



Selling Power

SOLUTIONS FOR SALES MANAGEMENT

RECRUITING

A Better **Test**

How to choose the best assessment test for what you need in new hires

HIRING NEW salespeople can be the most important decision a sales executive makes on a routine basis. Effects of a bad decision can include lost sales, wrecked customer relationships and the heavy cost of replacing a rep who's below par. Even average hiring decisions leave money on the table -the money your firm could make by hiring people who have the potential to become top performers.

Expert firms can help you hire better reps by using a variety of test and assessment methods. The Internet allows more kinds of tests to be given much more economically and earlier in the recruiting process. But the bottom line is, Does the test you're using improve results? The best recruiting experts should be able to demonstrate that their methods work - that they raise the average sales of new hires and reduce the costs of turnover from bad hires.¹

Simulating Sales Challenges

Upward Motion does assessments for recruiting, selecting and training salespeople, according to the firm's president, Kim Ades. The company has products geared for real-estate agents and for business-to-business selling. It is about to introduce an assessment for call center staff.

In the simulation of B-to-B selling, candidates deal with typical challenges, including analyzing customer needs, selecting the best course of action and negotiating prices. Ades calls it a

"competency-based model" of sales ability. "We look for four basic competencies: analyzing customer needs, listening and comprehension skills, ability to manage the sales process, and closing skills," she says. "We believe the best indicator of performance is skills."

Recruits can also use the simulations to decide if they really want to sell. "Companies put a link on their Website, saying, 'If you are really interested, try our sales simulator,'" Ades explains. "Candidates get an idea of what a sales career is like, get a sense of the highs and lows, and can decide if they are likely to succeed in it." Managers use the results to screen candidates and look for areas to probe in interviews or to address in training.

Sales simulation is done over a high-speed Internet connection, as it includes a video component and takes about 75 minutes. The cost per assessment starts at \$300 but goes down to \$100 for larger volumes. Or clients can purchase a site license for unlimited use. The eight-year-old Upward Motion has been offering simulations for two years.

Ades is convinced this high-tech, reality-based approach is the wave of the future in assessing recruits. She has signed up Abbott Technologies, an auto-parts company, Ciba Vision and a Prudential real-estate unit. All assessments are validated against actual sales performance before they are offered to clients.

¹ Condensed from the original article