about a time when you had to think on your feet when a sales proposal was not going your way?”
- “How do you typically evaluate the needs of your customer when you first meet them?”

5. Able to handle rejection.

- “Tell me about a recent sale you lost. What happened and what did you learn from it?” *(Suggests Jill Konrath of Agile Selling)*
- “Tell me about a game or sports match you lost. Or a time when a situation didn’t turn out as you expected?”

6. Process driven.

- “In your current sales role, what metrics do you use to keep yourself on track and achieve your goals?”
(Forbes <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kensundheim/2013/09/17/50-questions-to-ask-before-hiring-sales-employees/2/#dae7d661fe9b>)
- “How do you organise your day, week and year? Can you share an example?”

7. Impeccable about following up.

- “How would you approach a situation in which a qualified prospect is not answering your email?”
- How many times would you reach out to a prospect if they were not replying to you?

8. Inter-team communication.

- “What’s your take on collaboration within a sales team?”
- “Give me an example of a team disagreement you’ve had. How did the team resolve the issue? What part did you play?”
(Yesware <http://www.yesware.com/blog/sales-interview-questions-and-answers/>)

9. They ask questions.

- This should become obvious during the interview. Does the salesperson ask you to explain your questions? Do they try to dig deeper to understand what type of information you are looking for or do they jump in and just keep talking?
- What are some of your favourite questions to ask prospects?

10. Great sales people listen.

- Give them silence. Do they jump in to fill the space or do they wait for you to talk?
- Notice what kind of questions they ask? Do they lead you to open up and speak your mind?

11. Genuinely curious.

- “How do you stay up to speed on the news and trends in your industry?”
- “What books or blogs have had the most impact on your sales career? What have you put into practice?”

12. Objective.

- “Describe for me how the decision makers in your prospect’s company make a decision to buy?
Source: Greg Alexander Sales Benchmark Index for the 20 best interview questions.

13. Comfortable talking about money.

- “Can you tell me what salary you are currently on or what you would require for this position?”

14. Show up prepared.

- “What do you know about me?”
According to Trish Bertuzzi of The Bridge Group, you need to be cautious of candidates who ask basic questions that could be easily answered by Siri or a two-minute Google search. “One candidate we had asked one of our founders how long he has been with the company... #Fail.”
- “How do you research prospects and companies before calling them?” or “What do you do to prepare for a sales call?”

15. Able to pick up a phone.

- Sales Call Reluctance can be objectively measured through a calibrated assessment tool called the Sales Preference Questionnaire .

16. Great time management.

- “List out the tasks you do in your typical day and rank them according to the return you get.”
- “Define a high value prospect.”

17. Take responsibility.

- “We all fail. Can you share your most recent failure? Why did you fail, and what did you learn from it?”

18. Deep understanding of the market.

- “Tell me what you know about our clients and their clients.”

19. Ensures all stakeholders are on board.

- “How do you find out who the main decision makers are?”
A great sales person will not blindly accept an answer like “It is just me.”

Look out for questions like:

“In addition to yourself, who else will be involved in the decision-making process?” “And, what role does each play?”

“Can we get them involved now to ensure that each of their needs/interests are met?”

20. They keep notes and follow up.

- “What types of customer relationship tracking did you implement in your past jobs?”

21. A natural problem solver.

- “Come up with ideas for selling this product or service.
How will you generate leads for this position?
How have you generated leads in the past?
What help do you expect generating leads?”
(Suggested by Alice Heiman, founder and Chief Sales Officer of Alice Heiman, LLC.)
- “What are three adjectives a former client would use to describe you? (Listen for synonyms of ‘helpful’)”.

22. Likeable and trustworthy, but not too agreeable.

- No question here. How does the salesperson make you feel?
Do you like them? Trust them?

Great Salesperson Characteristics Matrix

Use the characteristics matrix when interviewing a sales person to score and compare candidates.

Salesperson name

Total score

Total up the scores from all characteristics.
Where 1 is lowest and 5 is highest.

Notes:

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