

How to Attract, Assess, Interview, Hire and Onboard Salespeople Who Actually Produce and Drive Revenue



Introduction

There is nothing more important to the success or failure of your business than finding, selecting, onboarding and motivating high-performance salespeople.

That may sound obvious but believe it or not, many owners and managers think that selling is easy . . . that anyone can sell . . . or at least that anyone can be trained to sell well.

Before we go any further, let's make sure we are on the same page.

Otherwise the rest of this guide is really not going to be a good use of your time because you are in denial about what it takes to build an outstanding sales team.

Not everyone has the aptitude to sell. In fact, only one out of every five people have the innate characteristics to convert your expensive sales training into real production.

Finding and hiring the one person out of five who will sell well requires a disciplined process and the science of a deep personality assessment.

The stakes are incredibly high. Being faked out or just settling for a bad salesperson can cost \$100K or more. Conversely, hiring and deploying a truly gifted salesperson can have a huge, positive impact on revenues.

1:5

salespeople *will* sell for you

-\$100,000

cost of one bad salesperson

So, we want you to think about this for a minute. If you are truly committed to building a world-class sales team, we have some really good, hard hitting information for you here. But there are no short cuts. Like everything else, quality requires discipline and patience but the payoff in this context is enormous.

Introduction

There is a *ton* (90+ years) of research out there that points to one outstanding characteristic that nearly all high-performance “Hunter” salespeople share . . . DRIVE.

Drive is not an abstract term. It is defined by psychologists relative to salespeople as three characteristics: Need for Achievement, Competitiveness and Optimism. These traits cannot be taught – you either have them or you don’t.

For you, knowing which candidates are high in Drive and which are low makes all the difference when recruiting salespeople – whom your business depends on for growth.

Digging deeper into these three characteristics:



Need for Achievement

The inner desire for ever more success.



Competitiveness

The love for winning and the absolute HATED for losing.



Optimism

The resilience to face rejection and continue with confidence.

Hire high-Drive sales reps and you are on your way to crushing your competitors. Hire low-Drive sales reps and wind up in the purgatory of endless excuses and “one more chance” quarters of disappointment.

So, while we will be passing along all sorts of ideas to you here, they will all come back to the core characteristic that is the prime mover for salespeople: **Drive!**

Introduction

How do you know someone is not just faking Drive through a great resume or strong interview skills?

You don't – and therein lies the challenge – because one great interview does not mean a candidate has the long-term, core aptitude to push and sell successfully month-after-month.

You are not after pretty men or women, who are cheerful and have memorized great answers to common interview questions.

You are looking for Navy Seals, road warriors, tough-minded people who have proven time-after-time, over the course of their lives, that they have the grit, the stamina and the will to push themselves further, compete and WIN!

So, let's discuss how to find these rare, high-Drive salespeople.

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Writing a Job Listing

Want to Attract A Selling Tiger? Write a Job Ad That Tigers Will Love and Sheep Will Run Away From!

Have you ever taken a look at most of the ads that populate the big job boards like Indeed or Monster?

Most of them are awful! They throw everything but the kitchen sink into the job description.

It is obvious the authors want to cram as much as they can into the template and the result is a "wall of words" that includes none of the clues that high-Drive salespeople look for when exploring opportunities.



High-Drive salespeople are looking for excitement, challenge and the opportunity to kick some serious butt in a competitive and highly rewarding environment.

They want to know that only the best of the best is going to get into this organization, and if they are chosen, they will be surrounded by fellow Drivers and a support system that will not block, but unleash their passion and potential.

The following are examples of two job listings:

1. A typical ad that will not particularly attract Drivers nor discourage slackers.
2. An optimized job ad that is full of high-Drive language and clues.

Writing a Job Listing

1. Drive-Neutral Job Listing

Sales position with leading home construction company.

- Minimum five years of experience selling construction related products or services.
- Combination of handling inbound leads and new business development.
- Salesperson will work with estimators on opportunities and proposals.
- Compensation commensurate with industry standards and experience.
- And so on...

2. High-Drive Job Listing

High-potential sales position with leading construction company. We want you to have a minimum of five years of experience *successfully* selling construction related products or services because 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. You will be working with seasoned estimators so you can concentrate on what you do best . . . selling.

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? And this is only the beginning. Because you are going to keep pushing and pressing on this high-Drive theme all the way through hiring and onboarding.

There is no reason, at all, that you should compromise when it comes to recruiting and managing sales talent!

Identifying Top Talent

You Can't Judge a Book by Looking at Its Cover. Let's Discuss How to Know – *Not Guess* – You are Dealing with High-Drive Talent.

You have written a high-Drive job ad and gathered some promising resumes. You are getting excited about bringing some of the best in for an interview.

STOP!

Just the fact that you are getting excited is a sure sign that emotional bias is already starting to creep in. We are all human and we cannot escape bias in interviews.

Fortunately, there is a critical step you can take first that will give you an 80% probability of sitting down with a high-aptitude salesperson, and that is a personality assessment that is specifically designed to go after **Drive**.



There are scores of personality tests available and many of them are pretty good. But here is the challenge. All of those tests were designed to size up a person's general personality by picking up all sorts of information that has nothing to do with predicting success in sales.

You are then left to try to correlate the general information with the specific core aptitude that a successful salesperson needs. Or, some of the so-called sales personality tests go after learned sales skills.

This creates a problem because just because a person **can** sell does not mean they **will** sell.

You have to go deeper, much deeper into the core, non-teachable characteristics research shows top producers have in common.

Identifying Top Talent

Which brings us to the DriveTest®. The DriveTest® is a sales assessment developed by Dr. Christopher Croner. It was specifically designed to measure the personality traits of salespeople and has been validated by salesperson performance.

It is challenging because the questions use a “forced-choice” format, preventing candidates from faking their way through.

Hiring managers love it because when it comes time to interview, they have confidence that they are sitting down with only high-aperture salespeople. Not pretenders. And they can spend their precious time parsing between real players.

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			

Yes, we sell the DriveTest® so we have a bias here, but what we are really interested in is the outcome. Our clients stay with us and refer people to us because they are building Drive-centric sales teams that meet and exceed their revenue expectations.

The key here is that without applying an assessment **before** interviewing, you greatly – and we mean *greatly* – increase the risk of pretenders getting through, faking you out in the interview and getting hired. And then, inevitably, fired, because they did not have the core aptitude essential for success.

[Learn more about the DriveTest® here](#) and we encourage you to try it out. Your first assessment is free!

Reviews

SalesDrive has helped thousands of companies perfect their hiring process and hire better salespeople, but don't take our word for it. Read what our clients are saying below . . .



Bill Goldberg, CEO/Principal, Relevate Health Group

"Hiring proven, successful, brand new, relationship-building sales talent is one of the hardest jobs in business. Everyone thinks they can sell new business but in fact very few can. We have found SalesDrive to be an excellent tool to spotlight those that can actually sell new business."



Mike Gonski, Sales Director, Sunbird Software

"When Sunbird Software needed to quickly develop a team of professional inside and outside representatives, we depended on SalesDrive. We were able to quickly and easily screen candidates. We have found focus areas from evaluation results and suggested questions for interviewing extremely valuable."



Eric Grossman, CEO, NextHealth Technologies

"As an early stage company, every sales hire is critical. SalesDrive is a useful tool in our arsenal to help determine whether sales candidates are true hunters and glass eaters. So far, it has been 100% reliable. We utilize SalesDrive with all candidates prior to in-person interviews."



Steve Glover, President, Compugen Finance

"I used the SalesDrive service for many years now and it has proven to be a reliable and key part of our hiring process at Compugen Finance."



Steve Cebra, Senior VP, Walker Consultants

"Walker has been using the Production Builder™ and Sales DriveTest® for over ten years and find it to be an extremely valuable tool as we evaluate business development candidates. The accuracy of the results is amazing."



Bruce Hohensee, President, Talent Driven Consulting

"Using the SalesDrive assessment has given us good insight on the natural strengths of our sales and business development candidates. The correlation between the assessments and the abilities of the candidates has been strong."

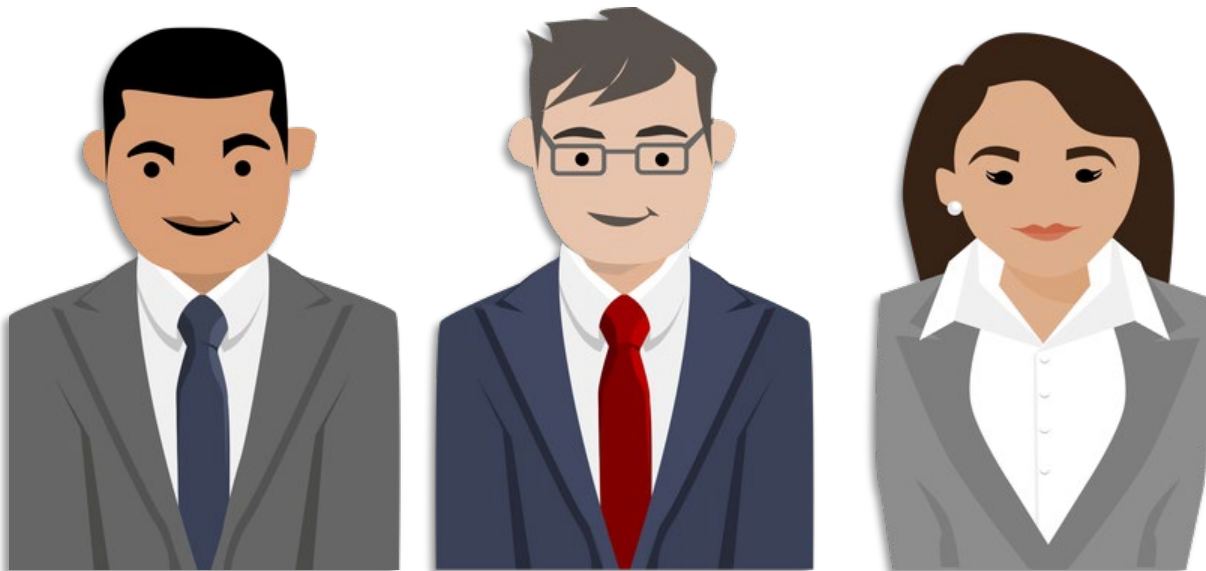
Interviewing

Lazy Intuition vs. Hard Core Behavioral Science

If you have made it this far, we hope you are buying into the critical importance of deep DNA when it comes to Hunter salespeople.

We've discussed writing a high-Drive job ad and applying a Drive-focused assessment, now let's discuss interviewing.

If you follow our process, chances are very good that you will be sitting face-to-face with someone who has the true potential to successfully sell for you. But you can improve your odds even more by applying a high quality, "behavioral interview."



Interviewing

What is a Behavioral Interview and Why is it so Important?

Any psychologist will tell you: the best predictor of future performance is past behavior.

Makes sense, right?

Think about yourself. You probably have a very good idea about how you will react in the future to things like pressure, stress, or anger based upon situations you have experienced in the past.

If someone confronts you and you do not like confrontation, you will probably try to diffuse the situation. On the other hand, if you do not mind confrontation, you may argue, as you have in the past. It would be very unlikely you would change your behavior after years of momentum one way or the other.

The same goes for the sales candidates you are interviewing. But there is a catch . . .

They are trying to land a great job. So, they will be on their *best* behavior, saying all the right things, trying very hard to anticipate the answers you hope to receive rather than giving the honest truth.

And they have a huge advantage, unless you come prepared with the type of behavioral interview questions psychologists use to strip away the veneer and get to the real predictors of future behavior.

The right behavioral questions will get to the real heart of the matter, the pivotal moment for your company as it tries to succeed and grow as an enterprise.

Many people who interview brilliantly can sell. They just proved it with their beautiful one act performance. But much fewer people will sell, consistently, week-after-week, month-after-month . . . through the triumphs and rejections.

Those are the people you want to hire, and those are the people you will validate with a professionally prepared, behavioral interview.

Interview Questions

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

You will see a pattern. They always ask the candidate to describe past behavior, not feelings or aspirations.

And as for your intuition, of course, that is valuable and important, particularly when you are thinking about cultural fit and managerial style. But the whole concept of relying on “your golden gut” to determine real talent is a fallacy.

We have yet to find anyone who hires on intuition alone without a structured, behavioral interview, who has less than a 50% turnover rate.

Q: Tell me about a time everyone else gave up but you continued to pursue a prospect and closed the deal?

This question does not evoke a canned answer. It forces the candidate to think about a real situation in which they remained resilient and stuck to their guns. The answer will give you an indication of the candidate’s fortitude and grit.

Q: If I were a fly on the wall and I was observing an argument you may have had with a coworker or your manager, what would I have seen?

This question again requires the candidate to think back to a real situation in their past, and usually evokes a more truthful and descriptive answer than a question like “How do you get along with others?” Again, use follow up questions to fill in the nuances of what really happened.

Q: What do you like to do to unwind and recharge away from work?

Again, an active question as opposed to “what are your hobbies?” Listen for passions that indicate need for achievement and competitiveness. For example, casual tennis is great exercise, but even better if the candidate competes in a league. Being a foodie is wonderful but actually taking on the challenge of cooking can be a stronger indicator of need for achievement – the most important hunter trait.

Onboarding

A Platinum Opportunity All Too Often Lost

When a high-Drive salesperson starts a new position, it is not unlike a professional athlete starting on a new team.

First of all, they are excited. Really excited! Fired up –by nature and by circumstance. High-Drive salespeople are usually successful wherever they work so they do not move around much, making this is a huge moment in their lives. It is also a huge moment for their families. Their wives or husbands are excited. Their kids are excited. And no doubt they have bragged to all their friends about the big move to a *great* company.



This is an absolutely golden, platinum diamond opportunity for you and your company to leverage this excitement and energy with an absolute knock out onboarding process.

But for many, if not most companies, it is an opportunity lost.

The following are two onboarding scenarios we have seen in real life:

Scenario 1: A new salesperson is hired and shows up for their first day of work. There is no formal greeting and certainly no fanfare. The hiring manager greets them and quickly shows them around, perhaps introducing them to a person here or there. A few hours in, the sales manager meets with the new hire to give them the lay of the land. The manager then says, *"Let me know if you need me."* That's it. Really.

Onboarding

The salesperson is then expected to pretty much figure everything else out for themselves. They might ask around and the quality of the answers received are dependent upon luck. They go to work. 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. The new hire has some sleepless nights wondering if they made the right decision. But there is nobody to really talk to. They certainly do not want to admit to their manager that they feel lost.

And meanwhile the sales manager is wondering why the new superstar is not already producing to 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 other sales team members are complaining about it at the water fountain. The first training class is on something the new salesperson has already mastered but they have to sit through it anyway in deference to their boss.

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

Scenario 2: The new salesperson is hired 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 Todd. We are all very excited to have you join our organization. Let me show you to the conference room to meet John, who will be showing you around.”* John is going to be Todd’s mentor for the first 90 days.



Onboarding

John shows up with the HR manager or office manager. They warmly greet Todd. They proceed to walk him around the office and introduce him to as many people as possible. All current employees have been prepped in advance and are familiar with the ritual.

John tells Todd 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 Todd where everything is, from the breakroom to the restrooms, how the computers work, how the phones work, etc. Of course, if Todd has or shares a secretary, they will be part of the discussion.

Meanwhile, a bottle of wine with a warm greeting card has been sent to Todd's house for dinner later that night.

You see the difference?

One company handles onboarding clinically. No passion. No excitement. Just checking the boxes. Onboarding is basically a pin that takes all the helium out of the balloon and the new salesperson can only conclude that this is the culture and program they have bought into. It is basically all going to be on them . . . very sad indeed.

The second company treats onboarding like a celebration because that is exactly what it is. A great human being is coming to work for a great company. They are going to live together, laugh together and love together. They have each other's backs. The onboarding blows the salesperson away. And off they go, into the marketplace, with confidence, excitement and enthusiasm.

You have around 30 days to emotionally bond with this wonderful new person, an important resource you have just invested in.

Then, they are going to determine, emotionally, if they are a hired gun or actually a part of something bigger, something greater and much more gratifying. **Onboarding is huge and requires your attention and focus.**



Mentoring & Coaching

The Secret Sauce of Great Sales Organizations

The typical attitude and modus operandi we find in way too many companies after they have hired a salesperson is:

"You applied for this job. You said you can sell. Here are your quota/targets. (Arms folded). Now get out there and sell!"

The naivete of such an attitude is remarkable.

Think about it this way. When the New England Patriots bring in a new running back, do they say to him, *"Here is the ball . . . start running?"* Of course not. They have coaches who orient the player into the Patriot's system. They provide customized fitness training. They hold countless practices. And they provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to absolutely maximize the potential of this person as a human being and, candidly, as a major investment.

All salespeople need ongoing training and coaching, and all salespeople benefit by having a mentor.

Now, here is a very important distinction and take away from this discussion:

MANAGING is not **MENTORING**.

Put another way, the role of a sales manager is not to mentor salespeople. It cannot happen because there are too many conflicts both intellectually and emotionally in the relationship.

The biggest potential conflict is that the salesperson believes the manager, or the management system, is a problem. *But, can they confide in the very manager they think is doing a poor job?*

Mentors are experienced coaches, who move through the salesperson's year with them, keeping the salesperson focused and accountable. They are trusted advisors who can help salespeople work through real life and emotional challenges that inevitably come along and who can add value in brainstorming opportunities and pitches. Great mentors can easily double a salesperson's production –sometimes much more. Nobody can do it all alone.

Conclusion

So, there you have it. Our system for how to attract, assess, interview, hire and onboard salespeople who actually produce and don't break your heart and your pocketbook. It is easy to understand, challenging to implement, but well worth the effort.

Let's recap:

1. **Write a High-Drive Job Posting** – Make it exciting, challenging and invigorating!
2. **Deploy a Sales-Focused Assessment** – Like the DriveTest® and only high aptitude candidates earn the right to interview.
3. **Interview with Purpose** – Use a behavioral interview and apply intuition as a complimentary aid, not a primary guide.
4. **Onboard with Passion** – You have 30 days to win your new sales reps over for life!
5. **Provide Ongoing Mentoring and Coaching** – To turbocharge performance.

There is no reason, whatsoever, that you cannot stock your entire team with high-aptitude producers, whom you develop to reach their highest potential.

This is the system that outstanding sales organizations use to continue to grow their businesses higher and higher.

SALES HIRING SIMPLIFIED.

Join 1,200+ companies, who have stopped hiring the wrong salespeople and start building a stronger sales team with SalesDrive.



[Get a Free DriveTest®](#)