

NEVER HIRE A BAD SALESPERSON AGAIN

SELECTING CANDIDATES
WHO ARE ABSOLUTELY
DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

Second
Edition



DR. CHRISTOPHER CRONER
RICHARD ABRAHAM

Before You Get Started...



Greetings! My name is Richard Abraham and I am co-author of the book you are about to read. Just a few words before you get started.

I have owned significant interests in many companies and personally managed three major sales forces. Of all the things I addressed in trying to grow these companies, the most important variable after the development of the product/service offering itself, was the recruitment of salespeople who could successfully close business.

This sounds simple and yet finding and hiring salespeople who can really sell – as opposed to people who literally STEAL your precious time and money without producing to the levels they promised in their interviews – can be incredibly challenging, not to mention frustrating and toxic, to the company as a whole. In fact, the range of wasted money our clients have quoted us for hiring just one bad salesperson varies from \$100,000 to over a million dollars!

I therefore found and challenged a brilliant young psychologist, Dr. Christopher Croner, to find a way to weed out the pretenders and solve for the real producers both in the recruiting process and after people have been hired but are not performing.

Dr. Croner's research, conclusions and recommendations may surprise you, but they can also lead you to a powerful solution, The [DriveTest®](#), which is based upon science and technology, instead of hunch, and can help you bring the goal of building a world class sales organization to life! Whatever you decide, I hope you enjoy our book. Dr. Croner has done a terrific job with his research and I have tried my best to translate it into clear and practical application for those of you whose businesses depend on hiring high-performance salespeople.

Never Hire a Bad Salesperson Again is required reading for all my sales leaders. When we hire, we reference this book. All of our final candidates must have examples of Drive before we hire them.

—Edwin D. Robles Jr., SVP, Head of Sales,
Cengage Learning

This book really resonates with me. It offers solid conclusions from strong research, and a no-nonsense guide to separating the pretenders from potential sales providers in the selection process. I highly recommend this as an important new resource for all hiring managers.

—Kevin Cushing, President, Strategic Ventures
Group, Alliance Franchise Brands

If you are responsible for recruiting salespeople, buy this book. It will save you a lot of stress and hassle in the interview process. I learned exactly what to say, and, more importantly, what not to say, to make sure I get the most accurate read on a candidate. This book has sharpened my approach and accuracy.

—Gary Napotnik, Managing Director, HDJ &
Associates, Inc.

When it comes to hiring salespeople, the cost of failure is simply unforgivable. There's no one better to provide direction on reducing that risk than Dr. Croner. Buy this book. Read it. Use it.

—Tammy Bitterman, Founder and Managing
Partner, The Acceleration Group

Improving sales force productivity is one of the most powerful drivers of organic growth and share gain. This book provides managers with valuable tools to impact this issue early—at the time of hiring.

—Ross Rosenberg, Vice President, Business
Development & Marketing, Danaher
Corporation

Hiring the right salesperson is one of the most important and difficult decisions managers make. Hiring a candidate who lacks Drive can have a dramatic negative impact on any sales team. With so much at stake, sales managers would be wise to follow this practical guide to getting it right.

—Kelly Grindle, Vice President, Motors Group,
Johnson Outdoors

Salespeople have tremendous impact on the fortunes of an enterprise. Croner and Abraham have provided an eminently practical guide that will prove invaluable to anyone looking to build a top-performing sales staff.

—Thomas Gruenwald, Vice President, Strategic
Resources for Tellabs

Hiring underperforming salespeople creates financial hardship on large companies and small startups alike. This book provides a proven method for selecting talented candidates.

—Neil Witmer, Ph.D., Principal, Witmer & Associates

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SECOND EDITION

DR. CHRISTOPHER CRONER
RICHARD ABRAHAM

*Never Hire a Bad Salesperson Again:
Selecting Candidates Who Are Absolutely Driven to Succeed
Second Edition*

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—*Christopher Croner*

I would like to thank every CEO, entrepreneur, and sales manager I have ever met who shared their triumphs, heartaches, and frustrations in trying to build a world-class sales team. This book is a tool for them, so that they can continue to take risks, invest with confidence, and realize their hard-fought hopes and dreams. Thanks are also owed to my collaborator, Dr. Chris Croner, whose high standards of research and quality have raised the bar for everyone interested in what makes salespeople run. Finally, I would also like to thank my wife, Erin, and my children, Marlena and Katherine, who share and support my passion for knowledge and new ideas.

—*Richard Abraham*

Introduction

You're never there.

—Tiger Woods

Tiger Woods was in an especially good mood. He had recently completed what many golf historians agree was the finest run in his sport's history. Four major titles in a row! Seventeen PGA victories! Record-breaking tournament earnings!

Yet when a reporter from the *Chicago Sun-Times* asked him what was left for him to accomplish, Tiger flashed him an incredulous, “Are you serious?” look that came from deep within the burning soul of a man born to compete—and dominate.

“You're *never* there,” reprimanded Tiger. “You can always be better the next day. That's how I look at golf and how I look at life. You can always, always be better. If you think you can't, then walk, because you have no business being out here if you think you can't get any better. That's how I approach each and every practice session, each and every round I play.”¹

Tiger Woods... Michael Jordan... Jackie Joyner-Kersey... David Beckham . . . each born with God-given gifts of coordination, strength, endurance, and intelligence. Yet such supernatural physical abilities alone are not enough to push these magnificent athletes to the astonishing levels of performance they have achieved in their careers.

No, each superstar shares another ingredient, a white-hot fuel that turbocharges their natural gifts: the electrifying personality characteristic that psychologists call Drive. Drive is the common denominator found in nearly all high-performing achievers in any competitive field. In fact, Drive is so important, and so powerful, that it often pushes less-talented individuals beyond competitors who may have been born with higher skills but lack the burning desire to succeed.

And, as we will demonstrate throughout this book, it is Drive that is the most important characteristic in identifying and selecting people who can successfully sell for a living.

Why is Drive so important to successful selling? Because of all professions, sales requires the most intense self-motivation in the face of rejection, and because sales exerts the most grueling and constant pressure on self-esteem. Only people who love to compete, have supreme confidence in themselves, and are willing to laugh in the face of rejection have the constitution to survive and thrive in this most competitive of business environments.

It has been estimated that up to 50 percent of the people who are currently trying to make their living by selling are in the wrong line of work. They may be

excellent communicators, gregarious, and likable, but they do not have, nor will they ever have, the Drive to provide a meaningful return on the huge investment you make in them. Sadly, a 2014 report by Stephen Bruce, Ph.D., estimated the total annual cost of hiring an underperformer in high-tech sales to be \$2.1 million (including recruiting, training, salary and lost sales).²

This book has been written for business owners, entrepreneurs, and managers who have suffered the frustration and financial heartbreak of placing the success of their life's work in the hands of salespeople who do not have the innate personality characteristics—aka Drive—to deliver.

Now, we would like you to slow down for a moment and read this very, very carefully: *It doesn't have to be that way in your company.* Through proper testing and interviewing techniques, salespeople with Drive *can* absolutely be identified, selected, and motivated to produce consistently, at high levels, for you and for your organization. While it takes time, patience, and discipline, it is possible to stock your team with A and B players—thoroughbreds—who have the intestinal fortitude and the burning will to succeed as high-producing salespeople.

A quick note of caution before we proceed: This book is not for the faint of heart. It is not for the business

owner or manager who does not appreciate the supreme importance of the sales function. It is not for the sales manager who is in denial about the cost of hiring and carrying mediocre performers. It is not for the sales manager who may not have the heart to make tough decisions. These decisions can hurt when it comes to releasing people whom the manager may personally like but who should be pursuing a different line of work, for the benefit of everyone, including the employee.

Identifying, selecting, and retaining Driven salespeople is a rigorous process requiring patience, discipline, and focus. But the payoffs are *huge*, in terms of both higher revenues and lower costs, a combination rarely achievable in other areas of your business.

We therefore invite you to take this journey with us, a journey into the hearts and minds of people who sell for a living. We will show you why some win, some plateau, and some lose. Most importantly, we will show you how you can “stack the deck” with sales athletes who are born to run—for you!

Part One:

Elements of Drive

1

Chapter

Drive: The Foundation of Success

“As much as I was upset at the time, it made me think, Well, I’m going to prove that I can play football professionally.”

—David Beckham

When faced with the ultimate rejection—told by his football coach at age 13 that he would never play for England because he was too small and weak—David Beckham’s resolve only strengthened.¹ Beckham pushed himself to the limit, building speed and endurance, eventually playing for his country over 100 times and becoming one of the greatest players of all time. David Beckham and other high achievers drive themselves *beyond* their limits, not just when the money is on the line but behind the scenes, *every day*. They show their Drive in the relentless course of their preparation, dedication, and training.

Drive—the David Beckham type of Drive—is the most important factor for sales success. In a 1998 analysis of more than 45,000 salespeople, psychology professor Andrew Vinchur and his colleagues found need for achievement, a critical component of Drive, to be more predictive of sales success than any other trait.²

Drive is also essential in unleashing other sales skill sets. To be sure, relationship skills and persuasiveness are important. But these traits are simply not sufficient without Drive. Furthermore, you can provide salespeople with excellent training, but without Drive, the money is largely wasted. While it may seem counterintuitive, you will be better off in the long run if you hire a Driven person who has no sales experience and teach that person your business than if you hire a candidate who has experience but lacks Drive.

While successful salespeople have different styles, they almost always share the Drive personality trait. For example, as reported in 1994 by Geoffrey Brewer, the Gallup Management Consulting Group through two decades of research identified several skills critical to sales success.³ Two of those skills, intense motivation and disciplined work habits, are hallmarks of Drive. Further, in his 2010 book, *Strengths Based Selling*, Brian Brim notes that a Gallup analysis of 250,000 sales reps at 170 companies found that the top 25% of sales performers generated an average of 57% of sales growth over the previous year. Notably, the

bottom 25% of sales performers sold less than the previous year.⁴

Anatomy of a (Sales) Winner

Have you ever had the exquisite pleasure of managing one of the *great* salespeople? You know the type. They come in early and leave late. They drop in on weekends to handle “paperwork.” During the week, they’re always out with customers, on whose behalf they fight tenaciously. On the occasions when they do get rejected, they move on immediately (for surely the next sales call will be successful). And when they smell the goal line—the close—nothing and nobody can hold them back!

In the course of examining our own assessment practice, and considering more than 90 years of research in the sales sector, we now know that there is a consistent formula common to the personality of nearly all successful salespeople. They have three essential traits:

1. They are motivated by a need to achieve outstanding results, and they are willing to do virtually whatever it takes to succeed.
2. They love to compete, both with themselves and with others.
3. They are optimistic, that is, they are certain of their ability to *win*.

These three traits—need for achievement; competitiveness; and optimism—are *all* necessary elements of Drive.

Need for Achievement

Top-gun salespeople have a burning *need* to achieve. They are ambitious, disciplined, and focused on advancement.

You may laugh, at first glance, at the *disciplined* element, since on the surface, great salespeople may seem anything but straitlaced and organized (picture *Top Gun* fighter pilots at the local bar on their day off). But make no mistake about it. When it comes to “the hunt,” great salespeople have the ability to track and capture their prey with the focus and patience of a big cat.

And there is more. Driven salespeople are *never* satisfied. They can never sell enough products, never make enough money. They are insatiable, setting the bar higher and higher, for themselves and, happily, for you.

Competitiveness

Driven salespeople are hardwired to be number one. Like a thoroughbred racehorse, they are always eyeing their peers, always comparing their performance to others. They are out to *win*. They are *born* to win.

Driven salespeople compete with everybody. Even the sale itself is seen, on one level, as a battle of wills with

the buyer, a competition in which the sale signals victory.

This competitiveness is one reason great salespeople are sometimes hard to manage. They even compete, intellectually, with their bosses. But it is a trade-off that must be reconciled because competitiveness is a critical element of Drive, and without Drive, a person simply will not perform to your sales expectations.

Optimism

Optimism is the Driven salesperson's ultimate weapon. Optimism provides the body armor to withstand the inevitable rejections of the selling life. To a great salesperson, rejection is just part of the game, like grounding out in baseball. No problem, because surely the next time at bat will bring a home run.

In an interesting, psychological paradox, optimistic salespeople credit themselves for success but do not take defeat personally. Like astronauts, they have "the right stuff" when it comes to facing down fear and placing risk in a more positive context than most people are able to do.

Recognizing Drive

Need for achievement, competitiveness, and optimism—all are essential to generate the nuclear fission that sales psychologists refer to as Drive. Given such a powerful profile, you would think we would be able to recognize a Driven salesperson when we see

one. But, in a cruel paradox for business owners and managers, *that is often not the case*. Drive is often misunderstood, and it can be faked, for a short time, leading to the waste of hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, in the process. (Hint: it is often the server or the dishwasher at the local restaurant who is working to pay for college, not the campus club president, who has the Drive to succeed as a top-performing salesperson.) In fact, in an eye-opening study by psychology professor Murray Barrick and colleagues, a group of human resources professionals—each of whom had more than 12 years of experience—was *unable* to accurately identify whether job candidates were industrious or persistent in the face of failure.⁵ They thus failed to discern two traits (need for achievement, represented by industriousness, and optimism, represented by persistence in the face of failure) that are key elements of Drive.

So, how do we recognize *real* Drive in candidates or incumbent salespeople? How can we be sure we are not mistaking chutzpah for competitiveness, anxiety for ambition? To find out, let's take a journey together into the heart of a salesperson who is Driven—a journey into the heart of a *winner!*

Summary

- ◆ Research shows that Drive is the most important factor for sales success.
- ◆ Three elements make up Drive: (1) need for achievement, (2) competitiveness, and (3) optimism. All three elements *must* be present for the salesperson to truly show Drive.
- ◆ A company's performance is dependent on the quality of the salespeople it hires, necessitating a much more rigorous screening process to identify and select Driven candidates than many companies currently deploy.

2 Chapter

The Need to Achieve

Tibetan Sherpas tell the story that, moments after reaching the summit of Mount Everest, a climber briefly admired the view, then turned to his partner and said, “OK, now what?”

Insatiable. Never satisfied. Demanding excellence. These are powerful personality characteristics (perhaps not easy to live with, from the point of view of one’s spouse or child) but absolutely critical to the profile of a highly successful salesperson.

Need for achievement is the inner motivation that causes a person to relentlessly pursue excellence. As psychology professor David McClelland and his colleagues reported in their 1987 book, *Human Motivation*, people high in need for achievement want to do well for the *personal satisfaction* achievement

brings.¹ This intense motivation pushes people to set tough but achievable goals, to find innovative solutions, and to take personal responsibility for their performance. In other words, the prescription for a dream salesperson.

As detailed in his 1961 book, *The Achieving Society*, McClelland found an association between high need for achievement and sales ability across several cultures.² In particular, he noted that sales careers are attractive to achievers because salespeople must make decisions about which prospects to call on, take personal responsibility for making calls, choose moderate risks, find creative methods of persuasion, and monitor their success. Supporting McClelland's assertion, University of Memphis psychology professor Andrew Vinchur and his colleagues analyzed the results of 98 previous studies of personality factors that predict sales performance.³ These studies spanned the years 1918 to 1996 and included a total of about 46,000 salespeople. Vinchur's group reported in 1998 that *achievement motivation showed a stronger relationship to sales performance than any other trait*. In a 1999 study at Cornell University, a group led by Renate Soyer also noted that individuals who have a strong need for achievement are likely to thrive in sales.⁴ These researchers found that such individuals *view rejection as constructive criticism, prioritize the customer, and carefully research their competitors*.

In a 2004 study, we tested the personality traits of 89 salespeople in mixed industry sectors, including manufacturing and financial services.⁵ We compared scores on a personality test to sales managers' ratings of each person's performance. Our results supported the research literature: need for achievement was a

more powerful predictor of sales performance than any other trait. Additionally, in a 2005 study, Douglas Amyx and Bruce Alford also tested 312 salespeople from 18 industries, including insurance, IT, and manufacturing.⁶ They found a significant positive relationship between need for achievement and sales performance.

Finally, in a 2015 study, we assessed 175 salespeople in industries ranging from IT to commercial real estate and transportation solutions.⁷ We again found a significant positive correlation between need for achievement scores and manager ratings of sales performance

Testing Need for Achievement

McClelland and his colleagues found two interesting ways to test a person's need for achievement. First, they used the Thematic Apperception Test, which asks users to make up stories about a series of pictures. They reasoned that people's fantasies about the pictures were the best measures of their inner goals and desires. The pictures were all rather ordinary drawings. For example, they included a boy looking down at a violin with a sad expression on his face. But when psychologists looked at the subjects' responses, they found something striking.

People with a high need for achievement told very different stories than the average person. For example, after viewing the violin picture, someone with a low need for achievement would tell a story about how the

boy's parents bought him this boring violin and made him practice every day. He is sick of practicing and wants to smash the violin and go outside to play. The violin is too much work to learn.

However, someone with a high need for achievement would tell a story about a big recital coming up the next day for which the boy is practicing. He is dog-tired from practicing all night, but he wants to get in one more hour before dozing off. Then the following day, he gives the performance of a lifetime!

McClelland's second test to show need for achievement involved a seemingly simple experiment. He asked volunteers to throw rings onto pegs—without telling them how far back to stand. Most subjects threw from random distances. But the high achievers in the group measured the distance to produce an ideal challenge (not too easy but not impossible). Achievers love a tough task at which they can excel.

Through his work, McClelland concluded that many people do not possess a strong need for achievement. That means we need to be expert at selecting the genuine article when it comes to salespeople.

The Birth of Desire

Where does this need to achieve come from? Like most personality traits, it is heavily influenced by a person's childhood experiences. In his 1997 book, *Psychological*

Self-Help, clinical psychologist Clayton Tucker-Ladd noted that achievers' parents or guardians are praising, supportive, optimistic, hardworking, and success oriented.⁸ They expect each member of the family to do a share of the chores and follow household rules. Dinner discussions are about the child's work and studies. But these achieving kids are not always star students. They excel at whatever is important to them in accomplishing their goals. If they see academics as important, they excel there. If it's a sports career they're after, they excel at athletics. Others may devote their time to entrepreneurial activities, such as running a lemonade stand or making T-shirts. This pattern continues throughout such people's lives, right up to the moment they are sitting across from your desk in the job interview. That's why using the right set of questions will help you figure out whether a candidate is the genuine article or a sloth in a tiger's clothing.

Unfortunately, there is a catch. (There's always a catch.) Even with the best questions available, it is very, very difficult to determine who has the *real*, deep *need to achieve* and who merely "acts like" they have this need. Let's take a moment here to distinguish the "pretenders" from the "producers."

Watch Out for Fakers

Some candidates in sales may make a good first impression but nevertheless lack the critical need for achievement to stay focused and productive for the long haul. We have identified several of these imposters, whom we classify as *narcissists*, *ultra-type A*

personalities, and flatliners.

Narcissists

Narcissists are people with inflated egos who can *seem* to be ambitious, persuasive, and self-confident in a sales interview. However, deep down, they harbor intense insecurities which ultimately cause them to fail as salespeople. As Soyer's group pointed out, narcissists often can determine what you, as the employer, are looking for during an interview and then *mimic* the prototype. Narcissists can be incredibly charming, which you would think would help them succeed if hired. But their brief spurt of charm is not enough, because sales is ultimately a marathon, and the narcissist is usually a sprinter.

A skilled narcissist is very hard to detect without proper testing and interviewing techniques (which we will discuss in chapters 7-9). For now, be aware that the need to achieve is a legitimate, deep-seated trait that pushes high achievers and great salespeople over the long haul, not just during the lovefest of the interview and the hiring process, when the narcissist often stands out—for the moment.

Ultra-Type A Personalities

While it may seem confusing on the surface, there is a critical difference between what psychologists diagnose as extreme *type A* personalities and people

with a deep need to achieve. When it comes to salespeople, the distinction boils down to this: while extreme type A people can be achievement oriented, they can also be impatient, irritable, and hostile. These characteristics can lead to depression and dissatisfaction with their jobs, bosses, or clients—hardly the team orientation necessary for a company to grow and prosper as an organization.

Occasionally, a client will tell us, “We are looking for type As.” As advisers, we like to recast that goal to “We are looking for A players,” our criterion being a *need to achieve*, not a need to make everybody else crazy. Most of the best salespeople we know keep their emotions well under control, even as they relentlessly drive for achievement. They can be prima donnas, but they do not compromise their performance with excess collateral damage.

Flatliners

We received a call from a printer in Minneapolis. His story was all too familiar. Steve, his highest-paid salesperson, had plateaued. “I don’t get it,” lamented our client. “This is the third year in a row Steve has hit the same numbers. Our business is growing. We are giving him more resources. But we can’t seem to light a fire under him to raise his game.” Steve is what we call a *flatliner*. Unlike the mountain climber who reached the pinnacle of Mount Everest, Steve is satisfied with the lovely view at 10,000 feet. Steve may be motivated by money but not by more than he needs to lead a peaceful life *below your expectations*. He has designed a certain lifestyle, and he earns just enough to support it.

Now, there is nothing wrong with Steve as a person. Who's to say he hasn't achieved the "balance" we are all looking for in life? *But he is not going to grow your business.* You may want to retain him as a solid contributor, but to grow, you will need to find another horse to bet on, one with the burning need to achieve.

Sales managers sometimes make a mistake in thinking that the antidote for underachievers is, ultimately, more money. But special promotions and higher commissions rarely work for flatliners. The real A players will love it, but they would have performed anyway because they are self-motivated and do not need your help.

It's Not About the Money

For the narcissists, ultra-type As, and flatliners, their underperformance is not about the money. It's about their inability to sustain high-quality performance over time, under any circumstances (or compensation formulas). They will not, or cannot, apply the dedication nor make the sacrifices necessary to lift your business and your investment in them on their shoulders.

On the other hand, salespeople with a strong need for achievement want to do well for its own sake. Their primary goal is achievement, not money. To an achiever, money is like points on a scoreboard. Just as Michael Jordan was not motivated simply to score points, top salespeople are not motivated by money alone. They simply use their income to keep track of how well they are doing (assuming that their

compensation is competitive with the market).

Our sales heroes, our real achievers, are born to run, not only against their own insatiable expectations but against others as well. And not only do they need to *achieve*, they *love to compete*, keep score, and win. Let's find out why and discover how to recognize this thirst for competition in our next chapter.

Summary

- ◆ Ninety years of research have shown *need for achievement* to be a critical component of sales success.
- ◆ This basic desire for personal excellence is especially important in sales, where the freedom from daily supervision can attract slackers who want a free ride.
- ◆ Sales careers also attract self-centered narcissists, ultra-type A personalities, and flatliners, all of whom can be charming in a sales interview. It is imperative that managers know how to weed these people out early to avoid the hemorrhaging of resources they will likely cause if hired.

3

Chapter

The Thrill of Competition

“We were killing time, and I beat Michael (Jordan) in a casual game of pool. You would have thought I stole his last dollar. He made me keep playing, game after game, until he finally beat me.”

—Phil Jackson

We know from our last chapter that Driven salespeople have a deep-seated need to achieve. It motivates them to train longer, try harder, and never give up when it comes to reaching their goals and objectives in life. Now comes the second piece of the puzzle: their passion for *competition*. People with Drive love to *compete*. They relish the thrill of the race, the rush of winning, virtually anytime, anyplace. And, like Michael Jordan,

they *hate* losing. In fact, their loathing for losing is often as strong as their lust for winning—a potent combination indeed.

We have all read stories about older professional athletes who attempt to make comebacks, well past their prime. Or others who attempt to take up a different sport, such as professional golf, later in their careers. These people cannot live happily without competition. The lucky ones find new and equally exciting ways to compete as they get older.

Competitiveness is Crucial

Psychologists define *competitiveness* as the desire to win and to outperform others. Competitive salespeople monitor their performance constantly to make sure they are surpassing their peers. They work hard to prepare for a task to make sure that they outperform others.

To a competitive salesperson, the sale is often viewed as a contest of wills with the customer. Essentially, it is a contest between the salesperson's product or service and the customer's resistance or inertia, hence the expression "winning the sale." This desire to convince others of the validity of one's opinion is also a form of competitiveness. Organizational psychologist Herbert Greenberg and his colleagues in 2001 labeled this aspect of competitiveness *ego-drive*, or an individual's desire to persuade

others. They noted that this trait is crucial for success and *impossible* to teach.¹

Competitiveness Research

In a 1994 paper, Geoffrey Brewer, editorial director of *Gallup Press*, reported a survey of a half million salespeople from companies including Federal Express, Strycker Surgical, and Home Savings of America, which concluded that competitiveness is an essential trait for sales success.²

University of Memphis marketing professor Balaji Krishnan and his colleagues conducted a study to find out why competitiveness improves sales performance.³ They tested 182 real estate salespeople and reported in 2003 their finding that competitiveness combined with other key personality traits caused salespeople to work harder and subsequently outperform their peers.

In a 1998 study, University of Houston marketing professor Steven Brown and his colleagues tested 158 medical supplies salespeople and found that highly competitive salespeople who saw the company climate as competitive consistently set higher goals.⁴ Conversely, salespeople who were low in competitiveness consistently set lower goals, regardless of what they thought of the company climate.

In a 2016 study, Michigan State University professor Wyatt Schrock and colleagues, extended this research

testing 117 human resource services salespeople. As expected, this analysis indicated that competitiveness was significantly correlated with higher sales performance.⁵ However, this effect was increased when the salesperson described their environment as highly competitive. Similarly, a 2021 study by economics professors Ophy Quamilla and Gugup Kismono at the University of Gadjah Mada, tested 61 automotive salespeople, and found a significant correlation between competitiveness and sales volume.⁶ This study also found that competitive salespeople who viewed their environment as competitive showed stronger sale performance. These results indicate that companies that both hire competitive salespeople and foster a competitive environment give themselves a strong advantage.

Taken together, previous research shows that *competitiveness leads to greater effort and better performance in sales*. Many sales managers realize this fact but make a crucial mistake: they assume that a former athlete will make a great salesperson. That is a myth, pure and simple. Most sales managers have hired one or two former high school or college athletes who once set the gridiron or basketball court on fire with their athletic prowess. Then, months down the road, something shocking happens. These managers find out that a number of ex-athletes do not cut it as producers. What is going on here?

Competitiveness is not enough!

In reality, there is no guarantee that former athletes will be good salespeople. Remember, competitiveness

is only *one* element of Drive. Although it is an essential trait, competitiveness is not enough for sales success. Top performers must also have the need for achievement we discussed in chapter 2. Need for achievement is what causes star athletes to set their sights on a championship instead of just surpassing their peers. Need for achievement is what puts superstar status in the crosshairs of top salespeople. These two factors work together to motivate what we call *Competitive Achievers*.

In our work with sales managers, we have gotten to know some extraordinary salespeople who exemplify Competitive Achievement. These people are consistently ranked above their peers and produce remarkable numbers. Our interviews with them have shown that the combination of achievement motivation and competitiveness holds the key to generating consistent, superior performance. We will briefly describe two such examples.

Case Study 1

One such sales star, Greg, was a sales representative for a large manufacturing firm. He consistently outperformed his peers and was a mentor to the newer salespeople in the position. As we were discussing his work habits, he said, “I exceed my manager’s expectations by working 70 hours a week. I feel good every month when management sees my numbers. I’m motivated to please our CEO. I’m also competitive every day with Jack [the company’s other top salesperson]. I beat him in two of the last three months . . . It’s nice to make the money also.” Here we can see

the combination of need for achievement and competitiveness delivering the necessary one-two punch. Greg sets the bar for his own accomplishments high and does whatever it takes to meet his goals. He is also constantly competing for the spot of top dog on the sales team. It is clear in Greg's record-setting track record that the combination of strong achievement motivation and competitiveness gives him the Drive to succeed.

Case Study 2

Another top salesperson with a hydraulics company, Janice, granted us some time to discuss how she consistently achieved stellar numbers and surpassed her peers. She said, "In every sale, I go in with a purpose and a focus: is my action making money or losing money? I'm very competitive. I want to know where I stand overall [compared to other sales reps]; I was *born* with Drive."

Again, here we clearly see the intense love of competition. Janice is focused on being the top salesperson in her company. Her need for achievement keeps her motivated to set performance goals much higher than those of the average rep.

Both of these top performers amaze their managers and are the envy of their peers. Both of them achieve remarkable results and reap significant rewards. And it is clear that both rely on the combination of competitiveness and need for achievement as the foundation of their success. Without these two traits, neither could attain such high levels of performance.

Fortunately, passion for competition is relatively easy to identify through the course of proper testing and

interviewing. While our old friend the narcissist can *claim* to love competition, we can flush that element out with questions which put this person in a position to choose between a competitive situation and alternatives that require less risk and less reward.

It's important to remember that there is a key difference between a love for competition and simply a desire to win at all costs. The former involves the lust for a good game, the invigoration and growth that come from the competitive process itself.

Our A and B salespeople never stop competing and consequently never stop developing. Wise business owners and sales managers feed this tempest with internal and external competitive challenges that bring out the best in their top producers and often help identify those who cannot, or will not, engage. They know that the big dogs love to keep score, relish feedback, and thrive on the thrill of the game.

The latter can involve shortcuts and easy routes to a shallow victory.

At this point, we have two parts of the Drive model for high-performance salespeople in place. Let's now move to lock in the third critical element—the characteristic that pulls it all together—the top salesperson's supreme sense of self-assurance: *optimism*.

Summary

- ◆ Competitiveness is crucial to sales success. This finding has been supported by academic research and our extensive practice.
- ◆ *Competitiveness* must be combined with the *need for achievement* to create a high-performing Competitive Achiever. Such a person is motivated to achieve and loves to compete.
- ◆ Hiring a former athlete is no guarantee that you will have a top performer. The person must also have the *ambition* to match the desire to win.
- ◆ Competitiveness and need for achievement are still not enough to give a salesperson *lasting Drive*. Optimism, the third element of Drive, is also crucial.

4

Chapter

Optimism

Years ago, when I played high school basketball, I had the “privilege” of guarding our state’s best player, a real gunner whom I “held” to 49 points. Later, we became good friends, and I asked him if he ever felt discouraged if he missed a shot. He said, “Actually, it’s just the opposite. I’m around a 50 percent shooter. If I miss a shot, I can’t wait to take the next one because I’m absolutely sure I’ll make it.”

—Richard Abraham

You would think that the combination of a burning *need to achieve* and a *love of competition* would be enough to drive our super salespeople to succeed. But even some of our Competitive Achievers won’t make the cut because of a brutal anomaly: while they yearn for success, they are *terrified of failure*. They are so terrified,

in fact, that fear blocks the realization of hopes and dreams that their skills could otherwise achieve.

Years of testing have revealed that salespeople who *expect to succeed every time* will *close* far more often than those who are afraid of the alternative. In fact, salespeople's expectations of success or failure ultimately determine whether they can unleash the full power of their natural talent. When they think about tomorrow's meeting with a key prospect, they see only the close. To them, there is no other possibility!

This sense of certainty comes from the third and final facet of Drive: *optimism*. More than 30 years of research have shown that *optimism is a critical element for sales success*. Salespeople with optimism have two key advantages over their pessimistic peers:

1. *Optimists expect to win*. When they think about the sales call tomorrow, they *see* the close. This positive visualization sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy of success.
2. *Optimists are thick-skinned*. They don't take rejection personally. They interpret a failure as something temporary, unusual, and outside of their control. They have the constitution to put rejection in its proper perspective.

In a 1999 review of 30 years of optimism research,

Peter Schulman, research director of the Martin Seligman Research Alliance, discussed the relationship between optimism and motivation.¹ He noted that “the ability to succeed and the desire to succeed are not always enough without the belief that one *will* succeed. Someone with the talent of a Mozart can come to nothing in the absence of that belief. This is particularly true when the task at hand is challenging and requires persistence to overcome obstacles and setbacks (like sales!).”

Although optimism seems like an obvious necessity, many managers don’t recognize or emphasize its importance when recruiting salespeople. Even as trained psychologists, *we* learned about the supreme importance of optimism the hard way.

Several years ago, we performed a psychological evaluation on a potential salesperson for a hardware leasing company (let’s call him Chuck). The interview showed that Chuck was absolutely a Competitive Achiever. He had a track record of going for the gold and for working as hard as necessary to get it. He also had other personality traits we were looking for in salespeople, so we recommended him for the position. However, after about six months, he began to bog down. Though Chuck had lofty goals and wanted to be at the top of the sales team, his sales did not match his ambitions.

We and our client were confused. How could someone who was clearly a Competitive Achiever, with such other necessary traits as persuasiveness and relationship and organizational skills, not make the grade? Something else was obviously missing—but

what? As we dug deeper, the mystery began to reveal itself. Chuck's sales manager told us that in a recent sales meeting, a reluctant prospect became the subject of conversation. Chuck thought this topic was a waste of time, saying that the prospect clearly did not want to buy because he did not understand the value of the service being offered. Chuck wanted to change the subject to bigger goals and warmer leads. But one of his peers stopped him: "Wait a minute; this is a huge opportunity to educate this customer about the value of our service. This could be a profitable client, and I'm sure we can land him." Chuck just looked perplexed.

Clearly, Chuck was motivated, but he lacked the *optimism* to keep pushing. He loved to succeed in general but just did not have the optimism necessary to succeed at the rough-and-tumble game of overcoming rejections. In the end, he felt so bad about not reaching his goals that he offered to pay the sales manager back every dollar of salary he received. Chuck's manager admired his character but did not take him up on the offer. Chuck and his company parted ways, amicably, having learned a valuable lesson.

This incident from our early days of practice caused us to research the optimism trait in depth. We learned that a salesperson can be highly motivated but lack the sense of certainty that he or she will succeed. Without optimism, Chuck and thousands like him have struggled desperately in sales careers—aiming high, wanting to do well, but unable to muster the confidence to persevere and succeed.

The Evidence for Optimism

Martin Seligman and his colleagues pioneered the study of optimism in salespeople. More than 30 years of their research with more than one million salespeople have confirmed the importance of this trait. We now understand what causes some salespeople to keep moving forward and others to crumble when they hear the word *no*. It's usually based on the way salespeople perceive and explain rejections and setbacks to themselves and others.

For example, in a 1986 study, Seligman and Schulman tested the explanatory style of life insurance agents for Metropolitan Life and compared it to their sales performance.² The results showed that salespeople who habitually explained a negative event as internal ("it's my fault"), stable ("it's going to last forever"), or global ("it's going to undermine everything I do") consistently sold much less insurance than optimistic salespeople did. In fact, the optimistic salespeople sold 37 percent more insurance than their pessimistic coworkers. Unlike the pessimists, the optimists explained negative events as external ("I'm not at fault"), unstable ("this is only temporary"), and specific ("this is isolated to this one situation"). Cutting it even finer, the most optimistic salespeople of the group sold 88 percent more insurance than the most pessimistic. The researchers also found that optimists stayed on the job at twice the rate of pessimists, who were more likely to quit at great cost to their employers.

Seligman and Schulman then applied their findings to recruiting at Metropolitan Life. They tested 14,000 applicants for optimism. Applicants also completed

Metropolitan Life's regular personality test, which identified applicants whose personality profiles matched current top performers. Two interesting findings emerged. First, optimists outsold pessimists by their second year; and second, *optimists even outsold the pessimists who scored higher on the regular personality test.*

Schulman went on to compare optimism scores to performance of salespeople across several industries, including office products, real estate, banking, and car sales. The results he reported in 1995 across all industries studied indicated that optimists outsold pessimists by 20 to 40 percent!³

In a 1993 study, marketing professors David Strutton and James Lumpkin examined why optimists are more likely to succeed at sales.⁴ They tested the personalities of 101 salespeople from the textile manufacturing, furniture manufacturing, and communication technology industries. The findings showed that optimists and pessimists differed in how they dealt with a problem. Optimistic salespeople focused on solving the problem because they believed that the situation could change. Pessimists, on the other hand, were more likely to react by focusing on their own bad feelings and giving up. Obviously, the pessimist's reaction leads to poor performance.

A 2016 study by marketing professors Bruno Lussier and Nathaniel Hartmann echoed these findings in an assessment of 175 pharmaceutical, food and beverage, financial, and industrial salespeople.⁵ Their analysis indicated that optimism and resilience increase customer-oriented behavior (i.e., identifying possible

problems and solutions). This customer-oriented behavior subsequently increased sales performance. Optimistic salespeople are more likely to view problems as opportunities and believe they would be successful at resolving them. This belief increases the likelihood that they will take the actions necessary to succeed.

Optimism is an incredibly positive characteristic in all walks of life, but it is particularly crucial to the success of a salesperson. Optimistic salespeople believe problems can be solved, so they persist. Pessimistic salespeople give up, often before the opportunity to close has been fully developed. Optimistic salespeople do not dwell on rejection. Pessimistic salespeople focus on their bad feelings, often blame themselves, or avoid the selling situation altogether to reduce stress. Optimistic salespeople feel that the next call will be a winner.

The Perfect Storm

So, there we have it—the three elements of Drive: (1) the need to achieve, (2) competitiveness, and (3) optimism. Two out of three won't cut it. All must be present in the heart of the great salesperson. We have established that need for achievement and competitiveness combine to create what we know as *Competitive Achievement*. We have also made it clear that all the motivation in the world won't carry the day if a salesperson lacks optimism. Optimism is the third force that gives us real *Drive*.

As one psychologist puts it, “if need for achievement is

the engine, and competitiveness is the steering wheel, optimism is the key to the engine. Without it, you're never getting out of the garage.”

Our 2015 study of 175 salespeople in a variety of industries found that salespeople scoring high on Drive (a combination of Need for Achievement, Competitiveness, and Optimism) were twice as likely to be strong performers as those scoring low on Drive.⁶

The Four Types

The following model provides an interesting snapshot of the relationship between Competitive Achievement and optimism in salespeople. We will describe each of the four unique types of salespeople categorized by this model.

Competitive Achievement	<i>High</i>	Realist	Driver
	<i>Low</i>	Collaborator	Believer
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
		Optimism	

Collaborator

This type results from the combination of *low Competitive Achievement and low optimism*. These people are pretty easy to identify. They are focused on attaining a good work-life balance. Collaborators may

be great at customer service roles. However, if you ask them to pursue new business development, they will give you headaches with their inaction. They put off prospecting and are slow to follow up. It is nearly impossible to change these people. They'll show brief flashes of effort when they think their job is threatened, but then they'll fall back into their old patterns.

Believer

This type results from the combination of *low Competitive Achievement and high optimism*. These people show strong optimism, which can help them overcome psychological challenges others may not be able to handle. Believers are often cheerful and fun to be around, which can be helpful in maintaining the team's morale. Customers probably like this person as well, because they love to entertain or bring gifts. However, they will often leave a call without asking for the order. If you confront them, they will insist that orders are going to close any day. But they will not be able to sustain enough Drive to convert high hopes to closed sales. Several years ago, a sales manager we worked with fired a Believer only to receive calls from customers saying how much they had liked him! Of course they liked him—he never pressed them for an order.

A word of caution. Believers are likely to stick around forever unless you make a move. In their 1986 study, Seligman and Schulman found that low producers who were high in optimism remained in their positions significantly longer than those low in optimism.

Be careful of Believers in job interviews! They often

come highly recommended by customers. When assessment results indicate that a candidate has a low Drive score but a high optimism score, hiring managers are often shocked. “But he got such rave reviews from his customers,” the manager may protest. Exactly, and *your* customers may love him too. But the name of the game is not likability, its production, and that inevitably requires exerting some pressure on the customers to close the sale.

Realist

This type results from the combination of *high Competitive Achievement and low optimism*. Realists often like to consider what might go wrong in an upcoming meeting or presentation. Realists may also get discouraged after they experience repeated rejections. Realists may occasionally use their concerns to prepare thoroughly for prospect meetings. Although this tendency can be very helpful, interviewers need to make sure that the Realist will remain persistent when the going gets tough.

Driver

This type has the winning combination: *high Competitive Achievement and high optimism*. These people are our sales heroes. They are our top performers. Drivers work hard to establish new accounts and strengthen current relationships. They love the thrill of getting new business. They are full of ambition and certain of victory.

Where do *your* salespeople fit in this model? If your company is like most, you will have a scattered

diagram ranging from a handful of real Drivers to a slew of salespeople you intuitively know are Believers, or Collaborators, or even Realists.

Fasten your seatbelt or knock back a stiff shot of bourbon before you read the next chapter because we are going to help you calculate how much it's costing you to keep low-Drive salespeople, who are not born to sell, in Hunter roles. But don't get too discouraged. We will spend the rest of the book working with you to identify, recruit, and motivate real producers—the only type that deserves to be representing your interests in the marketplace.

Summary

- ◆ Optimism is an essential component of Drive, a trait that turns Competitive Achievers into closers.
- ◆ Optimistic Competitive Achievers have two key advantages:
 1. They set up a self-fulfilling prophecy of success.
 2. They have a thick skin and thus bounce back quickly from rejection.
- ◆ Research evidence has shown that optimists consistently outsell pessimists.
- ◆ Competitive Achievement and optimism combine in certain ways to make up four common types of salespeople.
 1. *Collaborator* salespeople are low in both Competitive Achievement and optimism.
 2. *Believer* salespeople are low in Competitive Achievement but high in optimism.
 3. *Realists* are high in Competitive Achievement but low in optimism.
 4. *Drivers* are high in both Competitive Achievement and optimism.

5 Chapter

The High Cost of Low Performance

Rule No. 1: Never lose money.

Rule No. 2: Never forget Rule No. 1.

—Warren Buffett

It never ceases to amaze us, as business investors and advisers, when we encounter the astonishing difference between a company's zero tolerance attitude regarding the performance of, say, a \$500,000 piece of machinery it has purchased and its passive response regarding a mediocre salesperson who burns \$200,000 to \$300,000 *per year* in opportunity and carrying costs. When we point this out to the owner-manager, we invariably get a response like, "It doesn't cost us *that* much."

Unfortunately, it *does* cost that much—and more—to train, manage, coddle, support, and carry underperformers, not to mention opportunity costs and the psychological toxins that such people spread throughout the organization.

Most sales teams have three kinds of salespeople:

- ◆ A players—those in the top 10 percent of talent available for the position
- ◆ B players—definitely keepers, but require some development
- ◆ C players—those who should not have been hired

So, before we can go any further, we need to understand the outrageous cost of *tolerating sales mediocrity*. We have therefore prepared some simple calculations we would like you to do along with us.

The Cost Calculator

Step 1: First, write down the annual revenue you expect out of an A player. Please pencil in your answer right here on line 1.

1. _____

Step 2: Next, write on line 2 how much revenue one of your marginal C players generates each year. To give you some guidance, we usually expect that C players will deliver about 50 percent of what A players produce.

2. _____

Step 3: Subtract line 2 from line 1 and write the result on line 3. This difference is your annual *revenue gap* for each C player.

3. _____

Step 4: Now let's analyze the more insidious costs each C player lays on your company. First, think about the number of customers a C player loses through neglect, misbehavior, or both. What does *that* cost you annually? We know it's nearly impossible to estimate quickly. For purposes of this discussion, let's be conservative. Figure one lost customer per year, or 10 percent of an A player's revenue. Write that figure on line 4.

4. _____

Step 5: Next, consider the amount of extra time that you or your sales manager spend coaching C players. They certainly need a lot more help than your best players. For example, you probably have to spend extra time holding their hand preparing for a presentation to a major prospect. Or, you may need to have a candid conversation with them after they blow an important pitch. How about helping them get organized so they get to their territory on time?

A 2012 survey of 1,400 CFO's, by staffing firm Robert Half, found that the typical manager in the United States spends 17 percent of their time (almost 1 full day per week) managing underperformers.¹ To figure

the cost of *your* time and a C player's slow learning curve, we typically use 25 percent of a C player's annual salary as an index for extra coaching. Write that figure on line 5.

5. _____

Step 6: Now add up lines 3, 4, and 5 and write the result on line 6. This is your *total loss in annual revenue per C player*.

6. _____

Step 7: Gross profit is probably the most accurate way to determine the carnage caused by poor salespeople. To calculate your annual loss, let's consider your loss in gross profit per C player. Simply multiply line 6 by your gross profit margin and write the result on line 7. For example, if your total loss in annual revenue on line 6 is \$600,000, and your gross profit margin is 20 percent, your annual loss is \$120,000.

7. _____

At this point, you may be surprised how much poor or mediocre salespeople are costing you. But, make no mistake: research shows that *hiring problems in sales are as costly as, if not more expensive than, bad hires at the senior executive level*.

Now comes perhaps the most damaging element of all: *the cost of delaying action*. We are all guilty of putting off unpleasant confrontations, hoping the situation will somehow right itself on its own. Unfortunately, if a salesperson is not high in Drive—that is, if the salesperson is a C player—research shows that the

situation won't improve, and every month that goes by is a serious hemorrhage of the company's resources. Let's continue.

Step 8: Line 7 already shows you what it will cost to wait another year; copy that figure on line 8b. You can easily multiply the figure by 2 or 3 to see how much waiting *two or three years* will cost; write the results of those calculations on lines 8c and 8d. Even a six-month delay in action can be costly; divide line 8b by 2 and write the result on line 8a. Now, take a few minutes to let these costs sink in. We'll wait for you to return from the liquor cabinet.

8a. Cost of waiting six months: _____

8b. Cost of waiting one year: _____

8c. Cost of waiting two years: _____

8d. Cost of waiting three years: _____

**The bottom line: Underperformers—C
players— can kill your business.**

Why Won't They Perform?

Why won't they perform? Marketing professor Thomas Ingram and his colleagues surveyed 126 owner-managers about the factors that contribute to sales failure.² Their conclusions: (1) poor listening skills; (2) failure to concentrate on top priorities; (3) lack of sufficient effort; (4) inability to determine customer needs; (5) lack of preparation for sales presentations; (6) inadequate knowledge of the product or service.

What do *all* of these elements have in common? They all relate to a lack of Drive.

We can't tell you how many times we have been called into companies by desperate owner-managers who say, "Fix my sales team" or "Train my people to perform." When we arrive, we are introduced to a group of salespeople who would rather be somewhere else (the A and B players want to be out selling, the C players want to find somewhere to hide).

We go around the table and ask the salespeople to tell us a little bit about themselves as we compare each person with their production numbers. We always wait until our testing has been completed to reach our final conclusions. However, all too often, it is obvious within *fifteen minutes* that *half* the people in the room shouldn't be there in the first place. They certainly should not be soaking up precious executive time and training dollars.

But here's the real kicker, the scenario that literally drives us crazy as business advisers and investors in our own right: when we bring our findings to owner-managers, we often receive responses like, "Try to train them anyway" or "Well, I need *someone* out there selling for me." Then, there's the classic, "I don't have the time or the money to go through a rigorous assessment process."

Since investing in hiring salespeople *who can actually sell* is a virtual no-brainer and easily represents the biggest bang for the business owner's buck, these kinds of questions usually reflect deeper management issues that go beyond the scope of this book. Our job, in this context, is to help owners understand that if

they really want to improve their sales force and raise revenues; they should not waste money on trying to train lost causes. Train the true salespeople, redeploy the others, and backfill or recruit with the rigor that the stakes demand. When it comes to hiring new salespeople, you must recruit players with Drive and discontinue investing in salespeople who will let you down. How can you determine the difference? We begin to show you in chapter 6.

Summary

- ◆ Underperforming C players typically cost companies tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue annually.
- ◆ Most sales teams have at least a few C players on board.
- ◆ It is critical for a responsible sales manager to learn how much they are losing in annual revenues due to C players.
- ◆ Sales managers must take action on underperformers who lack Drive and replace them with A players.

Part Two:
Hiring Drivers

6 Chapter

Filling the Recruiting Pipeline

*“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and
I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”*

—Abraham Lincoln

At this point in our journey, we have come to appreciate the importance of Drive as the key personality characteristic that is hardwired in successful salespeople. We now know that Drive is made up of three elements: need for achievement; competitiveness; and optimism. Each of these elements is essential for high sales performance. We have also calculated the cost of carrying low-Drive players. This is often the largest area of financial loss, but it is also the richest opportunity for improvement in any business enterprise.

Now we turn to the solution—the formula, if you will, for identifying, hiring, and retaining A and B players—salespeople who are born to run and who have the ability to meet and exceed your highest expectations.

A quick word of caution: this process requires patience and discipline. It is always tempting to give in to our gut instincts, to try to save time (and work) by substituting intuition for process. But 90 years of research and *billions* of wasted dollars tell us to take the time and make the effort to fill these critical positions with people who have the potential to succeed—people who are Driven to sell.

The first step to hiring Drivers is attracting as many high-Drive candidates as possible. To do so, you need to get the word out to the market that your company, and the job itself, are Drive-centric.

High-Drive people are attracted to high-Drive situations. And low-Drive people may pause if they see something that does not fit their personality and strengths.

Writing a job ad that is literally and subliminally full of high-Drive signals sets the stage for elevating your entire recruiting process.

Below are two examples of a job listing for the same job (*abbreviated for these purposes. Yours can be as long as you would like*).

The first one is “Drive-Neutral.” The second one is “Drive-Centric.” Please read before job listings carefully.

Drive-Neutral Job Listing

Sales position with leading tech company.

- Minimum five years of experience in tech sales.
- Combination of handling inbound leads and new business development.
- Compensation commensurate with industry standards and experience.

To apply, submit a resume to . . .

High-Drive Job Listing

High-potential sales position with leading tech company. We want you to have a minimum of five years of experience *successfully* selling tech related products or services but we can take you even higher. This will be a combination of handling inbound leads with the excitement of pure, new business development, aka hunting.

We are all about great service which goes hand-in-hand with great sales. We love to compete and win in the marketplace.

Compensation is robust for those who are willing to work hard and enjoy the high expectations and energy of our intense, championship sales team. We help each other and we push each other to our absolute highest potential.

Please apply if you are ready to work hard, enjoy the energy of a high-octane team and are prepared to WIN!

See the difference?

The first listing is using standard language. It will not particularly attract high-Drive salespeople and it will not dissuade those people low in Drive to take a pass.

The second listing basically sends a warning shot over the bows of job seekers.

"We are not (expletive deleted) messing around here. We are on the hunt for confident, over-achieving people. Apply only if you think you can handle this. Do not apply if you will not be able to thrive in this highly intense and competitive environment."

Now, take a moment to visit the Additional Resources on [page 134-135](#) or <https://salesdrive.info/never-hire-a-bad-salesperson-again-resources/> for two worksheets. The first is to brainstorm words and phrases that include high-Drive signals. The second is to create your own high-Drive job listing. Note areas that could present the opportunity to use high-Drive words or sentences. It does not have to be perfect, yet. But you should continue to hone and refine it later.

Now that you have written your listing, the next step is to get it in front of as many high-potential candidates as possible.

Many companies attempt to do this by posting to popular job boards and hoping the right candidates respond. However, the best salespeople are rarely on a job board actively looking for work. Companies seeking experienced salespeople high in Drive should look for

passive candidates through resources such as LinkedIn or recruiting firms. Reaching out to passive candidates regarding your opening and why it represents a superior opportunity to their current role will help to build a powerful hiring funnel.

Experienced Candidates

When reviewing candidates' LinkedIn profiles or resumes for Drive clues, companies who consistently find high-Drive candidates look for three key indicators:

1. *Passive Candidates* – as discussed, if someone has been actively looking for a while in the world of sales, there may be a good reason for their lack of success.
2. *Longevity* – avoid job-hoppers. A few changes very early in their career are OK, but make sure it is not a habit thereafter.
3. *Metrics* – high-Drive candidates usually will have metrics of some kind on their resume or LinkedIn profile to show that they have been successful previously.

These three indicators together greatly increase the chances that your candidate is high in Drive.

Many companies are also looking for a candidate who will hit the ground running, and start producing quickly. In this case, we recommend looking for a candidate with at least 2-3 years of *relevant* sales experience at a similarly-sized company, as well as a high level of Drive. Of course, a candidate with 2-3 years of previous sales experience likely has

fundamental sales knowledge and will not require extensive basic training.

Additionally, a candidate with experience at a similarly-sized company will have experience dealing with the unique challenges your business presents. Candidates from companies of a different size than yours may have difficulty adapting to the unique challenges of your sales cycle and brand recognition level. For example, a candidate with experience at a larger company with strong brand awareness and a short sales cycle may have trouble moving to a smaller, younger company selling a product with a longer cycle that requires an “evangelist.”

Finally, a candidate who also has a strong level of Drive has the energy and passion to execute on that knowledge and experience.

Entry-Level Candidates

Of course, if you are seeking entry-level candidates, you can cast a wider net, using online job boards or university job fairs. University job fairs can also be a great opportunity to use an online assessment to identify high-Drive students. Occasionally, students who never considered a career in sales may have the three elements of Drive and simply need training and encouragement. University recruiting can also benefit companies looking for salespeople with expertise in a specific field, such as engineering.

It can be very challenging to find an experienced salesperson who is also a strong subject matter expert. However, pharmacy or engineering majors with underlying Drive may be great opportunities for training and development.

Finally, many universities are developing sales programs, including DePaul University, Kennesaw State University, and the University of Alabama. Kennesaw State also hosts a nationally-recognized sales competition, allowing employers to size up students' current skill level.

Whether you are sourcing experienced candidates or new entries to the workforce, the next step is mission critical: testing for Drive.

Summary

- ◆ Use a Drive-centric job listing to attract high-potential candidates.
- ◆ When reviewing resumes or LinkedIn profiles, look for passive candidates, longevity, and metrics as indicators of Drive.
- ◆ If new salespeople need to ramp-up quickly, look for experienced, high-Drive candidates *from companies of a similar size to yours*.

7

Chapter

Testing: The First Step

“Quickness” is the most important thing I look for in players, and you can’t teach “quickness.”

—John Wooden

After you fill your funnel with qualified candidates, there are two steps to hiring Drivers: *testing* and *interviewing*. The first step weeds out low-potential candidates, directing your time and resources toward interviewing only the cream of the crop—the potential pros.

When it’s done well, this process is not unlike the National Football League’s Annual Testing Combine

in Indianapolis. The Combine is the process by which NFL head coaches and general managers assess the upcoming talent pool that is leaving college each year. Attendance at the Combine is by invitation only. Athletes who attend go through a series of rigorous physical and mental tests. These challenges include the 40-yard dash, bench press, vertical jump, and, yes, psychological tests and interviews. When the process is finished, owners can be confident that they have some real talent on their hands: someone who can run fast and jump high; someone who is worth their time to assess further, face-to-face, through an interview. Team officials use the results of these tests to evaluate the talent pool and make their final draft picks. Usually, those who perform well at the Combine get drafted in the early rounds. Players who don't perform well at the Combine may not get drafted at all.

Like the NFL, top business organizations often use a rigorous process to select talent. To begin, these companies use validated tests to help screen candidates, narrowing down the applicant pool to those who have true potential. Then, similar to the Combine, those who make it past this first hurdle move on to the second hurdle: rigorous interviews with the hiring manager and human resource professionals. Finally, those who make it past this second hurdle move on to the final step, an interview with the hiring manager to conclusively validate their potential and decide how best to manage and motivate them as they come on board.

The SalesDrive model we have created features a similar process to select sales talent. First, we test and

screen out candidates with limited potential. Next, we invite serious candidates to interview with the company. Finalists make it to the most important and rigorous step in the process: the Drive Interview with the hiring manager. Let's start with the screening test in this chapter, and then we will turn to the interview process in chapters 8 and 9.

Testing and Screening for Driven Salespeople

Human Resource Directors have been using personality tests for years to try to match people's personalities and aptitudes with the performance expected of them. These tests are important tools and should always be used in the context of a balanced package of evaluation techniques, including a resume screening tip described in chapter 6. However, they can be particularly valuable for saving time and money by providing a basic qualifier for sales candidates before bringing them in for additional evaluation.

Step 1, therefore, in the recruitment of A and B salespeople, is to require each candidate to take a personality or aptitude test in order to be sure they have enough positive ingredients to warrant the interview and rigorous assessment process to follow.

Now, there are a host of credible personality tests

available on the market. However, when it comes to testing specifically for Drive, we recommend a test that measures the three key Drive elements: need for achievement; competitiveness; and optimism.

EEOC Requirements

When using any type of personality test, we must keep in mind the federal government's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requirements for appropriate use. These guidelines prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender, national origin, age (over 40), and disability. EEOC requirements also stipulate that any test used for hiring must be reliable and valid for the position in question. Here's a quick primer:

Reliability simply refers to how well a test holds up over time. In other words, will Candidate X get the same score in two weeks as was received today? Of course, the answer should be yes. Look for reliability standards in the manual supporting a given test, or ask the testing service specifically to provide reliability documentation.

SalesDrive features the *DriveTest*[®] to specifically focus on Drive characteristics. Ask your assessment provider how it defines and emphasizes Drive in its testing platform.

Validity refers to whether the test really measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, a test of

optimism should measure optimism, not anxiety or depression. The test should also predict performance in the position. That is, it *must* be relevant to the job.

Be sure to ask your assessment company to provide evidence that a test is both reliable and valid. Also, be sure you have worked with HR to define the skills essential for the position (We will give you a process to do this in Chapter 8.) Finally, make certain that the test validly predicts performance in those skills at your company.

The DriveTest®

SalesDrive has taken the initial testing of salespeople several steps further by developing an online assessment that is validated and heavily weighted, in terms of both the questions and scoring, for identifying Drive for sales positions. While there are a number of other characteristics we look for, we think Drive is so critical that we have designed our process to emphasize this key trait.

The architecture of the DriveTest® is designed with algorithms that distinguish between people who *can* sell and people who *will* sell. This key distinction is often the place where we are able to head off flashes in the pan and people who may have the brains but not the heart to succeed as a salesperson.

Before administering the test, the hiring company should determine the necessary level of each trait measured by the test. Of course, we are always happy to provide as much guidance as needed. Then, candidates are invited to take the test.

The following is an example of two reports generated by the SalesDrive assessment indicating the test results of two candidates, one who performed poorly and one who performed well.

Let's look at the weak candidate first.

Profile Report 1: Weak Candidate

1 = Poor Fit	2 = Weak Fit	3 = Average Fit	4 = Good Fit	5 = Excellent Fit					
Drive	Total level of Drive: Weighted combination of Need for Achievement, Competitiveness, and Optimism.				1	2	3	4	5
Elements of Drive	Description	Fit							
Need for Achievement	Sets demanding personal goals. Is ambitious. Strives for excellence. Willing to work as hard as necessary to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5			
Competitiveness	Thrives on competition and winning. Determined to be the top producer. Takes challenges head on. Works to outperform others.	1	2	3	4	5			
Optimism	Expects to succeed. Remains resilient in the face of difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5			
Other Core Skills	Description	Fit							
Confidence	Is unfazed by rejection. Not offended by difficult buyers. Feels self-assured. Freely expresses opinions or concerns.	1	2	3	4	5			
Persuasion	Builds a good case, taking customer needs into account. Closes compellingly. Enjoys selling, negotiating, and changing others' point of view. Stays calm under pressure.	1	2	3	4	5			
Relationship	Easily establishes and maintains relationships with prospects and customers. Enjoys social interaction and building rapport. Freely expresses enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4	5			
Organization	Is disciplined and methodical. Detail-oriented. Is organized and orderly. Checks thoroughly to avoid mistakes. Tracks opportunities and contacts. Task-oriented. Follows up.	1	2	3	4	5			
Sales Roles	Description	Fit							
Hunter	Develops leads and new business opportunities. Closes new accounts.	1	2	3	4	5			
Farmer	Develops and resells existing opportunities. Follows up diligently. Grows business steadily.	1	2	3	4	5			
Testing Consistency	The candidate responded consistently throughout the assessment, showing appropriate motivation and understanding of the items.								

Interpretation

- If Fit is Green:** This salesperson shows potential to perform well in most sales positions. You should verify this potential with reference checks and in-depth interviews.
- If Fit is Yellow:** This salesperson has one or more aspects of their personality that could compromise sales performance. You should carefully probe low-fit areas with thorough reference checks and interviews. A professional assessment may be necessary.
- If Fit is Red:** This salesperson is likely to perform below standards in most sales positions.

By way of explanation, the skill definitions are standard and stay the same in each report. The Fit score ranges from 1 (Poor Fit) to 5 (Excellent Fit).

As we can quickly see from the first report, this is the type of candidate who might make it to the interview if we didn't screen such people out first. Candidates with this profile are sociable and friendly. They could easily receive some nice references from people who like them. In fact, in a support capacity, they could make excellent employees, and they may even be able to sell if necessary. But, as always, the key question is, *will they?*

But such a candidate is not a Driven salesperson.

People like this will *not* push themselves past their limits. They will *not* take rejection well. They will *not* elevate your business to the next level, for they lack the Drive to do it.

Now, imagine if you were interviewing this candidate *without* the assessment results. How do you think this person would look in the interview? If you said they would likely present a strong image of persuasion and relationship skills, you are right. But, critically, underneath the surface, they lack the Drive needed to succeed as a hunter.

That is why a good initial test is absolutely critical. For a couple of hundred dollars, you have just saved your company thousands of dollars in additional interview

time as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenues from underproduction if a candidate like this one was to slide through a weak hiring process and join the company.

Now let's look at the profile of a Driven salesperson who has taken the DriveTest®.

Profile Report 2: Strong Candidate

		1 = Poor Fit	2 = Weak Fit	3 = Average Fit	4 = Good Fit	5 = Excellent Fit
		Fit				
Drive	Total level of Drive: Weighted combination of Need for Achievement, Competitiveness, and Optimism.	1	2	3	4	5
Elements of Drive	Description	Fit				
Need for Achievement	Sets demanding personal goals. Is ambitious. Strives for excellence. Willing to work as hard as necessary to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5
Competitiveness	Thrives on competition and winning. Determined to be the top producer. Takes challenges head on. Works to outperform others.	1	2	3	4	5
Optimism	Expects to succeed. Remains resilient in the face of difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
Other Core Skills	Description	Fit				
Confidence	Is unfazed by rejection. Not offended by difficult buyers. Feels self-assured. Freely expresses opinions or concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
Persuasion	Builds a good case, taking customer needs into account. Closes compellingly. Enjoys selling, negotiating, and changing others' point of view. Stays calm under pressure.	1	2	3	4	5
Relationship	Easily establishes and maintains relationships with prospects and customers. Enjoys social interaction and building rapport. Freely expresses enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	Is disciplined and methodical. Detail-oriented. Is organized and orderly. Checks thoroughly to avoid mistakes. Tracks opportunities and contacts. Task-oriented. Follows up.	1	2	3	4	5
Sales Roles	Description	Fit				
Hunter	Develops leads and new business opportunities. Closes new accounts.	1	2	3	4	5
Farmer	Develops and resells existing opportunities. Follows up diligently. Grows business steadily.	1	2	3	4	5
Testing Consistency	The candidate responded consistently throughout the assessment, showing appropriate motivation and understanding of the items.					

Interpretation

- If Fit is Green:** This salesperson shows potential to perform well in most sales positions. You should verify this potential with reference checks and in-depth interviews.

- If Fit is Yellow:** This salesperson has one or more aspects of their personality that could compromise sales performance. You should carefully probe low-fit areas with thorough reference checks and interviews. A professional assessment may be necessary.

- If Fit is Red:** This salesperson is likely to perform below standards in most sales positions.

This candidate clearly has the potential to be an A player. The person scored high on Drive as well as the other core sales skills. Nonetheless, the rest of the diagnostic still has good information for us. Notice the lower Organization score. Of course, it is not uncommon for high-performing Hunters to show lower organization scores. The organization score can alert us to zero in on this trait in our interview and learn about the candidate's development needs. We might need to invest in a CRM program for this person. However, although we can build organizational skills, we cannot teach Drive. The candidate has potential in both account acquisition and development. If presented with two candidates like those shown in these examples, we now have powerful data to use in conjunction with our regular resume screening process.

After we administer the assessment and find high scoring candidates, we still have more work to do before selecting our winner.

Research by organizational psychology professor Joe Cortina and his colleagues in 2000 has shown that a structured interview adds significantly more predictive power than testing alone.¹ Therefore, based upon the enormous stakes and the huge cost of hiring the wrong person to carry your company's flag, *we never recommend personality or aptitude testing alone as the answer to hiring Driven salespeople.*

Passing the initial test is the first hurdle. The real game is about to begin. But before we leave the initial test, let's address a few frequently asked questions about testing:

- *Why bother using a test to screen candidates?* A screening test allows you to save valuable time and money by eliminating candidates who are clearly inappropriate for the position and shouldn't soak up precious interviewing time.
- *What if a candidate has great references? Should I bother with the process?* Many sales managers have asked this question, especially if they know the references personally and/or need to fill the position fast. However, you should never base your hiring decision on recommendations alone, no matter the source. Those referenced may not know enough about the position at your company to make an informed recommendation. They just know they like the candidate and want the person to do well. You need to conduct a thorough interview to make sure the candidate is truly a good fit.
- *Can I use the initial test alone?* Screening tests are critical to determine which candidates to move forward into the hiring process. But you need to pair a well-constructed test with a structured behavioral interview to get the full story on the candidate.

Remember, personality or aptitude testing is the essential *first step* in identifying people with Drive from within your candidate pool. Once you have qualified your finalists through the testing process, it's time to engage in one of the most important processes in the lives of both your candidates and your company: the interview—an art and a science we will take you through in the next chapter.

Summary

- ◆ There are two steps to hiring Drivers:
 1. Testing to screen out clearly inappropriate candidates and
 2. Interviewing those who pass the initial screening test.
- ◆ The initial screening test narrows the candidate pool and identifies candidates who have the strongest potential.
- ◆ The screening test must be valid, reliable, and job-relevant, and it must not discriminate against any protected group.
- ◆ Select a test that measures all three elements of Drive—need for achievement, competitiveness, and optimism—as well as other skills essential for the position.
- ◆ Passing the test is only the first hurdle for the candidate. The rigorous interview process follows for those who show potential.

8

Chapter

The Drive Interview

A prudent question is one half of wisdom.

—Francis Bacon

We have discussed the enormous stakes involved in selecting the right (or wrong) people to represent our companies in the marketplace. We know that salespeople can literally make or break our businesses.

We thus come now to the most important part of the salesperson hiring process: the face-to-face interview. This stage of the process is where we conclude whether a candidate or employee has the psychological characteristics and the intellectual aptitude to succeed in the ferociously competitive environment of sales.

It is therefore astonishing to us how little precision many companies bring to the process—how often they rely on intuition, or “gut feelings,” rather than leveraging the powerful information now available on the psychology of top performers. NFL teams would never bet millions of dollars on draft choices who did not have the basic skills to succeed. Why should you?

As we stated previously, the interview is one of the most important events in the lives of the candidate *and* your company. Here, we provide a discussion of some of our best techniques to help anyone who is trying to vet a candidate for Drive.

The Drive Interview is a one- to two-hour interview requiring intense *due diligence*—that is, thorough research and analysis—to understand both the company’s culture and the specific requirements of the position. The process results in an in-depth understanding of the candidate’s strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for mentoring.

This chapter presents the key elements of the Drive Interview, including questions we love to ask when searching for the rocket fuel we call Drive.

But first, a word of caution . . .

Five Classic Errors

First of all, it is important to recognize what *not* to do in an interview—that is, common mistakes interviewers make or traps they can fall into which lead to bad decisions. See if you recognize any of the following five classic errors.

1. The BS Session

Most business owners and sales managers we know are not short on ego, and many feel they have a “golden gut” when it comes to people. So, instead of leveraging 90+ years of technical research on what makes top performers tick and using a structured set of questions, they fall back on a classic BS session as a means of sizing up the candidate.

This is a common practice among many owners or managers who have had no formal interview training. First, they talk about the position for a while. Then, they spend the rest of the time casually chatting with the candidate, trying to get a “gut feel” for them. They often tell us that they can “just tell” whether the candidate will make a good salesperson. *Unfortunately, “gut feelings” have cost companies millions in lost sales, missed opportunities, and lost customers.*

Now, small talk is extremely important for establishing initial rapport with the candidate. You should spend about five to ten minutes chatting generally at the beginning.

You can also pepper in a bit more of this relaxed conversation during breaks. But any more than that and you are exposing yourselves—and your company—to much greater risk than you may realize. Here’s

the problem with unstructured interviews: anyone who wants a sales job can go to the bookstore and buy one of dozens of interview guides filled with typical questions and how to prepare for them. These books advise candidates on what to wear, how to act, and specifically how to respond to “gut feeling” types of questions. Candidates also are coached to take control of the interview if possible.

Remember our friend the narcissist? If you do not conduct a structured interview, here is what these types of charming candidates will do. They will cut loose with a prepared speech about how motivated they are to sell and how excited they are to work for you. The more you eat it up, the more they will dish it out, and they will keep right on spoon-feeding you whatever you want to hear until you’ve got that nice “gut feeling.” (Months later, you will be wondering why your gut feeling has turned to indigestion when such promising candidates fail to live up to your expectations.)

University of Iowa management professor Murray Barrick and his colleagues studied the behavior of 73 candidates who held mock interviews with experienced human resource professionals.¹ The results showed that applicants *actively managed* the impressions they created during the interview. They presented themselves as hardworking, persistent, and dependable.

Obviously, if you are not ready with your own, structured plan, you need to be prepared to risk \$150,000 on a non-producer. To avoid being seduced, the focus *must be* on the candidate’s work history. We

will get into a specific recipe for this technique in a moment.

2. The “What if?” Trap

Many sales managers avoid BS but still fall victim to classic mistake number 2: the “What If?” trap. This happens when they spend too much time asking the candidate, “What would you do if... [for example, an irate customer called; or a customer wanted to haggle; or your hair caught on fire]?”

These are called *situational questions*. They ask the candidate how they would handle *hypothetical* situations on the job. Such questions can be valuable for getting a candidate’s philosophies on important topics. They work well in interviews for management or administrative staff.

However, when you are interviewing a sales candidate, situational questions can get you into trouble. Essentially, they make it easier for a candidate to look good by giving away easy clues about what you want to hear. As we mentioned earlier, numerous interviewing guides are filled with these types of questions—along with their “ideal” answers.

Savvy candidates will often have their answers to these philosophical questions well prepared, but their great answers may have little or nothing to do with what they *will actually do* on the job. Through situational questions, you discuss concepts rather than performance. It’s easy to agree that you *want* candidates to succeed. But *can* they? *Will* they? For *you!*?

The best way to predict a person's future behavior is to carefully examine what that person did in the past.

Studies comparing both types of questions (such as those reported by Elaine Pulakos and Neal Schmitt², and Allen Huffcutt and colleagues³) have shown that interviews based on previous behavior are more predictive than those based on hypothetical situations. So, instead of falling into the “What if?” trap, you should use situational questions sparingly and instead focus most of your time on requests for information about a candidate's experience, for example, “Tell me about a time when you wish you had been more persuasive” or “Describe the most profitable sale you ever made.” *Previous behavior is the evidence you need to support your conclusions about the candidate's ability to succeed going forward.*

3. Weak Sales Resistance

Many sales managers are former salespeople, and salespeople love to be sold! It's in the blood of every great salesperson to enjoy being persuaded. However, if you do not verify that your candidate has staying power, your love of a good sale can cost you dearly down the road.

Sales managers with weak resistance typically love it when the candidate uses traditional sales tactics in the interview. For example, if the candidate *probes for pain* by asking tough questions about the manager's real needs and then tailors their subsequent speech accordingly, some sales managers feel the candidate has great empathy. Similarly, when a candidate *asks for the sale* by asking for the job, the manager assumes the candidate is a solid closer. The only problem with

this approach is that most semi-experienced salespeople know how to use these basic tactics. But the question is not whether they *can* sell, it's whether they *will*.

Remember, as we established earlier, job applicants are carefully managing the impressions they are trying to make on us. Often, the behavior we see on interview day may be the best sales job we ever get out of a particular candidate. So, if you like to be sold, be careful. The candidate may have just sold you on a \$150,000 ride to the poorhouse.

4. Hiring Someone Like You

While we're at it, another classic interviewing mistake is hiring someone who is *just like you*. We all have a natural preference for people who seem to share our values and opinions. Although this bias is helpful for making friends, it can be terrible for hiring. When you recognize that a candidate somehow reminds you of yourself, you often are blinded to that person's negative traits. When this happens, an interviewer will typically emphasize the strengths but ignore important shortcomings that the candidate has in common with them.

Here's a way to avoid this problem as you interview. During a break in the interview process, you should stop and ask yourself, "How is this candidate like *me*? What do I like most about this person? What kinds of things could I be missing because of it?" (Hint: think about your *own* shortcomings.) You need to be as critical as necessary to uncover all potential weaknesses.

5. Settling for a Warm Body

Many times along your path, you will be tempted to stop and settle for a candidate who has substantial experience, simply looks the part, or “just feels right.” Giving up and taking whoever is in front of you will feel so much easier, temporarily, than holding out for a real Driver.

These situations are simply tests of your resolve. They will *test* you to determine whether you really have the stamina to hire stars. Every time you pass such a test, you come one step closer to creating your dream team. Every time you give in and hire a warm body to fill a vacancy, you will be punished by failure.

We know there can be tremendous pressure to fill a vacancy, especially in a busy territory. However, business owners and sales managers who settle for nothing less than Drivers always surpass those who give in to gut instinct or nepotism. Apply the lessons in this book *patiently* and you will assemble a team capable of exceeding your expectations.

Now that we’ve reviewed these five classic errors, let’s discuss how best to structure the interview to find real Drivers.

The Rules of Interview Engagement

To structure the interview effectively, we recommend following a formula that we have labeled the *3 Ps* for ease of memory: (1) *Planning*, (2) *Probing the Past*, and (3) *Patterns*.

Planning

Planning is a process that involves two steps: defining the job requirements and preparing for the interview.

Step 1: This step relates to understanding the specific requirements of the sales job in question. To determine these requirements, we recommend developing a list of the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for the position. This initial due diligence has two parts.

1. Defining the Roles the Salesperson Plays

First, the sales manager defines the *type* of selling that is unique to the industry or the company's strategy—that is, the *roles* the salesperson plays. In the following chart, 12 aspects of the job are defined, grouped as contrasting pairs. You can use the chart to check those roles that are most relevant. In some cases, you might check both items in a pair.

Sales Roles	
Hunter	Develops leads and new business opportunities
Farmer	Aggressively develops and resells existing opportunities
Individual	Is solely responsible for account development and maintenance
Team-based	Works closely with others internally on the account
External	Spends a lot of time at client sites
Internal	Works almost exclusively from the office, via phone, etc.
Short Cycle	Quick or repetitive sales, usually under 2 months start to finish
Long Cycle	Strategic sales, understanding customer's business, 4+ months
Sell End	Sells directly to the end user
Sell Reps	Motivates other representatives to sell products

Simple Sales	Commodity sales, price sensitive, off-the-shelf
Complex Sales	Sells solutions involving multiple components and customization

2. Defining the Most Critical Skills

The second part of the planning stage involves defining a short list of desired skills, based on those relevant roles. Obviously, although Drive is critical, other skills are also important, depending on the position*. The following chart features 17 skills that our research shows are most associated with sales success. The first five core skills are those that our research shows are essential to most sales positions: Drive, confidence, persuasion, organization, and relationship skills. We recommend that sales managers assess candidates for each of these skills. Specialized skills, such as analytical, conceptual, and strategic skills, may be essential in a narrower range of positions.

We recommend selecting a total of three to five specialized skills. This keeps the interview process focused and efficient.

*For simplicity and uniformity, we will use the word “skill” to refer to all competencies relevant to sales positions.

CORE SKILLS – Essential in all sales positions
Drive —needs to achieve; loves to compete and win; optimistic and thus certain of victory
Confidence —unfazed by rejection; will persist despite setbacks; inner strength
Persuasion —articulate; builds a good case, taking customer needs into account; closes compellingly
Relationship —easily establishes and maintains relationships with prospects and customers; service-oriented
Organization —disciplined; tracks opportunities and contacts; follows up; juggles multiple tasks; conscientious

SPECIALIZED SKILLS – Unique to your position
Problem Solving —proactively, sometimes creatively, seeks solutions; solves customers' dilemmas
Profit Priority —understands business priorities, sells profitable business
Independent —self-starter, works well without external structure or supervision
Listening —patient; tunes in; will probe and clarify to get a real sense of customers' needs
Tact —considerate; diplomatic; treats others with respect, even if opinions differ
Detail —patient/detailed/timely with necessary product knowledge, reporting, paperwork
Analytical —can dig into needs/problems effectively; adept with numbers
Conceptual —abstract thinker; grasps complexity of customers' situations; develops complex solutions
Strategic —sees big picture and long-range implications; understands customers' strategies
Technical —understands customers' industry, products, and technology
Executive Presence —earns respect in the executive suite; appropriate image
Motivator —(if salesperson is not selling directly to end users) will teach, coach, motivate those who sell product to end user

After completing that discussion with sales management, you now have a detailed specification, or *spec*, of the sales position. Visit the additional resources on [page 136](#) or

<https://salesdrive.info/never-hire-a-bad-salesperson-again-resources/> for a Drive Interview Planning Form, allowing you to summarize this information for each position.

Next, we recommend interviewing A players (people who are already doing the job well) at the company. Ask them to elaborate on each skill in the job spec. Their input allows you to refine the spec even further, so you know what each skill looks like on the front line.

Some positions, for example, require higher persuasion skills, while others may call for more subtle relationship building. Whatever the case, your ultimate interview will be tailored to identify the best match, given the requirements of the specific sales position.

Step 2: This step of the planning process involves preparing for the interview itself. *It is absolutely critical that you, not the interviewee, control the interview and gain the information you need for a valid assessment of the candidate's potential to succeed in this position.* Remember, the candidates' coaches are recommending the opposite (i.e., that *they* control the interview). It takes structure and discipline to keep candidates on point so you can gather the right data and make accurate observations.

We recommend a two-hour interview with a very tight agenda which incorporates the following itinerary:

Drive Interview Schedule

(5-10 min) Make small talk, warm up, relax, and establish rapport. Accent the positive.

(15 min) Discuss resume and career history. Ask candidate for reasons they accepted and left each previous job.

(90 min) Ask experience and aptitude questions. Questions are related to what is required to succeed in this position.

Note: Include a halftime break (10 min) midway through the interview.

Probing the Past

Probing the Past is the second *P* in our 3 Ps interview process. *The best way to predict a person's future behavior is to carefully examine what they did in the past.* It is therefore critically important that throughout the interview you use *experience questions*, which speak to *behavior*, as opposed to *philosophy questions*, which speak to *aspirations*. Remember, the ultimate name of the game for you is not finding people who *can* (or think they can) sell, it's finding people who *will* sell.

Here is an experience question we recommend in determining Drive: "Tell me about a time when you thought you had a sale but were surprised and disappointed by the prospect or customer. What was your next move?"

Notice we didn't recommend asking, "How did you

feel?” It’s too easy to give a glib answer to that question. You want to know how the candidate *reacted*. Did this person bounce back quickly? Did they learn a lesson and apply it to the next case?

The foregoing example is the kind of question that probes the past for clues that the candidate has applied Driven characteristics before and will do so again for *you*. We will provide a list of such questions later in this chapter.

Patterns

Patterns hold the third *P* key to a successful interview. We structure our process to connect individual questions into a web of patterns which, once identified, are virtually sure to reemerge (both positively and negatively) when the candidate comes to work for you.

Let’s say that you want to understand if the candidate can successfully multitask because the position in question requires a variety of actions. You might ask, “Do you prefer handling assignments individually, or tackling several projects at once?” A smart candidate, having researched the position, might answer the basic question by stating, “I prefer doing several things at once; it keeps me stimulated.”

So far so good, but later in the interview, you loop back and ask when the candidate’s confidence is lowest, “When is your confidence the lowest?” If the candidate replies, “When I am overwhelmed with information,” whoa! Time out! You need to probe deeper with a follow-up question such as, “Tell me about the last time you got overwhelmed.” If the answer includes

having “too much on my plate” at the time, you now have contradictory information that requires another follow-up. So, you say, “Give me one more example of a time you were overwhelmed.” If the candidate responds with yet another example of having a lot on their plate, you have made an important discovery. Now, a pattern of breaking down when asked to multitask emerges, despite this candidate’s *coached* answer about loving variety.

Establishing patterns is a very enjoyable part of interviewing. It is like detective work: searching for evidence that the candidate is *truly* Driven by uncovering paths they have taken in the past—and will no doubt take again in the future—in trying to succeed as a salesperson.

Key Interview Questions to Ask

You are looking for Driven salespeople, who share three outstanding characteristics: Need for Achievement; Competitiveness; and Optimism. During the Drive Interview, you will assess each of these elements, as well as the skills you identified in the job spec.

To begin your interview, as noted above, we recommend starting with five to ten minutes of small talk to establish rapport. Next, we recommend moving into a review of the candidate’s resume using the following process.

Resume Review

As the interviewer, you might start with: “Let’s review your resume together. As we discuss each job, I would like you to tell me three (3) things:

1. Please provide a basic description of the job.
2. If you were on a sales team, where did you rank? (*Competitive candidates will know the answer.*)
3. What got you to move on to the next position?”

In your candidate’s responses, note job history, progression, technical/sales experience, industry experience, versatility across jobs. If the candidate responds to Question #3 with vague or evasive statements such as, “There were some disagreements with my manager,” or “We had some misunderstandings regarding expectations,” then ask the candidate the following question:

“If we had a magic wand and could improve three things about that job so you would never want to leave, what would they be?”

This follow-up question places a positive spin on a potentially hot-button issue by asking the candidate what, in a perfect world, they would have liked to see happen at their previous job. This is a very disarming technique, and much less likely to be finessed by a clever candidate. At this point, the candidate may respond, “Well, I would have gotten paid three times as much, my three assistants would not have quit, and I would not have told off my manager when they asked me to put in more hours.”

Of course, the candidate's response might not be so blatant, but, in any event, they will almost certainly give you a gem of information that you can probe to get the real story behind the spin. The key is to make sure the candidate has a history of strong performance, and is not a chronic job hopper.

After a thorough resume review, you are now ready to move into asking experience and aptitude questions. Below are some questions we recommend on the three elements of Drive as well as core and specialized sales skills. Of course, feel free to use your own questions that are unique to your company and/or open position.

Experience and Aptitude Questions

As the interviewer, you might continue with: "Now, we're going to switch gears a bit, and I'm going to ask you to tell me some stories."

Continue asking questions from the chart below.

CORE SKILLS	
Need for Achievement	Look for
1. What kinds of sacrifices have you had to make to be successful?	1. Substantial past sacrifices for success at work (time, other pursuits, etc.)
2. Tell me about a few times where you exceeded expectations or went beyond the call of duty.	2. Has regularly exceeded expectations for projects, making sales numbers, customer service
3. How do you know when you've truly succeeded?	3. Has been a sharp critic of own efforts; is tough on self in judging accomplishments
4. Over the last few years, how many hours have you worked in an average week?	4. Has regularly shown effort beyond the typical 40-hour workweek

5. What's the toughest goal you've ever set for yourself? How do you plan to top it?	5. Has accomplished a very challenging work goal; has a specific plan to top that goal
6. Tell me about your last success at work.	6. Tells a story about a major accomplishment and hard work to achieve it
7. What is the hardest you have ever worked to succeed in your job? How often do situations call for that kind of effort? How did you feel about having to work that hard?	7. Has a story about exerting a tremendous effort leading to a major accomplishment; has done so regularly; feels that such effort is simply par for the course
Competitiveness	Look
1. When was the last time you were competitive? Another time?	1. Has more than one recent example (work, home, sports)
2. Where do you rank in the sales team? May I have your permission to contact your boss to ask about your rank?	2. Consistently ranks at or near the top of the sales team and gives permission to verify
3. What is the most fun you have ever had winning a customer over?	3. Talks about enjoying the process of winning over a difficult customer
4. How would your manager rank your competitiveness compared to your peers? What makes your manager see you as competitive?	4. Manager ranks candidate as among most competitive
5. Tell me about the most competitive situation you have ever been in at work. How unusual was it for you?	5. Talks about a competition with coworkers or with competitors over a customer; describes it as a common occurrence
Optimism	Look
1. Tell me about a time you remained persistent, even after others gave up.	1. A history of substantial effort to secure a new customer

2. Think back to the last time you lost a deal. What did you do to recover?	2. Quickly put the situation in perspective and bounced back by working on another sale
3. Tell me about a sale that went wrong. What did you attribute it to?	3. Attributes a problem to a temporary, unusual situation out of own control
4. Tell me about the worst customer problem you ever faced. How did you recover?	4. Again, quickly put the situation in perspective and got going on another sale; came back strong after tough times
Confidence	Look for
1. Tell me about a time someone rejected you. What did you do?	1. Handled situation with poise; quickly bounced back
2. Talk about a time when you've gotten a result even through it upset someone.	2. Candidates who will have trouble cold calling may be concerned with confrontation and worried about upsetting a prospect. Be sure they can ask for forgiveness, if necessary, rather than permission (and defuse the situation later if needed.)
Persuasion	Look for
1. Tell me about the most difficult deal you ever handled.	1. Listen carefully to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does this sale stack up against the ones they would need to make for you? ▪ How did they handle the challenges thrown at them? ▪ Did they close the deal?
2. What is helpful to you in getting someone to see things your way?	2. Learns what is most important to their colleague and uses that value to influence effectively. Less persuasive candidates will often talk about simply presenting the facts as sufficient in and of themselves

Relationship	Look for
1. How do you go about developing bonds with clients/customers?	1. A history of finding common ground and building relationships from there
2. Tell me about a client or coworker relationship that was particularly challenging to develop.	2. What was most challenging about this type of client or colleague? How does this person's personality compare to the customers or clients they will meet at your company?
Organization	Look for
1. Tell me about a time when your organization skills were particularly important.	1. Describes a challenging situation that was resolved through time management and use of organizational skills
2. Talk about a situation when you wish you had been more organized.	2. Talks about a situation that caught them off guard, but provided an important learning experience

SPECIALIZED SKILLS	
Problem Solving	Look for
1. Tell me about a difficult client/customer dilemma that you resolved. (For inexperienced candidates, a difficult dilemma is sufficient.)	1. Discusses a multifaceted issue that they diagnosed and resolved efficiently
2. Tell me about a client problem that was impossible to resolve.	2 Find out exactly what made the problem impossible to resolve: a truly impossible situation or lack of skill?

Profit Priority	Look for
1. Tell me about the best prospect you pursued in the last year. What made them stand out?	1. Identified a prospect with stronger potential than other leads and prioritized them over lower-value opportunities
2. Tell me about the last time you had conflicting priorities at work or school. How did you decide on a course of action?	2. For inexperienced candidates. Look for prioritization based on applicability to the candidate's primary duties/responsibilities. You will need to teach them about your industry
Independent	Look for
1. Tell me about a time when you took action without explicit permission.	1. Discusses a situation in which they took initiative to resolve an issue rather than waiting for instructions
2. Tell me about a time you really needed help at work.	2. Describes a situation requiring teamwork, rather than an issue where they simply waited for instructions
Listening	Look for
1. Tell me about a time when you were with a client/customer and had to read between the lines to figure out what was important to them. How did you do it?	1. Describes gaining insight into a client's needs through skillful questions and careful observation (Ask inexperienced candidates about a co-worker)
2. Tell me about your most recent meeting with a new client. How did you structure the meeting?	2. Comes prepared with thoughtful questions and probes responses carefully
Tact	Look for
1. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an obnoxious coworker.	1. Describes a situation in which they remained calm and diplomatic, refraining from argument

2. Tell me about a particularly disrespectful client or customer. How did you handle them?	2. Remains calm and assertive without showing aggression
Detail	Look for
1. Give me a detailed description of how you manage your paperwork and reporting to the company.	1. Describes a diligent and consistent record keeping system
2. Tell me about a time when you caught an important detail in a project that others may have missed.	2. Describes a situation in which they perceptively identified a nuance that contributed to a project
Analytical	Look for
1. Tell me about a time that you had to make a sale based on analysis of data? Describe the process in detail.	1. Describes a data analysis they performed leading to a sale. Be sure they performed the analysis personally
2. Tell me about a project that required you to be good with numbers.	2. Describes a project requiring them to show numeric skill, as well as a successful completion
Conceptual	Look for
1. What is the most complex sales situation you ever had to wrap your head around.	1. Describes a complex issue similar in nature to those in your company, and demonstrates understanding/mastery
2. Do you prefer dealing with black-and-white concrete issues or more complex, abstract concepts?	2. Discusses enjoyment of multifaceted concepts requiring intellectual effort to understand
Strategic	Look for
1. Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a complex customer strategy.	1. Describes comprehension of the customer's strategy and commensurate adjustments in style and approach

2. How do your department's operations contribute to your company's strategy?	2. Articulates the contribution of their department's function to the company's strategic goals
Technical	Look for
1. What technical aspects of the business do you need to learn to increase your sales?	1. Discusses learning objectives for industry knowledge and how this will improve sales performance
2. Tell me about the most challenging technical sale you have encountered in the last year and how you handled it.	2. Describes a sale in which they worked with client technical buyers to answer questions, solve problems, and move the deal forward
Executive Presence	Look for
1. How has your style of interacting with senior executives changed over the years?	1. Discusses increasing comfort behaving assertively with senior executives consistent with career stage
2. Talk about the last time you were nervous at a high-level meeting. How did you handle it?	2. Describes a successful effort to overcome challenges and command a high-level meeting. Make sure that they were not intimidated by the seniority of the attendees
Motivator	Look for
1. When did you last have to motivate a distributor? How did you do it?	1. Discusses learning the distributor's unique goals, demonstrating how selling their product helps meet them, and developing a consistent follow-up process
2. Tell me about your biggest challenge in staying top of mind with a distributor. How did you resolve it?	2. Discusses relationship with a busy distributor and development of a system to maintain the distributor's attention

Scoring

Once you have the data to assess the three elements of Drive and the other skills in the job spec, you are ready to score the candidate. Scoring a candidate's Drive Interview involves two steps.

First, you score the candidate on each of the three key Drive characteristics (need for achievement, competitiveness, and optimism), as well as the other core skills (confidence, persuasion, relationship, and organization), and the 3-5 specialized skills selected above.

Use the following scale to summarize your findings:

Rating

- 1 – Poor
- 2 – Weak
- 3 – Average
- 4 – Good
- 5 – Excellent

Next, add up your ratings for each skill:

Number of 5's: _____

Number of 4's: _____

Number of 3's: _____

Number of 2's: _____

Number of 1's: _____

The following table provides a summary of the scores. If the candidate scored . . .

Score Summary	Definition
Mostly 4's & 5's	This candidate is clearly skilled and would need minimal development. This individual is a good match.
Mostly 3's	This candidate may need some significant development. Proceed with caution.
Mostly 1's & 2's	This candidate lacks the skills needed to sell. There is a high risk for performance problems. It is not recommended to move forward with this individual.

We recommend accepting only candidates scoring 4 or 5 in Drive (Need for Achievement, Competitiveness and Optimism) for most sales positions, especially those requiring substantial account acquisition, particularly if you need them to start producing quickly with minimal training. But you must balance your ratings of Drive with your evaluations of the other key skills for the job. Only *you* can set the bar

and arrive at a final decision. However, using this type of interview process to help you identify Drive will give you a strong advantage in making sure that your salespeople have “the right stuff” to begin with.

Of course, as you review your ratings and make your hiring decision, please also consider all of the other factors that will contribute to the salesperson’s success: fit with the company culture, fit with your management style, fit with the compensation plan, etc. All of these elements, in addition to the candidate’s Drive, come together to determine success.

Six months after a candidate is hired, we recommend comparing your ratings with their actual performance

in each skill. Learning from your mistakes will help you improve as an interviewer.

Summary

- ◆ There are five classic errors commonly committed by most sales interviewers:
- ◆ *The BS Session.* Allowing the conversation to drift wherever the candidate leads you.
- ◆ *The “What If” Trap.* Overuse of questions asking about hypothetical situations with a sales candidate.
- ◆ *Weak Sales Resistance.* Falling for a candidate who simply uses classic sales techniques on you in the interview.
- ◆ *Hiring Someone Like You.* Bringing people on board just because they are a lot like you. Remember, they probably also have your shortcomings.
- ◆ *Settling for a Warm Body.* Caving in to the pressure to hire someone just because you have a vacancy. By doing so, you risk hiring an underperformer. You will wish you held out for a Driver.
- ◆ The 3 Ps are the key to an effective interview:

1. *Planning.* Make sure you do a thorough job spec, using the process outlined in this chapter.
 2. *Probing the Past.* Dig into the candidate's previous experiences, using the techniques we provided.
 3. *Patterns.* Look for patterns in the candidate's responses and behavior for clues to how the person will behave on the job
- ◆ Use the questions provided to assess the three elements of Drive, the other core skills, and any specialized skills you select.
 - ◆ Use the rating scale provided to arrive at a final Drive Interview score.
 - ◆ Make sure you weigh Drive heavily in your final decision, but also consider the other key skills identified.

9

Chapter

Interviewing Secrets

You can run but you can't hide.

—Joe Louis, World Heavyweight Champion

As described in chapter 8, the science of interviewing for Drive is composed of the structure of the interview and in asking specific questions designed to identify personality traits and patterns. We now come to the art of interviewing—that is, not only knowing what questions to ask but how to ask them.

Disarming the Candidate

The candidate on the other side of the table is wearing a filter. It is a filter they have constructed to seem as

desirable as possible. Your job is to penetrate the filter and get to the real person. You can do so by disarming the candidate's defense system with techniques that neutralize the filtering mechanism. The following are some of our favorites.

Digging for Gold

You should never make a judgment about an element of Drive until you are absolutely certain of your diagnosis. To achieve certainty, you often need to probe deeper into the candidate's responses to your initial questions. If you fail to probe the candidate's responses, you may miss a great opportunity to gather important information beyond the prepared answers.

For example, suppose you say, "Tell me about the last time you were competitive." The candidate then replies, "Oh, um . . . the other day."

You would not just leave it there and say, "OK, sounds good. Let's move on." Obviously, you would dig in further to find out what the candidate did the other day that was so competitive. The inquiry would continue along the following lines.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the last time you were competitive.

CANDIDATE: Oh, um . . . the other day.

INTERVIEWER: The other day?

CANDIDATE: Yeah. I was at the gym. I noticed the guy on the elliptical machine next to mine going faster than me. So, I sped up to beat him.

INTERVIEWER: What happened then?

CANDIDATE: He noticed me speeding up. So, he tried going faster and got winded. I won.

This is a great start; but you always want to bring it back to the world of work.

INTERVIEWER: How does that competitiveness show up at work?

CANDIDATE: When I'm with a customer, I'm always competitive; thinking about what our company's competitors are quoting and doing whatever it takes to beat it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So, how could someone in the room tell that you were being competitive? What would you be doing?

CANDIDATE: I'm always asking questions about how satisfied the customer is with our competitor and what we can do to surpass them.

Each time the candidate responded, you dug deeper, getting more specifics and learning more. The key thing to remember about probing is that every question you ask is like a ripe, juicy piece of fruit. All you need to do

is keep squeezing until you have gotten all the information possible out of the initial question.

The Echo

This is a great technique designed to ask for more information without making the candidate feel defensive. Simply tilt your head slightly to the side and repeat the key words that interest you, using a questioning tone. For example:

CANDIDATE: That customer was always a little tough to manage.

INTERVIEWER: A little tough?

CANDIDATE: Yeah. They were a real stickler for details.

INTERVIEWER: Stickler for details?

CANDIDATE: Yeah. They got bent out of shape whenever I was late.

INTERVIEWER: Whenever you were late?

CANDIDATE: Yeah. You can't always make every meeting on time.

Obviously, this candidate needs some time management training, but the point here is that by repeating the person's own words, you encourage the candidate to keep talking until enough has been revealed for you to form an opinion.

Follow-ups

These are simple open-ended questions often starting with the key words: Who, What, When, Where, and How. Try to avoid closed-ended questions whenever possible, since closed-ended questions invite one-word answers.

Notice the difference in these two examples:

Example 1: Closed-Ended Question

INTERVIEWER: Did you have trouble dealing with difficult customers?

CANDIDATE: Yes.

Example 2: Open-Ended Question

INTERVIEWER: What was challenging about your most difficult customers?

CANDIDATE: They came across as frustrated and short-tempered. That always scares me . . .

Extreme Questions

These are some of our favorite questions. They will take you right to the heart of the matter. Extreme questions include such words as most, least, biggest, smallest, best, and worst. Let's look at two examples, one with a standard question and one with an extreme question.

Example 1: Standard Question

INTERVIEWER: What was challenging about your last job?

CANDIDATE: Getting everyone on my team to work together and pulling off some tough assignments.

Example 2: Extreme Question

INTERVIEWER: What was the most challenging aspect of your last job?

CANDIDATE: Dealing with my boss.

To reap the full benefit of the extreme question, a follow-up combining the echo and extreme styles is helpful.

INTERVIEWER: Dealing with your boss? What was most challenging about that?

Fly on the Wall

This is another powerful technique. You can get great clarification about what a candidate is like to work with by using this tactic.

CANDIDATE: I guess I got a little miffed when that customer called me a jerk.

INTERVIEWER: Miffed? If I were a fly on the wall, how would I know you were miffed?

CANDIDATE: Well, I raised my voice and hung up on him.

Dealing with Evasive Candidates

Have you ever run across one of these?

INTERVIEWER: Bill, tell me about a time when you wish you were more organized.

CANDIDATE: Oh, gee, let's see. Hmm . . . You know, I really can't think of a time.

Later...

INTERVIEWER: Bill, tell me about a sale you made that was unprofitable.

CANDIDATE: Hmm. You know, I really can't think of one. They've all been profitable really.

Later...

INTERVIEWER: Bill, what kinds of sales are most challenging for you?

CANDIDATE: Oh . . .um . . . none, really. I've never really had trouble selling anything.

Well, consider this your first time.

We have all experienced evasive candidates. They give quick, one-word answers; provide little elaboration; and can't seem to think of a single mistake they've ever made. Taken at face value, they are perfect specimens

of salespeople who simply don't want to waste your time with the details of their many accomplishments. But we know better. These folks are being evasive for a reason. They often have something to hide, whether it's a bad experience or their lack of experience.

Many new sales managers fall into the trap of unconsciously colluding with the evasive candidate. They allow the candidate to give short answers with little detail. They move on to the next question quickly to avoid the awkward silence. The problem is that once the candidate knows that a quick answer will be accepted, it's the only kind you will get.

Let's discuss a few tactics to deal with evasive candidates. We recommend starting out with a gentler technique. But, if they do not cooperate, confront them about their behavior.

“What about it?” Questions

“What about it?” questions are a great first strategy for cracking a candidate's defenses. For example, when asked about a previous job, a candidate may seem skittish and say, “Yes, that job sure was a tough one,” and then look at you as if to imply, “Next question.” The candidate may also try to move on to another subject at this point. But there's no way you're going to leave gold like this laying around. You can reply with, “Back to your last job for a minute; what about it was hard?” This follow-up targets the heart of the issue and forces the candidate to give you more information.

The Magic Wand Question

Previously introduced in Chapter 8, this technique is also great when a candidate is reluctant to reveal the details of previous underperformance at work. Simply ask the candidate in a disarming, creative way what would have made the situation better. Such a tactic will typically cause candidates to drop their defenses.

Here's an example:

INTERVIEWER: What about the last job was so hard?

CANDIDATE: The environment was really tough to work in.

INTERVIEWER: OK, if we had a magic wand and could improve three things about that job so you would never want to leave, what would they be?

CANDIDATE: The boss would be less demanding; my assistant would not have quit; and my coworkers would be more intelligent.

Avoiding “Why” Questions

Here's another tip for getting past a candidate's defenses. If you are interviewing someone who is having trouble disclosing information without looking nervous, avoid “Why” questions. In an interview setting, the word “why” can have a slightly accusing tone, especially to someone who is scared about revealing something personal. “Why” tends to make

evasive people more evasive. Instead, rephrase these inquiries into “What” or “How” questions. For example, instead of asking, “Why did you do that?” try “What caused you to make that decision?” This is a subtle point, but it can be extraordinarily useful in helping a nervous candidate relax enough to open up and tell you something.

Confrontation

So, you’ve tried to play nice but the candidate is still shutting you out, eh? Well, here’s Plan B for handling evasive candidates: confront them.

Every now and then, you will get a candidate who gives nothing but terse, one- or two-word answers.

Here’s an example:

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to help a customer out.

CANDIDATE: Yeah, you know, that happens a lot.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Can you give me a specific example?

CANDIDATE: Sure, you know, just the other day, I helped a customer.

INTERVIEWER: OK. What happened? Can you give me the details?

CANDIDATE: I can't remember the details exactly. Someone just needed some help, and I was there. Happens all the time.

You might let something like this slide one or two times because you have so many questions to get through. However, when the candidate keeps the evasive wall up past that point, you should call them on it. For example:

INTERVIEWER: I get the impression that some of these questions are tough for you to answer.

[Silence]

CANDIDATE: Yeah. It's just hard to come up with specifics.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I understand. I know it's a lot to remember. But rest assured, you have plenty of time to think. It's very important for me to get these details so we can determine if this is the kind of job you are looking for. Also, I will need to know what kinds of specific details to ask your references about. As we go on, just let me know if you need some extra time, and I will wait as long as you need. Let's try a different question.

Move on to your next question. Later, circle back to the initially evaded question. If the candidate is still evasive, this person likely is trying to hide something. Proceed with extreme caution.

Red Flags

As you proceed with the interview, you will be assessing several skills in addition to Drive, such as organization, relationship skills, and persuasiveness. Please note that there are a few candidate traits that indicate that the person may have tendencies that will cause performance problems on the job. These red flags are often evident but go undetected during the selection process. Industrial psychologists Neil Witmer and Jeff Grip, in a 2018 report, identified several of these behavior patterns.¹ The table that follows summarizes the most problematic behaviors. Take it with you to your interviews and look it over once before you begin and once at halftime. Make sure that you look closely when any of these traits seems evident.

Evidence of any of these behaviors during interviews should be probed thoroughly. However, these red flags are not foolproof indicators of poor performance. In a given job, one may be a fatal flaw while others are tolerated. A good rule of thumb is that one of these red flags indicates caution, and two or more indicate risk, raising serious doubt as to a successful job match.

Table 1: Red Flags Checklist

Limited Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ black-and-white thinking—gives simplistic answers to complex questions ○ has difficulty discussing abstract ideas or long-term implications of decisions
Extreme Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ thinks too quickly—hard to follow in interview – unable to give simple answers ○ makes things too complex - bores quickly in job assignments
Too Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ gets excited by intellectual and theoretical ideas ○ spends less time discussing practical and specific accomplishments ○ shows eccentric social mannerisms – is more cerebral than socially down-to-earth
Hyperactive Worrying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ high-strung, talks fast, verbose ○ spends too much time discussing fine distinctions and small details ○ second-guesses past decisions – worries – overly self-critical
Unfocused: Distractible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ gets distracted on tangents during interview ○ answers only 1 or 2 parts when asked complex 3-part questions ○ admits undisciplined work habits or complains about chaotic work environments
Highly Controlling; Avoids Delegating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ over-controls the interview – frustrates when schedules change ○ poor listening – interrupts – dominates the conversation ○ demands direct reporting of all problems ○ focuses on own achievements rather than empowerment of others' ○ gives orders and mandates – cannot articulate stories of empowerment of talented staff

Disengaged Socially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ extreme introvert – falters with small talk – interviewer feels awkward ○ prefers analysis and computer/office over communication and relationship-building ○ shows more excitement over hobbies/avocation than past job accomplishments
Overly Analytical; Linear; Rigid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ stiff personality – speaks in an overly linear and calculating manner ○ uncomfortable with ambiguous questions in the interview – needs a lot of structure (conversations, directions, assignments) ○ intolerant of creative ideas and approaches – frustrates with others' mistakes ○ requires excessive data – risk-averse – lacks “out-of-the-box thinking
Arrogance; Condescension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “better-than-thou” or “smarter-than-thou” – has difficulty admitting shortcomings ○ “tells” rather than “listens” – leaves people behind if they can't keep up ○ may be prone to vulgarity ○ may play “victim” and blame others . . . or may suffer from over-confidence
Low Social Confidence; Conflict Avoidant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ overly nice, accommodating, self-conscious or apologetic in the interview ○ avoids conflict – intimidated by higher-ups or strong personalities – cannot articulate stories of occasionally ruffling feathers or creating controversy ○ may become over-committed or fail to hold staff accountable
Guarded; Aloof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ apprehensive to discuss personal shortcomings or personal history ○ hard to read

Posturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ interested in image, appearance, job title and job perks ○ exaggerates personal knowledge/skill and past performance ○ uses charm to impress others, especially upper management or the interviewer
Self-Absorbed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ more focused on own performance than getting results through others ○ shows more evidence of “taking” than “giving” – verbose – poor listening ○ insensitive to others’ time ○ over-focuses on personal interests rather than company priorities
Punishing; Emotionally Uncontrolled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ degrades people when frustrated – prone to outbursts or inappropriate intensity ○ uses job threats to get staff’s attention
Tolerates Poor Performers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tries to develop limited people – cannot tell several stories of upgrading talent ○ cannot articulate performance management principles (feedback accountability) ○ limited people reading skills – cannot describe nuances of others’ personalities
Narrow Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lacks experience in organizations of similar size/culture, or in a similar role ○ has disproportional experience at Corp. vs Division, public vs private, large vs small ○ lacks experience leading similar spans of control
Career Instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ shows bad judgment by repeatedly choosing bad companies or bad bosses ○ restless – bored – overly ambitious ○ positions have been downsized/eliminated multiple times

Source: Witmer and Grip 2018. Used with permission.

Summary

- ◆ Getting past a candidate's defenses requires several advanced interviewing skills.
- ◆ Never make a judgment about an element of Drive unless you are absolutely certain. Keep probing to uncover the details in candidate responses. Several techniques are helpful for doing so:
 - *Digging for Gold*. Keep asking for greater detail until you have the whole story; steer general character information into a work context.
 - *The Echo*. Repeat with a questioning tone the key words the candidate has said.
 - *Follow-ups*. Ask open-ended questions starting with *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, or *How*. Avoid closed-ended questions, which require only a yes or no answer.
 - *Extreme Questions*. Ask questions including such words as most, least, best, or worst to get to the heart of the matter.
 - *Fly on the Wall*. To get specifics about a situation, ask the candidate, "If I were a fly on the wall, what would I have seen you doing?"

- ◆ There are several great ways to handle evasive candidates:
 - “*What about it?*” *Questions*. Ask what about the situation in question was particularly difficult.
 - *The Magic Wand Question*. Ask what three things the candidate would change about a difficult situation if we had a magic wand.
 - *Avoiding “Why?” Questions*. “Why” can sound accusatory to a nervous candidate. Rephrase *Why* questions into *What* or *How* questions.
 - *Confrontation*. Occasionally you need to firmly, but gently, let an obstinately evasive candidate know that they must provide you with more information on a question so you can make a hiring decision.
- ◆ Look closely for *red flags* in the candidate’s behavior that may compromise performance. They include arrogance, being overly guarded, and lack of emotional control.

Part Three:
Setting the Table for Success

10

Chapter

Onboarding High-Drive Salespeople

*The score will take care of itself when you take care
of the effort that precedes the score.*

—John Wooden

So, you have hired a high-Drive salesperson, now what? It is common for sales managers and business owners to assume that a salesperson high in Drive will just naturally know what to do in their new role. But this assumption gets a lot of companies in trouble and it is an unrealistic expectation.

New salespeople, even high-Drive ones, will need a little bit of time to ramp up. This is especially true if they do not have much experience. Furthermore, new salespeople bond (or do not bond) with their new team and manager in the first 90 days of employment, so it is extremely important to pay extra close attention to how they are being welcomed to the team.

And lastly, even high-Drive salespeople need encouragement and guidance from time to time. They want to know how their success is measured, how they will be rewarded and that their efforts are being recognized and appreciated.

Critical First 30-90 Days

Believe it or not, the following is a common scenario in struggling sales organizations.

A new salesperson, let's call her Jane, is hired and shows up for her first day of work. There is no formal greeting and certainly no fanfare. The hiring manager greets her and quickly shows her around, perhaps introducing her to a person here or there. A few hours in, the sales manager meets with Jane to give her the lay of the land. The manager then says, "*Let me know if you need me.*"

That's it. Really.

The salesperson is then expected to pretty much figure everything else out on her own. Jane may ask around and the quality of the answers received is dependent upon luck. So, she goes to work, doing the best she can, given the circumstances.

About a week passes and the disoriented salesperson inevitably has "buyer's remorse." This is a natural letdown after the euphoria of being recruited and hired.

She has some sleepless nights wondering if she made the right decision. But there is nobody to really talk to. She certainly does not want to admit to her manager that she feels lost. And meanwhile, the sales manager is wondering why the new superstar is not already

producing at expected levels.

Reality begins to set in on both sides. The back up in proposals or customer service the hiring manager promised is not materializing. Perhaps the sales meetings are not well-organized, and the salespeople are complaining about it at the water cooler. And the first training class is on something Jane has already mastered, but must sit through anyway in deference to the boss.

By the end of the first couple of months, the honeymoon phase is definitely over, and the once in a lifetime chance to really bond during the early part of the relationship is gone forever.

This is *not* the way outstanding sales organizations welcome their new recruits. The first 90 days after being hired are a critical time when new employees bond (or do not bond) emotionally with their new company and colleagues. So, let's discuss how great sales teams onboard their new talent.

Day One

The new salesperson is hired, let's call him Bill, and shows up for work. The receptionist has been prepared in advance for the big moment, stands up, walks around the receptionist desk, smiles, shakes hands and says,

“Welcome Bill. We are all very excited to have you join our organization. Let me show you to the conference room to meet John Smith, who will be showing you around.”

John is going to be Bill's mentor for the first 90 days. John shows up with the HR manager or office

manager. They warmly greet Bill. They proceed to walk around the office, making introductions to as many people as possible. All current employees have been prepped in advance and are familiar with the ritual. John tells Bill that they are going to have lunch together later and leaves him with the HR manager and/or office manager to fill out paperwork, discuss insurance, benefits, and so on. The office manager then shows Bill where everything is, from the breakroom to the restrooms, how the computers work, how the phones work, etc.

Of course, if Bill has or shares an assistant, they will be part of the discussion. Meanwhile, a bottle of wine with a warm greeting card has been sent to Bill's house for dinner later that night. Remember . . . this is a family!

Do you see how this works?

This is one of the most important days of the new salesperson's life as well as the life of the company. It can also be a little daunting. You want to surround your new employee with warmth and excitement. You are going to be slaying dragons together, so let's bond and let's get pumped!

Remember it should be a first day ritual worthy of a superstar. Someone very important just joined your organization—a *producer*!

Now, take a minute to think about your current first day ritual for welcoming new salespeople. Visit the Additional Resources on [page 138-139](#) or <https://salesdrive.info/never-hire-a-bad-salesperson-again-resources/> for two worksheets to guide you in creating a new, elevated first day ritual, that you can

begin executing with your next sales hire.

Day One Lunch

Lunch the first day presents a wonderful opportunity to begin to transfer the excitement of the recruiting process into the mission at hand. Picture a great college football player and his first one-on-one meeting with his pro coach. The player, and your new salesperson, is going to be looking for every possible clue relative to the way the team and the coach operates and what is going to be expected.

This lunch is still in the bonding stage. Switching too quickly from the romance of recruiting to the challenges and hard work ahead can be a little too abrupt. The main message is that you are very happy the new salesperson is on board and you are excited about how you are going to succeed together.

If there is one vibe you want to establish at this point, it is *confidence!* Confidence in the company. Confidence in your product and services. Confidence in your new salesperson's abilities.

The lunch can become supercharged if the CEO or Owner of the company can join you. That is how the pros do it.

The Mission Meeting

During your new hire's first week, after they have settled in, we recommend sitting down with them for a process we call "The Salesperson Mission Meeting."

This is when the two of you discuss and compare each other's missions and visions for the coming year(s). Discuss the following questions together:

- What are they aspiring to achieve financially?
- How is the salesperson trying to develop their family?
- How do they like to work?
- What turns the salesperson on, or off, the most, in the course of working?

Meanwhile, from your side, explain the company's vision, including where it stands today and where it wants to go. Your salesperson's role is to achieve that vision. It is your role to ask how you can help them achieve their mission.

How to Conduct a Mission Meeting:

Step 1: Discuss the mission of the company and the vision of its leaders for development and growth.

Discuss what the company is trying to achieve as an organization and how the new salesperson will be an important part of accomplishing the mission.

This is the beginning of establishing the salesperson as part of something bigger than themselves, a basic need all human beings have. It is a critical part of the bonding process. *(Remember, new employees either bond or don't bond in the first 90 days of employment.)*

Step 2: Discuss the new salesperson's personal vision for their life.

Ask about the salesperson's family and their hopes,

dreams, and personal passions. *(Note: these are high leverage opportunities to connect with the salesperson over time on a deep emotional level.)*

For example, if the salesperson is trying to get a child in a particular school, perhaps company leadership has some contacts there. Or if the salesperson aspires to a leadership position at some point, periodically send along online webinars or courses that they might find of interest. They will be delighted over time that you remembered and that you care.

Step 3: Discuss expectations from both sides.

From the company's side, be sure to be as detailed and definite as you can about how you will define the salesperson's success in the first year. Define how it will be measured and how you plan to help them achieve it through company support and resources. *(Be sure to discuss nuances.)*

For example, if top line revenue generation is important but margin is even more critical, provide case study calculations. Expectations and measurements must be 100% synchronized.

Step 4: Discuss supporting the salesperson.

Ask the new salesperson how the company, and you, can best support them during the early months of employment and thereafter.

Be sure that the offer is authentic and that you will follow through on it.

Step 5: Discuss being a resource/confidante.

Be sure that you communicate that you are a safe haven for the salesperson to come to for any questions, and that no question is a dumb question, especially the first year. Ask what questions they currently have.

Also be sure your HR and IT teams have a supportive and helpful attitude as the new salesperson ramps up. Salespeople must treat the administrative staff with respect and vice versa for the overall machine to run smoothly.

Step 6: Psychologically, accent the positive.

Be sure to encourage your salesperson, build a teamwork attitude, and recognize their success. If your salesperson encounters particularly challenging prospects in their first week, be sure to turn a negative situation into a positive. (*Remember: One of the best times to motivate someone is when they are down.*)

Some examples:

- You *will* be successful here.
- We *will* reach our goals together.
- We *will* work well together.

Great athletic coaches constantly refer to the ultimate goal, “We *will* reach the playoffs *this year!*” Remember, confidence is contagious!

First Month Check-ins

It is a good practice to check-in with your new salesperson at least once a week for the first month. These meetings should be regularly scheduled, formal, and well-structured. Check-ins keep the momentum

alive and short circuit any early problems that might be developing. Issues as simple as knowing there is a delay in getting a cell phone are important to address.

You want to make sure all the little things are covered, fast, as a sign to the salesperson that they have joined a no-nonsense sales team that supports and appreciates them. Most likely, they just came from a company that was not buttoned up like your team. This is your chance to pump them up and show them how real winners operate.

Summary

- ◆ Welcome your new salesperson into a living system of communications and support.
- ◆ Create a welcoming first day experience that emphasizes the new salesperson's importance to the company and your enthusiasm to have them onboard.
- ◆ Use lunch on the salesperson's first day to bond and instill confidence. Ask your CEO or President to join, if possible.
- ◆ Conduct a well-planned Mission Meeting with your salesperson, clarifying each other's visions for the coming year, setting expectations, and establishing your role in support/mentoring,
- ◆ Check in regularly over the first month with structured meetings to address any issues and maintain momentum.

Epilogue

The Most Important Decisions of Your Career

*Plans are only good intentions unless
they immediately degenerate into hard work.*

—Peter Drucker

The sales decisions you make as a business owner or manager determine both the success of your company and your quality of life. They are among the most important decisions you will ever make.

This book has provided you with powerful tools to make informed decisions about improving your sales team's performance—and your company's bottom line. We have defined Drive and broken it down into its three elements: need for achievement, competitiveness, and optimism. We have seen how each element is essential for creating the *perfect storm* of passion that fuels great athletes and superstar salespeople alike.

We have discussed the enormous costs associated with underperformance in sales. You have determined these costs for your own company. We hope you have come to the

conclusion that it is far cheaper to screen in advance for high-potential performers than it is to carry underperforming salespeople and pray they will improve.

We discussed prescreening for Drive. You have learned interviewing techniques for getting a more accurate read on a candidate. You have also learned a process for onboarding your new salespeople to maximize their success.

Most important, you now have the answer to a question most sales managers and business owners have puzzled over for decades: *How do I determine if a salesperson has the potential to meet my expectations?*

In our experience as business owners and advisers, the mis-hiring and carrying of low-potential salespeople is often the number one waste of company resources and the biggest single opportunity cost in the company's life cycle. While there are a number of reasons salespeople succeed or fail, it all starts with potential—potential that is hard-wired in the form of Drive.

There is nothing easy about demanding that only A and B players work at your company, but that is exactly what the most successful professional sports franchises, the most elite universities, and the most powerful sales organizations do. They do not compromise. While the hiring process requires patience, discipline, and diligence, the rewards can be staggering as you finally elevate your sales team to its highest and best performance: the performance of champions.

Additional Resources

Drive Interview Planning Form

Step 1. Define Sales Roles: For each pair, check the role that applies to the position. If both roles apply, check both.

Sales	
Hunter	Develops leads and new business opportunities
Farmer	Aggressively develops and resells existing opportunities
Individual	Is solely responsible for account development and maintenance
Team-based	Works closely with others internally on the account
External	Spends a lot of time at client sites
Internal	Works almost exclusively from the office, via phone, etc.
Short Cycle	Quick or repetitive sales, usually under 2 months start to finish
Long Cycle	Strategic sales, understanding customer's business, 4+ months
Sell End	Sells directly to the end user
Sell Reps	Motivates other representatives to sell products
Simple Sales	Commodity sales, price sensitive, off-the-shelf
Complex Sales	Sells solutions involving multiple components and customization

Step 2. Review the Core Skills.

CORE SKILLS – Essential in all sales positions
Drive —needs to achieve; loves to compete and win; optimistic and thus certain of victory
Confidence —unfazed by rejection; will persist despite setbacks; inner strength
Persuasion —articulate; builds a good case, taking customer needs into account; closes compellingly
Relationship —easily establishes and maintains relationships with prospects and customers; service-oriented
Organization —disciplined; tracks opportunities and contacts; follows up; juggles multiple tasks; conscientious

Step 3. Select up to 3 Specialized Skills.

SPECIALIZED SKILLS – Unique to your position
Problem Solving —proactively, sometimes creatively, seeks solutions; solves customers' dilemmas
Profit Priority —understands business priorities, sells profitable business
Independent —self-starter, works well without external structure or supervision
Listening —patient; tunes in; will probe and clarify to get a real sense of customers' needs
Tact —considerate; diplomatic; treats others with respect, even if opinions differ
Detail —patient/detailed/timely with necessary product knowledge, reporting, paperwork
Analytical —can dig into needs/problems effectively; adept with numbers
Conceptual —abstract thinker; grasps complexity of customers' situations; develops complex solutions
Strategic —sees big picture and long-range implications; understands customers' strategies
Technical —understands customers' industry, products, and technology
Executive Presence —earns respect in the executive suite; appropriate image
Motivator —(if salesperson is not selling directly to end users) will teach, coach, motivate those who sell product to end user

First Day Ritual Checklist

Review this checklist and select what criteria you want to include in your new, elevated first day.
(In person or virtually)

Morning

- Welcome Greeting
- Welcome Meeting with Manager
- Meeting with HR to finalize any paperwork, benefits, etc.
- Office Tour
- Meeting with IT to obtain computer, phone, etc.
- Meeting with Assistant (if applicable)

Noon

- Lunch with Manager, Mentor, Senior Executives (e.g., CEO, VP), and any colleagues who will be closely working with the new salesperson
- Send gift to new hire's home

Afternoon

- Meeting with Senior Management (if they could not attend lunch)
- Meeting with Sales Team
- Meeting with Mentor (if your new hire will have one)
- End of Day Meeting with Manager. Gain feedback on the first day, answer any questions, and set up expectations for the rest of the week, including scheduling a Mission Meeting.

First Day Outline

Use the worksheet below to plan out your new, elevated first day.

8:00am: _____

9:00am: _____

10:00am: _____

11:00am: _____

Noon: _____

1:00pm: _____

2:00pm: _____

3:00pm: _____

4:00pm: _____

5:00pm: _____

Mission Meeting Guide

Create a mutual vision and motivate your salesperson to their full potential.

1. **Discuss the mission of the company and the vision of its leaders for development and growth.** Discuss the company's goals and how the new salesperson will be an important part of accomplishing the mission.
2. **Discuss the new salesperson's personal vision for their life.** Ask about their family, their hopes and dreams and their personal passions.
3. **Discuss expectations from both sides.** Define how the salesperson's success will be measured in their first year, and how you plan to help them achieve it through company support and resources.
4. **Discuss supporting the salesperson.** Ask the new salesperson how the company, and you, can best support them during the early months of employment and thereafter.
5. **Discuss being a resource/confidante.** Communicate that you are a safe haven for them to come to for any questions (no question is a dumb question). Ask what questions they currently have.
6. **Psychologically, accent the positive.** Be sure to encourage your salesperson, build a teamwork attitude and recognize their success.

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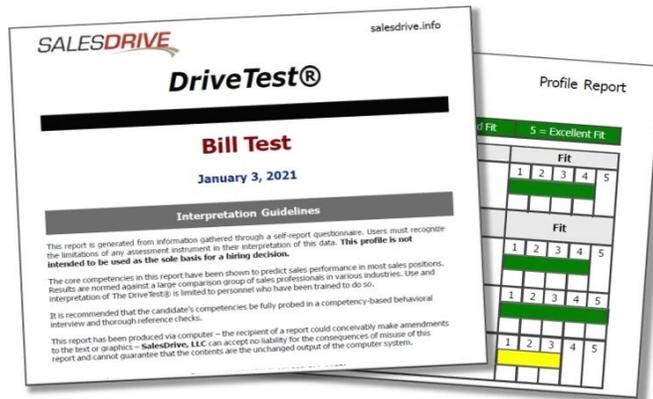
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About SalesDrive, LLC

SalesDrive, LLC simplifies the sales hiring process to help companies build better sales teams. Our proprietary sales assessment test is designed to identify Drive, as well as other fundamental characteristics common to high-performing salespeople.

For more information and to claim one complimentary DriveTest[®]*, please visit <https://salesdrive.info/> or contact us at (866) 972-5373.



*For business use only. Limit one DriveTest[®] trial per company. New companies only. We do not provide practice assessments to salespeople looking for personal development. All requests are screened prior to administration.

Important Information on Selecting High-Potential Salespeople



Greetings! My name is Dr. Christopher Croner and I am co-author of the book you have just completed.

First of all, congratulations! By taking the time and effort to read this book you are showing the curiosity and commitment it takes to really and truly build a team of sustainable sales winners. May I respectfully recommend the next step, [request a free DriveTest® assessment for your next sales hire](#). Use it to screen your next candidate to see if they have the Drive required to sustain high sales performance.

I have worked with more than 1,200 companies to help them develop the process of eliminating *pretenders* and building teams of sustainable *producers*. Below is my personal calendar. I am giving it to you because you have honored me by reading my book and because I know you are serious about this process.

Please schedule a call me, and we can talk about your specific needs and the resources we can bring to bear to help you achieve them.

Thank You,

Dr. Christopher Croner
(312) 577-7012
[Schedule a Call Now](#)