



# **PREPARING FOR A SALES INTERVIEW**

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The success of a sales interview depends very much on how well you perform. Here are some tips for succeeding and some potential questions you may face.

### **1. Do your research**

The most crucial aspect is conducting thorough research on the business you're interviewing with. By gaining an in-depth understanding of their products and how the market perceives them, you can formulate a strategy on how to effectively sell their products.

To obtain this knowledge, it's recommended to review current blogs, press articles, industry-specific publications, and official information sources.

### **2. Practice your answers**

It's advisable to search for interview questions that are typically asked for sales jobs, including those that are challenging and open-ended, and then rehearse your responses. When you've prepared and delivered your answers confidently, it leaves a positive impression on the interviewer.

### **3. Make a solid first impression**

This can be achieved through several ways:

- Dressing appropriately in professional attire
- Making eye contact for a few seconds to establish trust
- Offering a genuine smile to show friendliness and empathy
- Confidently introducing yourself
- Demonstrating positive non-verbal cues that convey relaxation, confidence, and attentiveness

### **4. Be specific about your work history**

When your interviewer inquires about your employment history, job titles, and tenure with each previous employer, it's best to provide concise and clear answers. However, if they ask for further details, offering specific examples can showcase the value you can bring to the role. For instance, when asked about your performance in a previous job, a general response of "I did well" is not as effective as providing specific details such as "During the first eight weeks, I consistently met my weekly quota of \$10,000" or "My final close rate was 24.3%, which exceeded the company average of 19.5%."

## 5. Ask good questions

When the interview is ending and you're asked if you have any questions, don't just say "no". Thoughtful questions indicate to the interviewer two things: 1) your interest in the company and the role and 2) your ability to listen to what you've been told.

Some examples that you may ask:

- What qualities do the most successful salespeople at your company possess?
- What percentage of your sales force hit their targets?
- How much flexibility do salespeople have to negotiate deals?
- What are the main barriers to success for your sales team?
- How big is your sales team and how is it structured?
- What's the best thing about working in sales at the business?

**Often in interviews it is unclear what the hirer is looking for in a candidate, here is a good question to help direct a clear answer.**

**"My recruiter did an excellent job of filling me in on your opportunity and I have uncovered some exciting research about your firm, but I always like to hear it directly from the executive's perspective"**





## KNOW YOUR BACKGROUND

**1.Career Synopsis** - Write down on paper a short career summary. Include dates, job titles and a few key responsibilities. This should not be longer than a minute or two.

**2.Achievements** – Write a detailed outline for each job you’ve held identifying specific accomplishments that resulted in cost savings, improved productivity, increased sales, etc. and provide examples.

a)Use action/result words such as: achieved, provided for increased, evaluated, reduced, implemented, created, etc.

b)Use leadership words such as: managed, led, assessed, built, guided, directed, coordinated, etc.

**3.Technical Qualifications** – write down your skills that correspond specifically to the new job requirements.

**4.Personal Attributes** - write down your strengths, weaknesses, goals and reasons for leaving past positions. If you analyze these attributes prior to an interview, your answers will flow naturally.

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## SALES INTERVIEW TIPS



Below are a few standard tips and questions that might be asked of you in an interview for a sales role. Please take the time to read through this information – it could mean the difference between you getting the role and not! Sales interviews discussions would majorly involve the below:

**Your sales process from cradle to grave – give an example of a deal.** (They are looking for you to name the steps i.e.: I do my research by doing this... I prospect using these tools...I present to these decision makers...) Also list any formal sales training you might have had: Challenger, Sandler, Spin, Value-Based etc.

**The biggest deal you won.** (They are looking for specifics about what you did to win the business). I spoke with these key decision-makers, I investigated these pain points, I did an ROI on these metrics.

**They will ask you about working collaboratively** – they want to see that you include finance and operations or other internal stakeholders along the way.

**They will ask specifics about growth numbers and deal sizes.**

**If this is a BD role, they will ask about how you prospect and fill your funnel** – what specific activities you do.

**They will ask what repeatable process you follow to be successful.** Something like, “I always ensure that I am asking these questions, or involving these people, or getting access to this type of information.”

**If you are applying for a Hunter role – be detailed about Net New Revenue that you have won –NOT share of wallet growth.**

**If you are applying for a blended AE role, be specific about large complex renewals and RFPs, you have been involved with.**

**Give examples of how you sell to and engage with V and C-Level decision makers.**

**Tell them how you manage your pipeline and forecast.**

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## SALES INTERVIEW BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

Below are some standard behavioral questions that might be asked of you in an interview for a sales role.

### Attention to Detail

- Please give me some examples of things you have done on previous jobs that have demonstrated your ability to pay attention to detail. What resulted from your actions?
- Please give me an example of where you may have found an error in some aspect of work that others may have overlooked. What was the error, how did you find out, what actions did you take and what resulted from your actions?

### Teamwork

- Please give me some examples of areas where you have demonstrated the ability to be an effective member of a team. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?
- Please give me an example of where you have made any team, of which you were a member, more effective. How did the team/organization benefit from your actions?

### Quality of Work

- Please give me an example of some things you have done which demonstrate the quality of work you do.
- Please give me some examples of your achievements that would demonstrate your ability to perform the position that we have open.
- Please give me an example of why your previous organization was better off having you as an employee. What were some things that you did and how did they benefit the organization?

### Application of Education

- Please give me some examples of how you have applied your education for previous jobs. What took place as a result of applying your education?
- How would you apply your education to this job?What would you do and what would you expect the results to be?

Be ready to blow your own horn in detail regarding your successes in a thoughtful and concise manner. Remember it's your track record. If you are not ready to shout about it with compelling style while in an exciting interview, no one ever will be!



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## **Personal Development**

- What is the most recent example of something you did to improve your job performance? Please tell me why you did this and what resulted from it?
- Please give me an example of a time when you have failed (or received negative feedback) in some aspect of your job performance. What did you do to try to correct this failure and what resulted from your actions?

## **Resolving Conflict Effectively**

- Please give me an example of a time where you had a conflict with a peer. How did you handle this situation? What resulted from it? Would you handle it in a different manner now? If so ... how and why?
- Please give me an example of where you had a conflict with a customer. How did you handle this situation? What resulted from it? Would you handle it in a different manner now? How and why would you handle it differently?

## **Sales Ability**

- Please give me some examples of how you have generated new business from a client.
- Describe a major sale that you lost. Why do you think you lost it and what would you do differently because of that experience?
- Describe your most creative sale. Please describe how you might be creative in selling our products.
- Describe your most difficult client. What did you do to maintain that client?
- Please give me some examples of where you have been able to anticipate customer complaints/problems and correct them before they became an issue. How did you handle this situation and what were the results?

## **Managing People**

- Have you ever had a difficult subordinate? If yes, tell me how you dealt with him/her and what resulted from your actions. If no, tell me what you feel you would do and what you would expect to happen as a result of your actions.
- Give me some examples of things that you have done which demonstrate your ability to manage people effectively. How did your organization benefit from your actions?
- Please give me examples of things that you have done to obtain maximum performance from your subordinates. What did you do and what resulted from your actions? How would you apply those techniques to this job?

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## **Managing Costs**

- Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your ability to manage a budget effectively and would demonstrate your ability to perform this job.
- Please give me some examples of how you have demonstrated the ability to control costs and still achieve organizational objectives.

## **Motivation**

- Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your level of motivation. What have been the results from your actions?
- Please give me some examples of where you took extraordinary efforts to fulfill a deadline. What did you do and what resulted from it?

## **Response to Deadlines**

- Give me some examples of things that you have done, in the past, which demonstrate your ability to respond to tight deadlines.What resulted from your actions?
- Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your ability to handle multiple priorities. What resulted from your actions?

## **Creativity**

- Please give me some examples of things that you have done on previous jobs that demonstrate your creativity on the job.What resulted from your actions?

## **Organization**

- Please describe some things you have done on previous jobs, or in school, which would demonstrate your organizational skills.What has been the result of your actions?
- Describe a recent project you oversaw. Indicate how you organized that project and the impact of your organization on the outcome of the project.

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