



# Attracting Younger Talent

## Updating your hiring techniques for new generations

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**T**he sales profession is changing and, unfortunately, it's graying. Statistics show that the average age of a professional salesperson now is 47.1 years old. Fifteen years ago, that number was 42. That means that our profession has aged five years in the last 15 — and that's unsustainable. The sales profession needs new blood.

With millennials now making up the majority of the workforce and Gen Z close behind, you might need to evolve your hiring practices to continue attracting top young sales talent. The old way of hiring salespeople — putting out a basic job description and waiting for résumés to trickle in — just won't cut it anymore for recruiting younger generations. I've seen this in working with my clients — and I've seen some new methods generate great results. Sales managers need to take a more proactive and strategic approach to stand out and connect with qualified candidates. Here are six updated hiring techniques that have been shown to be successful in reaching younger sales professionals.

### Showcase Your Company Culture

"Culture" isn't just a buzzword anymore. Today's younger workforce values culture, flexibility and purpose when job seeking. When recruiting, showcase what makes your company culture — and your job opportunity — unique. Highlight your culture on your careers page, company website and job posts. Let candidates know if you offer benefits like remote work options (sales is well positioned for this, in my opinion) and professional development programs, as these attract young talent. Use images, videos and employee spotlights so candidates can get a feel for your work environment. Culture can make or break whether you connect with younger applicants. One key is that, whatever you do, it must be authentic. Understand that if you fake your culture, sites like Greendoor will very quickly let candidates know the truth.

### Leverage Social Sourcing

Members of younger generations live their lives online and on social media. You should incorporate social sourcing strategies into your hiring process to connect with talent where they already spend time. Strategically post job openings in relevant Facebook and LinkedIn groups in your industry. Share and engage with content from top performers and rising sales stars you would like to recruit and connect with them. You can also identify passive candidates by searching profiles with relevant backgrounds or skills. Social recruiting allows



you to grab the attention of talented individuals who are not actively job seeking. This also means being innovative with respect to your recruiting message. Don't be afraid to step out of your lane and try things like a video job ad (keep it to 60 seconds or less) or memes (funny or serious). Post not only to the "normal" mediums like LinkedIn and Facebook, but consider TikTok, YouTube Shorts and Instagram. Remember, you can't hire them if they don't know you are hiring. Don't be snobbish about the way you get your candidates. Just get them.

### Highlight Development Opportunities

Younger sales talent cares about career growth and acquiring new skills. If your company lacks structured development programs, highlight other growth opportunities in your job posts and outreach. Better yet, build some structured development programs, starting with your 90-day onboarding program. (You do have one of those, right?) Mention if top performers have a chance to take on mentees, have access to skill-building resources or can participate in stretch assignments. You want candidates to see that your company supports professional advancement so they envision future opportunities. Having one-on-one meetings with candidates to discuss career path trajectories is also powerful.

### Showcase Tech Stack

Millennials and Gen-Z candidates expect companies to harness modern technologies and encourage innovation from employees. When recruiting, thoroughly describe your tech stack — like sales engagement platforms, LinkedIn integration, data analytics and automation tools you leverage (and if

you are not already, get comfortable with phrases like “tech stack”). Discuss how your sales team members utilize technology to enhance productivity. Today, you should be comfortable discussing artificial intelligence (AI) as a sales tool. You want tech-savvy candidates to see you providing cutting-edge resources to drive results. By the way — if you are not using tech to drive sales results, start doing it. The sales profession isn’t going to be backtracking to a low-tech environment anytime soon.

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to expect quick likes, comments and attention. If you want to succeed in hiring, get used to doing the same. I used to recommend that managers collect résumés for a week, then sort through them, pick ones to call and call. Now, the best practice is to receive a résumé, do a quick scan on it and then call immediately. If your candidate doesn’t answer, you should also email and text him (or her). You want the candidate to get that dopamine hit that comes with a quick response, and then give multiple

ways to get back with you.

You are competing for talent in a highly competitive environment. If some of the tactics above resemble ways that you would compete for customers, that’s not an accident. Compete for sales talent with the same intensity as you compete for customers and you’ll have a great sales team — and you’ll leave many of your competitors behind. ■

### Convey Company Mission & Impact

Younger people increasingly seek out purpose-driven work. When recruiting new team members, sales managers should communicate how their company mission makes a difference and highlight recent company impact metrics. For example, explain how your product or service tangibly helps customers. If you have community involvement programs, those should be part of your messaging. One fear I’ve heard is that sales managers are reluctant to get into politics with candidates. That’s fine; you don’t need to. Companies can be seen as positive without taking a particular political stance.

### Respond Quickly

Younger generations have been conditioned by social media

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