

Creating a Five-Star Sales Team

The who, where and when behind finding great salespeople.



By Brian Sullivan

As president of PRECISE Selling, Brian Sullivan helps improve sales, customer service, negotiations, leadership, and presentation skills through seminars and internet training programs. He is also the author of the book, *20 Days to the Top—How the PRECISE Selling Formula Will Make You Your Company's Top Sales Performer in 20 Days or Less*. To learn more, go to www.preciseselling.com.

Most businesses fail in the first five years. Why?

Because they aren't selling enough products and services.

As a business owner or manager, you only have two choices. You do all the selling and risk neglecting other parts of your business, or you hire, inspire, train and coach your new sales team to be the best in your industry. Frankly, option No. 2 is really your only choice.

If you want to not only make it past the five-year death crawl but also create the foundation that will have your business running hot well into your retirement, follow these steps to create your own five-star sales team.

Who to find

There are three things that separate the world's best salespeople from the average. Create a team with these qualities, and you will win.

Posture: Prospects and customers will say yes to your company and salespeople based more on attitude and enthusiasm than anything else. Five-star sales candidates and salespeople also have a deep interest in wanting to meet new people and build a ton of relationships. They are the energy source in every room. And

they don't do it with the intention of getting rich off the people they meet. They do it because it's fun.

They realize the byproduct of their great attitude and above-average enthusiasm is they meet a ton of people who want them around. And that wanting often leads to a starring role in their company or industry.

Hiring tip: Notice the candidate's body language, smile and tone of voice. If you feel their energy, that interview is off to a great start.

Product, industry and competitive knowledge: Do you need to hire somebody who has been in



your industry and knows your products and competition? Well, it doesn't hurt. But too many underperforming businesses make the mistake of putting too much weight on past industry experience. As a result, they end up creating a team of tired company-jumpers who often lack the enthusiasm that is essential to capture market share. When faced with a choice between the candidate who knows everything versus the enthusiastic one who is dying to learn everything, go with the latter. Because, regardless of age, product knowledge is teachable. Attitude is not.

Hiring tip: Don't hire a single salesperson unless you are willing to invest in training them effectively.

If you have done a great job building your own network of friends and industry contacts, seek one out who exemplifies the traits you are looking for in your next salesperson.

Great communication skills: Five-star salespeople are simply more interested in learning than talking. As a result, they are great questioners and even better listeners. These skills are fueled by an immense curiosity to find ways to serve others.

Hiring tip: Take them to meet as many people you know as possible. Have lunch with some friends or colleagues, and see if your job candidate asks questions and listens.

Where to find

This is where your own communication skills are tested.

Your trusted friends: If you have done a great job building your own network of friends and industry contacts, seek one out who exemplifies the traits you are looking for in your next salesperson. Then ask for help. Be specific

when communicating what you are looking for. And don't be surprised if your own contact finds interest in that great opportunity you're presenting.

Hiring tip: Your best people will come from your network.

Keep an eye out: Think of a great customer service or sales experience you had. Did you find yourself wishing that person worked on your team? If so, why not ask them to? The next time you find yourself in that situation, try this: "You did a great job for me today, and I can tell you take a ton of pride in your work. My company is currently expanding, and we are looking for associates with your type of attitude. If you have interest in learning more, please don't hesitate to reach out to me." Then hand them a card.

Hiring tip: Don't feel guilty about "stealing" somebody else's great people. If they are being treated well, you'll never hear from them again. If not, you are doing a good thing for them.

When to find

Don't wait too long to start building your team. The sooner you make the investment, the sooner you will get a return. If cash flow is an issue, then consider a straight commission program. Remember, five-star

salespeople are going to cost you some sales margin. But that's the deal you made. Don't be "that guy/gal" who doesn't like to share in the bounty and starts counting the dollars paid out instead of the dollars coming in.

Hiring tip: Always be looking for great salespeople.

Teams work

Understand you can't do it all. Also understand that there are dozens of high-performing salespeople waiting for your email or call today. These champions will bring you more new clients, sell more to your current customers and allow you to put that strategic mind of yours to work in other areas of your business.

And who knows? Now that your top-line sales destiny is in the hands of a five-star sales team, you may even be able to take that long awaited vacation – to a five-star resort! ■