

CRYSTAL BALL RECRUITING

THE PREDICTIVE GUIDE TO
HIRING TOP SALES PROFESSIONALS

ATTRACT | RECRUIT | RETAIN

JASON HOWES



INTRODUCTION

The Sales Performance Crisis

Right now, we're in a sales talent shortage crisis. The average salesperson's tenure is just 18 months and dropping as seasoned sales professionals look towards retirement or are losing the motivation to drive new business opportunities.¹

Things are heading in the wrong direction, but let's just not blame the salespeople.

Many sources indicate that roughly 50% of sales hires fail.² Some reports show that the failure rate is as high as 75%.³ And I'd consider the failure rate in startups is even worse especially in early-stage or venture-backed companies.

CRYSTAL BALL RECRUITING

Each salesperson is a \$200,000 investment, so you really want to make sure that you're getting a return on that investment. It will make or break you quickly.

But if you're thinking that just by hiring a salesperson, they're going to turn up and miraculously fix all your problems, then you might want to think again.

Some people say you should hire slow and fire fast.

But if you're hiring slow and other companies are hiring fast, then you've got a good opportunity to lose a good candidate from your job.

I would prefer to hire with confidence backed by the right science and data as quickly as you can, but not to rush. You don't want to be hiring just to get someone on a seat. It's a long-term investment in your business.

But most of us have not been trained to recruit for sales, and even some HR (human resource) people are not specialists in sales recruitment, many would admit that. They tend to lean more on the sales leader or hiring manager who potentially doesn't know much either. You'll find typically when you grow to be a company of 50 people, perhaps you may get a part-time HR person. But they're often more involved in other HR activities like documentation and policies.

It's not uncommon, like myself, to end up, you know, at the ripe old age of 33, managing a national sales team. I was involved in some recruitment but never had to

THE SALES PERFORMANCE CRISIS

recruit myself. And I think this is one of the biggest issues we have even as business leaders—we're juggling so many balls.

One of our valued clients said this about his first experience with sales management and recruiting.

“I went with the standard, more cost-effective route—thought I’d just recruit some BDMs myself and see how it goes.”

“One of them worked out well, but a few didn’t—they’ve since exited the business. It was a real learning curve for me. I realised I’ve got a gap in my skill set when it comes to identifying the right people in the right way.”

—Brendan O’Shea, National Sales Manager,
Knotwood Australia and New Zealand

We can get caught up in the moment of trying to hire somebody that somebody knows, who’s miraculously looking for a job right now, and then you give him or her a go, based on gut feel.

And how are we expected to recruit effectively when salespeople have become very good at interviewing because

CRYSTAL BALL RECRUITING

they've had plenty of practice, right? Candidates can talk the talk, but very few consistently walk the walk.

Right now, what we need is a disruption of traditional methods of hiring, and that's what we've been doing at Arrow Executive Sales over the last seven years.

We are challenging traditional recruitment practices by leveraging online platforms, AI data driven approaches to find and hire sales talent.

This book is like the Uber of sales recruitment because if you look at the impact that Uber made on traditional taxis when they came to the market, they fixed a lot of problems.

Taxis were slack, they were expensive. They weren't clean. They were old. You didn't know when they'd turn up, it was all guesswork (like hiring a salesperson, or even worse, guesswork hiring a sales manager).

Taxis didn't really care because they dominated the market. But Uber disrupted the industry, and the taxis had nowhere to go. They were defeated, and still are.

When we started doing our recruitment, if I wasn't doing anything different from traditional companies, then I didn't bring anything different to the table.

So, we brought the best technology and innovative approaches to take the guesswork out of sales recruitment.

THE SALES PERFORMANCE CRISIS

We've been able to scale and use disrupting recruitment methods to uncover more talent, and to make sure that talent can sell before they start the job. Sometimes, finding a "diamond in the rough".

Using science that's backed over 110,000 hires over the last 35 years, we're hiring quality sales professionals who don't have only industry or related product experience.

If you've read Seth Godin's *Purple Cow* book, it's one of my favourites. Godin explains that to survive in today's world, a company needs to have a purple cow—a remarkable idea, a product, a service that will differentiate them from their competitors. Remarkable ideas stand out and people talk about them.

The value, the technology and data that's available before you hire someone is what *Crystal Ball Recruiting* stands for, because I'm passionate about bringing the best people to the table —sales professionals who are hungry, who will win you new business and who will make you money.

One of the biggest challenges that business leaders have right now is that a lot of hiring managers don't have time to recruit. Too much confidence is being put into sales leaders and hiring managers who have never been taught how to recruit. They can't attract quality candidates because most top-quality sales professionals are not actively looking for a job now.

CRYSTAL BALL RECRUITING

That's why we help craft an employee value proposition to attract the top 20% to your business. If you're not attracting top talent to start with, how can you pick the best?

We help our clients to attract the best.

Hiring managers typically hire salespeople based on their industry experience or market-leading company experience. But having experience doesn't mean they've got sales ability.

We prefer a person with sales ability, and a strong and positive sales mindset who can learn your product. It's much easier, trust me.

If you put too much bias into your hiring and not enough science, then you will tend to hire the same type of salespeople. And if you hire fast and hire on gut feel and bias, then you've got a big problem coming.

If you sit back in a meeting and look around, you can see if there's a lot of people with a similar attribute. They might be a bit fired up or chilled, maybe barrack for the same football team, or be people you'd have a beer with. But are they getting you the results you need?

If your sales aren't growing and your new business development is non-existent, then potentially you've got too many of the same type of people.

THE SALES PERFORMANCE CRISIS

You must take the responsibility of investing in your sales team, systems and processes, and not simply tolerating underperformance. Key questions to ask include:

- What does our team look like right now?
- What's working?
- What isn't working and needs to change?

Instead of procrastinating or thinking a miracle is going to happen, you need to make the hard calls. That's what we love doing when we work with companies.

You're reading this book because recruiting salespeople is one of the hardest jobs to do.

Here is an example of one client we're working with now. He's a new leader who has quickly risen to national sales manager. And his story is very typical.

Straight away, he was expected to hire new salespeople. Cost was the most important thing. It didn't work. He struggled to attract quality candidates. He didn't have the time to understand who applied, and he struggled to get the time to interview.

When he did interviews, he realised that he wasn't attracting the right people.

When you're juggling too many balls and trying to manage a new team and grow, this is where you can outsource to external companies.

CRYSTAL BALL RECRUITING

I don't classify us as a typical, traditional recruiter. We're a performance growth company that helps sales teams grow and scale their business. We don't just hire and run away. We are with our clients for the long haul.

“Every hire must be better than your last.”
That's our motto.

We're heading into a new era of recruitment. AI is really impacting everyone, in both good and bad ways.

This might shock you, but I don't really look at resumes a lot. AI is now writing a lot of cover letters and resumes. That's why you need more than just a resume. I look at LinkedIn more than resumes.

When we're recruiting, we can attract over 200 applications. We then narrow that down quickly by using technology to uncover who are the best candidates. We also use AI outreach programs to contact great salespeople who aren't even looking for a new role. We utilise technology to bring the best people to the recruitment table. But this is only the start of our process.

This book also talks about the importance of retaining top sales talent. Not only is it very difficult to find quality talent, but it's also very easy to lose them if you're not doing the right thing. Maybe it's not giving them some flexibility in their life, if it's required. Or not paying the right money or not paying incentives (the biggest issue).

This book will show how to both attract and keep the top sales talent.