



WHITE PAPER:

**WHY HIRING SALESPEOPLE
IS DIFFERENT**

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More and more restorers are seeking to build an outside sales team in order to generate day-to-day leads that are not from TPAs, weather or luck by calling on agents, plumbers, property and facility managers and so on. This is entrepreneurial activity at its best. If the work you need isn't coming to you, go out and hunt for it!

However, most restorers hire salespeople the same way they hire for any other position in their company but identifying and hiring the very best salespeople requires a unique approach. You really need a system to do it correctly. If you don't have a system, you can't repeat the process and truly drive the growth of your business over time through your company's direct sales and marketing efforts.



Traditionally, when restoration companies need to fill a sales position, they:

- Place a generic ad
- Wade through stacks of resumes
- Interview the candidates that looked the best on paper
- Sell the offer to the “top” candidate
- Hope for the best that it all works out

It's because of hiring processes like this that the average tenure of a salesperson is 18 months or less. In fact, one bad salesperson hire typically costs three times the annual compensation of an average salesperson!

Unfortunately, most owners of restoration companies have little, if any, direct selling or sales management experience. It's no wonder then that building a high-performance team of salespeople (marketing reps) is such a challenge.

Many have tried and have given up. They have been burned one too many times by salespeople that interview like superstars, provide the “almost there/big one is just around the corner happy talk” month after month until the deal suddenly vaporizes through “no fault of their own” and the owner looks to see that, over time, the work generated has not even paid the salesperson's base salary.

The key to any successful sales program is the right salesperson. But there are other very important factors to consider without which even the best salespeople will struggle to be successful.

These include how your salespeople will differentiate your company from the hundreds of competitors calling on the same targets, creating a unique value proposition so that their sales team has something to offer, specific sales processes with accountability, coaching and sales management, and a solid compensation program to mention some of the most important.

Still, the heart of any sales program and a restorer's ability to drive the growth of their own business rests on its ability to hire qualified salespeople reps.

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Hiring and keeping high-performance salespeople that will drive the growth of your restoration company can't be approached the same way you tackle hiring for other positions. Doing so almost guarantees that you'll be looking for a replacement in less than two years (or much sooner!).

Before you even place the ad, you have to decide exactly what you're looking for in the candidate and communicate that effectively in the ad copy. If you don't clearly define the attributes you're looking for, you can't expect to find someone that will fit your ideal mold.

Once the ad is placed, the resumes will start to roll in. It's important to remember that the only thing a resume can really tell you is:

- The candidate's work history and the industries they are familiar with
- A pattern to determine if they have a natural up and down cycle (for example, do they have a habit of switching jobs around the same time every year?)

The good news is that hiring successful salespeople is a science more than it is an art. The heart of this science is a sales skills specific assessment tool designed to screen **every** potential candidate to make sure that they have the desire, commitment, and skill-set necessary for sales success.



If they pass this assessment, you can then move them to a phone screening process. The goal of this brief 10-15 minute screening is to put them under the kind of pressure that they are likely to encounter in the field and see what kind of sales skills they really have when the bullets are flying.

What the assessment and a skillful hiring process will reveal is whether or not your candidates have enough of the four crucial elements for success and the right amount and combination of the five major weaknesses as well as a host of other characteristics.

The only way to do that is with a screening tool designed specifically for consultative salespeople that looks at the concrete, job-specific skills, competencies, capabilities which we really need to understand about a salesperson's abilities.

A sales assessment is the first hurdle that any job candidate must overcome to even start the interviewing process. Simply put, if they don't pass the initial assessment, there is no point wasting time interviewing them!

In our experience, there are four crucial elements for success. These are desire, commitment, the ability to take responsibility and outlook.

Desire: Desire is extremely important because it tells us how badly the candidate wants to succeed in sales. People without the passion or desire for greater success in sales are not people you want driving the growth of your business!

Commitment: Commitment means doing whatever it takes to succeed, no matter what! Commitment is strongly related to terms like persistence, tenacity, perseverance and even faith. Building a referral network takes a lot of work and a fair amount of time before substantial results are obtained. For these reasons you need salespeople with as close to full, unconditional commitment as you can get.

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Responsibility: The ability to take personal responsibility for success or failure is a hallmark of great salespeople. When salespeople make excuses, they're actually selling themselves short. Regardless of the excuses they make it comes down to the fact that they aren't taking full responsibility for their results.

It's like that old saying that the first step in correcting a problem is admitting that you have one. Until salespeople take full responsibility, they aren't likely to make any changes that would improve their effectiveness!

Outlook: Outlook tells you about how people feel about themselves, the work they do, who they work for and who they work with. It's similar to attitude. When people are between jobs it's not uncommon for them to have outlook issues because they are going through a difficult time. The goal is to determine whether or not the outlook problem is a temporary or chronic one before inviting them onto your team.

When selecting salespeople, you want as much of the four crucial elements for success as possible in their make-up. But you also want to consider to what extent they have the five major weaknesses, which are Need for Approval, Emotional Discipline, Supportive Beliefs, Supportive Buy-Cycle and their ability to Handle Rejection.

Need for Approval: Salespeople that have a strong need for approval often feel that being liked, getting the love, getting the approval of a prospect may be more important than getting a meeting or the business.

Salespeople with this issue hurt you in that they can't close or ask for the business; can't ask the hard questions; can't confront respectfully and are allergic to the word "no". This leads to "happy ears" and a pipeline full of phony deals, chasing deals that are long dead and people that waste your most precious commodity—their time and the company's time.

Emotional Discipline: This is a very common weakness. Salespeople with this issue have a tendency to panic when they get thrown a curve ball or an objection. This panic is essentially the salesperson talking to themselves, thinking, strategizing, worrying, panicking in the middle of a sales call. When this happens, they are focused on the voices in their own head rather than listening to the prospect.



Supportive Beliefs: This means that the way a salesperson thinks will actually support their selling outcome. When those beliefs are non-supportive, they will sabotage their selling outcomes. So, the question is whether their beliefs are positive, supportive ones or damaging, limiting ones such as:

- I am terrible at prospecting on the telephone.
- Nobody wants to talk to me anyway.
- I can't dislodge incumbent vendors.
- I don't like making cold calls.
- My list stinks.
- I can't call on owners.

Supportive Buy-Cycle: This is one of the most important weaknesses in that candidates with a non-supportive buy-cycle are typically okay with prospects that don't make decisions. Because of the way they make major

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purchases themselves they “understand” the need for endless research, checking out the competition, “thinking it over” and fundamentally not making decisions.

Good salespeople understand that “yes is okay” and “no is okay” but the “maybes” are productivity killers and good salespeople are able to help prospects make decisions instead of accepting put-offs, stalls and objections.



Handling Rejection: There is no selling without rejection. In today’s world there is a lot more passive rejection where people simply don’t return your calls or emails, and this can affect a lot of salespeople in a serious way. The key is not whether or not they get rejected or fear of rejection but rather, how long it takes them to recover when they do get rejected. The ideal salesperson is rejection-proof or at least rejection-resilient.

So, once we have candidates that pass the assessment, the rest of the hiring process consists first of a brief phone screening designed to put the candidate under the same sorts of pressure that they would face in real life selling situations. This quickly sorts out the real salespeople from the estimated 74% of salespeople that suck, those that go from one failure to the next their entire careers.

The next step is a face-to-face interview. The first interview process should be focused on picking apart the resume. Again, this is a pressure test designed to determine whether the accomplishments and experience on their resume reflect real life or fantasy.

Treat it as an audition. You have to be aggressive and ask questions like, “It says here that you built a territory from nothing to a \$4 million dollar operation in three years. How exactly did you do that?” 43% of resumes contain false information. It is your job to determine whether it is an accurate statement of their past achievements.



Putting the salesperson through their paces with role plays and asking them the hard questions most interviewers balk at again reveals the skill and quality of the candidate.

If the candidate gets past the first live interview, they are now among what is typically a very small group of people that you would be willing to hire and are moved to a second face-to-face interview. This interview is much more traditional in nature. The pressure is off, you are warm and welcoming, and this is where you paint the picture of the opportunity for the right salesperson at your company.

Now you must sell the offer to them in a way that demonstrates it is a worthy position for someone of their ability. They’ll also need proper on-boarding, training, ongoing coaching, professional development and accountability measures and tools to ensure they have everything they need to be successful.

Ideally, you will have a pool of two or three finalists to choose from. The last interview is their opportunity to make their case as to why they are the right fit.

When we hire salespeople using this process, we are highly confident that the salesperson can do the job. But this doesn’t necessarily mean they will do the job! No more how stringent the process you can’t anticipate

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failing marriages, personal crises, drug and alcohol dependencies and the occasional sociopathic liar who can beat the system.

But what is more common and perhaps more disappointing is good salespeople who are hired but then fail because they were not properly on-boarded, not given the proper sales processes and training required to be successful, not given a tracking and accountability system (CRM), not coached and properly managed so that they clearly understood what they had to do in order to achieve success.

Or, even worse, that they encounter business owners that pull the rug out from their salespeople just when they start having success and start making money by changing the comp plan, reconfiguring the territory and other betrayals. Smart owners understand that, assuming a well-crafted compensation program, the more they pay a salesperson the more successful their sales program and their company is. Such owners are always looking for ways to pay their salespeople fairly because they understand this simple fact.



Preparing yourself as the business owner and your company as you become a sales organization is vital to your success. Like most other business activities, failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

Business Development Associates, Inc. is a team of industry-expert consultants and support people fiercely committed to helping restorers increase top-line revenues and bottom-line net profits so that their business can become a vehicle for true wealth creation.

The company utilizes “The BDA Way”, a unique combination of proprietary systems to help clients develop a process-based business in order to increase sales, radically improve operational efficiencies and maximize net profits.

BDA has been helping clients in the cleaning and restoration business for more than 20 years.