

Sales Interviews – Key Questions

(Highlighted ones can be used in an advance telephone interview as well)

Positioning:

What have you been told about this process (ie. the interview process) by the recruitment agency?

Telephone interview:

OK, I just want to take 20-30 minutes or so to get a brief idea of how you go about your selling – at the end of the call we'll both know whether there would be value in having a face-to-face interview/ we'll be inviting a select number of candidates to an assessment day when we can go into much more depth. I'd just like to run through a few preliminary questions – is that OK?

1. **What attracted you to our business?** (shows whether they did their research and gives an indication of their motivators).
2. What questions do you have for me? (turns the interview process on its head and shows how they deal with change, also gives you an insight into their questioning skills – do they use open/closed questions, key driver/iceberg questions?)
3. **How do your previous roles link to this job?** (gives them a chance to talk through their CV in relation to our job role – also identifies whether they make changes in job for similarity plus, or for difference)
4. What made you move from X to Y? (select a few of their previous jobs from the CV and ask this question – their language in response identifies whether they are towards or away from motivated)
5. **In your recent roles, what percentage of your sales came from new versus existing accounts?** (shows whether they have been predominantly hunters or farmers)
6. **How do you plan your sales activity?** (Do they have a monthly plan? How often do they review it? Who do they discuss it with?)
7. Talk me through a typical couple of days - what would you be doing beginning to end?
8. **How do you know you're doing enough?** (shows if they know their own conversion ratios)
9. **What have been your main sources of leads in the past?** (% self-generated?)
10. **How do you select and qualify your target customers/sources of business?** (listening for processes)
11. In your current sales environment, describe the process you go through to qualify your prospects?
12. **How do you get in front of targeted customers? What structures/processes do you use?**

13. Talk me through your structure for a face-to-face sales meeting (do they follow a consultative sales process, do they have an opening structure, a questioning structure, a presenting structure, how do they close?)
14. What do you like and dislike about the products/services you're selling now?
15. How do you build the value of your products/services? (do they use a proper consultative selling process?)
16. Why do you think customers buy from you?
17. What are the main objections you get – how do you handle them? (do they have a structured approach?) How often is price an issue – why do you think that is? How do you handle it?
18. What do you see as the key issues in negotiating? (do they have a structure: think win-win, separate people from the problem, focus on interests not positions, find options for common interests, insist on objective/fair criteria, know their BATNA)
19. Give them several typical, challenging sales situations from your own business (describe a client issue, an internal issue, a product/service delivery issue) and ask them – how would you deal with that?
20. What do you do personally for your professional development?
21. What are your favourite selling books?
22. What would you look for when hiring people so you could build a great team (managers only)?
23. Why you? What are we buying into if we employ you?
24. How have you found this interview process? How do you think it has gone?