



Hiring Sales Reps

How dealers are finding success with this challenge

Compiled by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

Following is a question submitted by a dealer member as part of BTA's Dealers Helping Dealers resource and many of the answers received. These answers and many others can be found in the members-only section of the BTA website. Visit www.bta.org/DealersHelpingDealers. You will need your username and password to access this member resource.



How are you finding success in hiring sales reps?

“By establishing core competencies that are used to evaluate candidates. This pulls focus away from traditional focal points like industry experience and puts a focus on fundamental competencies to be successful. Print is somewhat of a niche market and it can be difficult finding people with proven success in the industry who want to make a change, so identifying true sales talent and training them to sell in our market has been successful for us.”

*Nicholas Hinton, vice president of service
imageOne, Oak Park, Michigan*

“We promote using referrals from existing employees and their friends, as well as job fairs for the local community colleges.”

*Les Harris, vice president of sales
UTECH, Ann Arbor, Michigan*

“Networking.”

*Geoff Riordan, president
AAMSCO Identification Products Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas*

“We are hiring fewer outside sales reps (lots of turnover) and are investing in inside sales and digital marketing.”

*Mike Williams, president/owner
iTech, Parkersburg, West Virginia*

“Extreme success! Relationships are key.”

*Brantly Fowler, co-president
Zeno Office Solutions Inc., Lubbock, Texas*

“Generally speaking, success has been ‘average’ with hiring. I think a challenge for our business lies in the fact that rapid advancements in technology have outpaced sales rep skill

for some. There is a strong need to further develop a professional sales executive. Not just a person who can knock on doors, effectively network, prospect and create relationships, but also someone who has a general ability to create value with (digital transformation) solutions offered.

“In order to shorten sales cycles and for dealerships to create value (high-level conversations) with complex solutions offered, I believe there is an opportunity for all to improve on technical skills and not just rely on ‘specialists.’ The challenge obviously comes with hiring, as many seek ‘security’ in their compensation, but we do remain in a performance-driven business.

“If you invest in someone and provide them with strong compensation up front, how long will it take until you can determine if the investment was worth it? When hiring sales reps, are you hiring someone who can move boxes and thrives on selling on price? Or can you effectively hire and develop someone who will be able to take ownership for their own personal development to effectively address what our marketplace requires given all the changes in how our customers do business? This is not easy, but good people are out there.

“Just like prospecting for business, I do think staffing and ‘building a bench’ requires more of a commitment for many. Many will look for people when a position is vacant. The best time to look for people is in line with your strategic vision for growth. Make recruitment part of a proactive strategy, not a reactive one.”

*Dave Aulisio, vice president of business development
Automated Business Solutions, Warwick, Rhode Island*

“We are looking for go-getters in all walks of life — not just former reps.”

*Chris Stroud, vice president of sales
Accent Imaging, Raleigh, North Carolina*

“We are having the best success in hiring younger folks with good educations and little to no experience in our industry and, in some cases, no sales experience. We’re training them the way we want.”

*David Carson, president
Plus Inc., Greenville, South Carolina*

"It has been very difficult, with seasoned reps asking for far too much of a guarantee and not wanting to work hard. We are starting to recruit newer reps to the industry."

*Richard Van Dyke, president
Advanced Office, Irvine, California*

"We look to our own personnel for referrals. If you have anyone cold calling your building, engage them right away. We also use Indeed and LinkedIn."

*James George, president
Donnellon McCarthy Enterprises Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio*

"We are encouraging our own employees with incentive plans to help find new reps. We are also using Indeed to post our openings. We are getting good response with both. The interview process and the qualifying of the applicant is then the most important step."

*Tim Renegar, president
Kelly Office Solutions, Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

"We just try to hire good people who take care of our customers and provide them with ongoing training and support. People who want to earn extra money will sell for you."

*Jeffrey Foley, co-owner
Apollo Office Systems, Alvin, Texas*

"It is very difficult. We are always looking, and if we can find new, younger people to introduce to our industry we nurture those opportunities to success."

*Michael Boyle, president
BASE Technologies, Bethel, Connecticut*

"Paid referrals from existing reps and employees, and a paid summer sales internship program have been effective for us. And we have a full-time HR employee who focuses a large

" ... If you can create an environment where folks want to work, then lean on word of mouth. Pay your current employees a finder's fee if they identify a candidate ... "

amount of their time assisting our recruiting efforts."

*John Hastings, executive vice president,
Imaging Division
Loffler Companies Inc., St. Louis Park,
Minnesota*

"To start with, I do believe everyone has a bit of a challenge here so you probably will not find a silver bullet that takes care of all your problems in this area. That be-

ing said, if you can create an environment where folks want to work, then lean on word of mouth. Pay your current employees a finder's fee if they identify a candidate who you hire and ultimately hold for six months."

*John Eckstrom, president & CEO
Carolina Business Equipment, a Novatech company
Columbia, South Carolina*

"We use Larry Coco as our prescreener. He does a great job. We use Larry Breed for the DiSC test (although sometimes this is more information than you want). This is a process that I hope we are getting better at."

*Bob Moore, owner
Lockwood Moore Inc., Reno, Nevada*

"Trailing spouse: The husband or wife who is getting transferred into your area who needs a job."

*Tim Stanley, owner/problem solver
TDSiT, Lowell, Arkansas*

"Networking, constantly looking and starting conversations."

*Nick Lioce, president
The Lioce Group, Huntsville, Alabama ■*

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