

HOW TO HIRE THE RIGHT INSIDE SALES LEADER FOR YOUR COMPANY

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Inside Sales Executives

On-demand Inside Sales Leaders

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Overview: Inside sales is a high stakes game

Inside sales is the new black. Companies across all economic sectors are adopting and integrating inside sales models in record numbers. The scalability, measurability, and predictability of inside sales has made it the new preferred sales channel for companies who have a mandate from stakeholders to grow sales and revenue quickly and within budget constraints.

**INSIDE SALES DRIVES MILLIONS OF DOLLARS
PER YEAR IN REVENUE FOR MANY COMPANIES.**

As such, companies seek to hire inside sales leaders who can help their organization reach revenue goals set by the executive team.

This white paper provides insights on what companies may want to consider as they seek to fill their inside sales leadership roles. It will explain the relationship between skill set, compensation, and job title.

Ideas about who to hire, why, and what to look for during the hiring process will be presented.

The perspectives set forth in this white paper are based on working with more than 300 companies in across a wide span of industries and case studies.

Assess your inside sales initiatives

Are you just starting? Is your process mature, proven and ready to scale? Are your numbers where you need them to be or are they stalling? What inside sales model do you have/plan to use? How will it be configured and integrated with the other sales and marketing channels within your organization? How will/do you track, measure, and report performance? What skill set is needed to get the job done? What components of your inside sales process need optimization? Who can do the job? Why can they do it? Where is your inside sales organization at with AI? Pilot, integrated, cost prohibitive, not utilized by reps?

Hire someone with expertise in your industry (if you can)

If you can find a candidate who knows your business, and they are viable, consider that individual a front-runner for the open role. The faster you can get someone to hit the ground running the better. Someone with industry-specific experience will be able to install an inside sales infrastructure and process faster than someone from the outside. They will know what will work, why, how and will likely have metrics from past roles they can lean on for insight.

**THE FASTER YOU CAN GET SOMEONE TO HIT
THE GROUND RUNNING THE BETTER.**

The distinction between the four inside sales leadership roles: Supervisor, Manager, Director, and VP Inside Sales

To oversimplify, generally speaking, Supervisors and Managers oversee an existing team, process and sometimes report to a higher level inside sales executive. Directors and VP's Inside Sales are often tasked with installing, optimizing and/or scaling inside sales initiatives.

Inside Sales Supervisors and Managers generally:

- Hire and train staff
- Design sales tools and support materials for reps
- Monitor metrics and rep calls
- Manage and motivate team members
- Develop training materials and modules

DIRECTORS AND VP'S INSIDE SALES ARE OFTEN TASKED WITH INSTALLING, OPTIMIZING AND/OR SCALING INSIDE SALES INITIATIVES.

Directors / VP's Inside Sales bring a broader range of skills and scope of thinking about inside sales and have:

- The ability to plan, implement, optimize and grow inside sales process and infrastructure (from ground zero). This is a crucial skill set if you plan to scale.
- Forecasting ability. This dovetails into everything: staffing, infrastructure requirements, sales revenues, and more.
- The skill set to help your company realize its revenue numbers by executing a plan based on rationale and insights gleaned from company's marketing/sales data.

Directors / VP's Inside Sales bring a broader range of skills and scope of thinking about inside sales and have (cont.):

- Understands testing. If your company offers a portfolio of products and plan to innovate new ones, testing is a crucial skill set. Testing will provide validation that in fact, your new offering can be viable in the market in which you plan to compete.
- The capacity to devise the overarching inside sales strategy and tactics within the strategy.
- An ability to interface with other teams which will be an integral part of inside sales such as marketing, outside sales, IT and C-level execs.
- A nuanced understanding of list selection (who to call/why/with what offer) is of paramount importance.
- The ability to extract insights from metrics and use them to calibrate inside sales initiatives. The saying goes “If you can’t measure it, you can’t fix it.”

AN INSIDE SALES DIRECTOR OR VP OF INSIDE SALES MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO PLAN, IMPLEMENT, AND OPTIMIZE AN INSIDE SALES PROCESS THAT IS PROVEN, MEASURABLE, SCALABLE, REPEATABLE, PREDICTABLE, AND PROFITABLE.

AI Literacy

Companies and individuals will have varying degrees of literacy with AI tools.

Early research shows AI abandonment for a large number of companies. How much weight should be attributed to this skill set should be considered in advance of hiring.

Consider energy, cultural fit, and management style

You will be working closely with your inside sales leader. Do they have the character and values that align with those of your company? Do they fit in culturally? What is their energy like? At certain compensation thresholds, skill sets equalize and character, values, work ethic and management style become crucial differentiators.

Do you need a specialist or a generalist? Consider depth and breadth of experience

A candidate who has executed a large number of campaigns for a wide portfolio of products will have a broader range of skills (breadth) than someone who has just sold one thing or one category of things (depth). Ask yourself, do I need a specialist or a generalist? A valve company will need a specialist, an office supply distributor will need a generalist.

The relationship between compensation, skill set and job title

It helps to understand the relationship between compensation, skill set, and job title. Simply put candidates with broader skill sets, more experience, and higher level job titles cost more money to hire. There is no way around this immutable fact.

CASE STUDY

A worldwide software company unable to fill their leadership role using a team of internal and external recruiters for more than six months contacted Inside Sales Executives and explained their dilemma. A three-minute conversation revealed the underlying problem; the compensation and job title were misaligned with what the company needed for their industry, location, and position. Upon changing the comp plan and job title the role was filled in just four weeks.

Think compensation ranges rather than a specific number

Companies who pigeonhole themselves into a specific compensation number (e.g. we are offering \$98,500) automatically hobble their own recruitment efforts. Instead, think in terms of compensation ranges (e.g. \$95-\$105,000) and be prepared to move outside your original range if you see a candidate who is the right fit.

Avoid the worn out recruiting tactic of telling a candidate “A person can earn big money here if they hit their numbers”. A sophisticated inside sales professional will simply reverse engineer your projected sales/compensation numbers to see if they match up and if they are even achievable. Overstated promises will cause candidates to run away (think Forest Gump).

In conclusion

Inside sales is a high stakes game. Unfilled leadership roles can have insidious effects on sales and revenue performance. Having the right inside sales leader is of paramount importance. Understanding the relationship between the job title, skill set and compensation before you start recruiting will help you avoid wasting time, energy and resources.

Inside Sales leaders need to be able to install, manage, and optimize inside sales initiatives that deliver predictable revenue using a repeatable and scalable proven process.

About the author

Joe Culotta is President of Inside Sales Executives. He is a speaker and mentor at the prestigious 1871 business incubator, a mentor at the American Society of Inside Sales Professionals, and the publisher of the Inside Sales Salary Guide and several other hiring white papers for the inside sales industry. He started his career as the Director of Inside Sales for Cellular One.

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