



'Just-Out' Sales Reps

Why your onboarding process is not built for them

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There is a generational trend reshaping B2B sales hiring and most companies are not prepared for it. You probably aren't either.

More organizations are hiring "just-outs" — people who are just out of college and hired for their first professional jobs. These are not typical entry-level hires who worked through college or spent time in another industry. These are people who went from graduation to sales floors with essentially no meaningful work experience. If companies treat them like traditional entry-level hires, they are setting them up to fail.

The Critical Difference

When hiring a just-out, a sales manager is not just teaching him (or her) how to sell a product or navigate a sales process. He is teaching him how to be a professional salesperson — how to manage time, how to handle rejection, how to prioritize competing demands and how to conduct himself in business conversations. In reality, Gen Z is probably less prepared for this than past generations, but Gen-Z hires can be big wins, too.

Past entry-level salespeople might have been young and inexperienced, but they knew how to show up, manage a workload and handle professional interactions. Just-outs do not. They are bright, enthusiastic and eager, but they are starting from zero.

This distinction matters enormously for onboarding, training, coaching and ramp-up expectations. The onboarding process that works for someone with two years of experience will not work for someone whose previous job was organizing study groups.

What Companies Are Getting Right

Companies hiring just-outs are likely to select well. These young professionals are intelligent, coachable and genuinely enthusiastic about learning. They are not jaded. They have not picked up bad habits from previous sales roles.

More importantly, just-outs crave structure, knowledge and training. They want experienced mentors — probably to a greater degree than past generations. They are not resisting accountability or metrics. They are actively seeking them.

This is an enormous asset. The window to capitalize on this eagerness is narrow. Companies need to act before frustration sets in or bad habits develop.



Where Most Companies Go Wrong

■ **Compressed Onboarding** — The biggest mistake is rushing just-outs into live prospect interactions. Some companies put young salespeople on the phone making cold calls within their first week or two.

This might work with experienced hires, but it is disastrous with just-outs who lack the foundational knowledge and

professional confidence to handle live conversations. The result is persistent insecurity rooted in "not knowing what they do not know."

■ **Lack of Structure and Tools** — Just-outs understand they need to hit activity metrics. In fact, they like the road map that comes with good activity metrics (which you have, right?). What they do not have is the process knowledge and tools to consistently achieve those targets.

They need documented processes, quick-reference guides, standard timelines and procedures, and a structured weekly routine. Without these, they are constantly making decisions that experienced salespeople make instinctively. Just-outs do not have those instincts yet.

■ **The Mentorship Gap** — Leaders have good intentions, but multiple responsibilities mean accessibility becomes an issue. Just-outs generate a high volume of questions about processes, products, pricing and professional norms. They need someone they can go to without worrying about interrupting something more important. Without that designated resource, they either hesitate to ask and make mistakes, or they interrupt leaders constantly and slow everyone down.

Action Steps That Actually Work

■ **Create Quick-Reference Resources** — Develop internal guides covering products, services and common FAQs. Include product attributes, common objections and responses, pricing guidelines and answers to questions that come up on most calls. These guides should cover 80% of what they will encounter in their first six months on the job. Call them FAQ guides, call them cheat sheets, call them what you want — just have them available.

■ **Document the Sales Process** — Write down the steps and stages from initial outreach through close. Include standard timelines, clear definitions of each stage and criteria for

moving opportunities forward. A documented playbook becomes a training asset for every future hire.

■ **Establish a Structured Prospecting Cadence** — Create a defined outreach cadence that incorporates phone calls, LinkedIn and emails. Specify the timing, sequencing and messaging for each touchpoint. Just-outs struggle with “What should I do next?” A structured cadence removes that ambiguity.

■ **Build a Buddy System** — Pair each just-out with an experienced salesperson who serves as his designated go-to for day-to-day questions. Formalize this with scheduled ride-alongs, call observations and regular check-ins. The best learning happens when just-outs can shadow experienced salespeople and debrief what they observed.

■ **Invest in Real Sales Training** — Role-playing exercises are useful, but they are not a substitute for structured sales training. Just-outs need formal instruction in prospecting methodology, discovery questioning, objection handling, LinkedIn outreach and full-cycle sales management.

■ **Define a Weekly Routine** — At this stage, just-outs need structure. Define what a productive week looks like: daily LinkedIn engagement, dedicated prospecting blocks, field time for in-person visits, networking events and sufficient activity to generate meeting targets. Providing this structure is not micromanaging; it is responsible development.

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The Wins Are There to Be Had

Just-outs require more investment up front than traditional entry-level hires, but they bring enthusiasm, coachability and fresh energy that experienced salespeople often lack. The companies that figure out how to properly onboard, train and develop just-outs will build loyal, high-performing sales teams. The companies that treat them like traditional hires will burn through talented young people who deserve better.

The difference is not the people being hired. It is the infrastructure being built to support them. Get that infrastructure right and eager college graduates become productive salespeople more quickly than expected. Get it wrong and you will wonder why these young professionals cannot figure it out. The choice — and the responsibility — belongs to leadership. That is you. ■

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