

The Sales Hiring Playbook

Sales Personalities at Work:

A Practical Guide to Sales Hiring, Coaching, and Leading with Assessments




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A woman with voluminous, curly brown hair is looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a white blazer over a dark top. The image has a blue tint and a semi-transparent dark blue overlay. Two vertical blue lines are positioned on the image: one near the top center, passing through the woman's forehead, and another near the bottom center, passing through her chest.

A bad sales hire
costs more than
money. It costs
momentum.

Introduction

The Cost of a Bad Sales Hire

A poor hiring decision in sales isn't just a minor setback—it can be a costly mistake.

Replacing a bad sales hire can cost up to 1.5 times their annual salary, factoring in recruitment, training and lost revenue. That means for a rep earning \$50,000 annually, turnover costs could reach \$75,000 (*HBR 2016*).

Beyond financial costs, a mismatched salesperson can negatively affect your company's image, damage customer relationships, slow revenue growth and impact team morale.

The challenge doesn't stop at hiring. Sales attrition rates are among the highest in any industry, with average turnover reaching 35%—nearly three times higher than the average across all sectors (*Xactly, ~2022*). High attrition rates mean businesses are always in backfilling mode instead of investing in team development.

The urgency of solving the sales hiring and retention challenge cannot be overstated. Some key statistics to consider are:



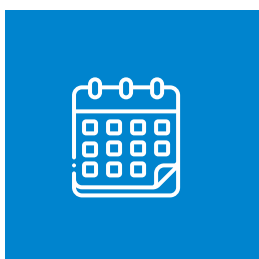
Ineffective Hiring

According to survey data, 37.4% of managers report that new salespeople take 6 months or longer to reach full productivity, highlighting the widespread challenge of onboarding and ramping up new hires (*Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 2024*).



Cost of Replacing Sales Reps

Hiring, training, and replacing a sales rep costs an average of nearly \$115,000, making every lost salesperson a significant financial drain (*DePaul University Center for Sales Leadership*).



Time to Fill Vacant Sales Roles

It takes an average of 60 days to fill a business-to-business (B2B) sales position and even longer for specialized roles (*Xactly, ~2022*).

What This eBook Will Cover

This eBook is your ultimate roadmap for navigating the sales talent lifecycle empowering you to excel at hiring, developing, and leading top-tier sales professionals.

You'll learn:

- How to identify different sales personalities and match them to the right roles
- A step-by-step approach to hiring sales talent and avoiding common hiring mistakes
- Strategies to cultivate and develop your salespeople for long-term success
- The essential traits and skills that drive sales performance
- Leadership strategies to coach and guide your sales team toward peak performance

Whether you're a sales leader, hiring manager, or HR professional, this eBook will provide a comprehensive understanding of the sales talent lifecycle and equip you with the knowledge to make informed decisions that will positively impact your sales team's performance.



Chapter 1

Why Sales Personalities Matter

Successful Salespeople Have Specific Traits

Not everyone is a natural fit for sales, making selecting great salespeople a challenging endeavor.

And that's only half the battle because, once you have hired salespeople, you have to motivate them to stay; competitive personalities are always looking for the next great opportunity. That makes keeping great salespeople another challenge.

When dealing with the complexities of human nature, nothing is foolproof, but personality assessments increase the reliability of your selection and retention efforts, helping you have more hits than misses. Hiring the right or wrong person for the sales team immediately affects your bottom line. It's too expensive to leave it to chance and gut instinct. Fortunately, there is a science for determining a salesperson's most successful personality traits.

What is a Sales Personality?

It's all about the right mix of traits. There's nothing worse than interviewing someone who appears articulate, confident, and motivated in the interview but can't close sales consistently once you hire them.

It's not normally possible to teach the art of sales to someone who isn't naturally competitive. Sure, you can coach them on all the right techniques, but if they don't have the intrinsic drive to negotiate and win deals and the ability to recover quickly after experiencing repeated rejection, it's a wasted effort.

Sustainable sales success requires certain natural behaviors. Based on Omnia's research, **assertiveness** and **resilience** are the two key traits most successful salespeople have in common.

The Power Combo: The Drive to Win + The Ability to Rebound

What separates the good from the unstoppable.

1. ASSERTIVENESS

Naturally assertive people will close the most sales. These individuals are innately driven, competitive, and ambitious. They are motivated by an incentive-based salary structure, i.e. commissions. They want to control their own earning destiny and make more based on their individual effort. They are natural risk-takers who can firmly control the sales cycle and ask for the close.



2. RESILIENCE

Resilient salespeople stay calm under pressure, bounce back from rejection, and keep pursuing their goals with determination. They remain focused through setbacks, adapt quickly when deals stall, and maintain momentum without constant encouragement. These individuals view obstacles as part of the process and continue driving results despite challenges.

Decoding DNA of a Classic Sales Personality

We all have our perception of what a salesperson looks and acts like.

Maybe you think of someone in a business suit who wines and dines clients at expensive restaurants. Or perhaps someone who frantically runs back and forth between multiple customers, trying to get each of them to commit to a purchase springs to mind. In reality, salespeople are much more complex than these caricatures.

Omnia's four decades of helping companies assess salespeople have uncovered four characteristics that define the quintessential sales personality.



1. THE DRIVE TO WIN

Successful salespeople are ambitious and confident. They proactively seek opportunities, ask directly for sales, and are motivated by achievement. They enjoy measurable success through commissions, competitions, and recognition. These individuals often prefer performance-based pay structures that motivate them to take risks and pursue sales aggressively.



2. GREGARIOUSNESS

The traditional sales personality is socially outgoing and approachable. These individuals are energized by social interaction and can easily engage with strangers—valuable for generating leads and requesting referrals. Their expressive nature helps build rapport and maintain customer relationships. They excel at reading social cues and tailoring presentations to appeal to specific audiences.



3. SENSE OF URGENCY

The classic sales personality works at a fast pace and thrives in dynamic environments. They aim to close deals quickly to pursue new leads and prefer short sales cycles. These individuals can juggle multiple deals simultaneously, adapt to last-minute schedule changes, and meet ambitious deadlines.



4. RESILIENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

Effective salespeople bounce back quickly from rejection. They work hard to convert "no" to "yes," and can pivot to new opportunities when deals fall through. Their resilience enables them to try novel approaches without fear of failure. They operate autonomously, making decisions without constant managerial guidance, and prefer being evaluated on results rather than process.

The classic sales personality combines these characteristics to create effective salespeople, though different sales roles may require variations of this profile.

"In sales, your personality is more important than your product knowledge. It is more important than your sales skills. It is more important than the product or service that you are selling. In fact, your personality determines fully 80% of your sales success."

Brian Tracy

Sales and Leadership Expert, Author
From *The Art of Closing the Sale*

Flipping the Script: Thriving in Sales with Unconventional Traits

We have just discussed the prototypical sales personality, but sales success isn't limited to those with outgoing personalities or those who want to see instant results. There's a place for analytical and methodical approaches that can lead to remarkable fulfillment and success.

Within Omnia's 17 personality groups, these characteristics are classified as analytical personality types. These individuals excel at evaluating data, identifying patterns, and developing strategic insights. They possess natural curiosity about market mechanics and patience for methodical problem-solving.

Roles that Benefit from Analytical Personalities:

Enterprise Sales

Enterprise sales involve multiple stakeholders, complex procurement processes, and long sales cycles with high price points. Analytical professionals excel by examining stakeholder needs, mapping decision hierarchies, and crafting data-driven solutions.

Consultative Sales

Success in consultative sales depends on understanding customer challenges and proposing effective solutions. An analytical mindset enables sales professionals to conduct thorough needs assessments, perform root cause analyses, and present data-driven recommendations that resonate with clients.

Technical Sales

In technology-driven industries, sales roles require domain expertise and analytical skills. Professionals must understand the technical complexities of the products and services they are representing and translate them into tangible customer benefits.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls in Sales Hiring

As mentioned previously, different communication styles and paces can thrive in various types of sales roles. However, many companies rely on their gut instincts or a cookie-cutter approach when hiring salespeople, often overlooking the unique traits that can lead to success. This reduces the employer's pool of talented candidates and may cause them to miss out on their next superstar salesperson. Some common hiring mistakes include:

- **Over-prioritizing charisma** – Just because a candidate interviews well or has a magnetic personality doesn't mean they will close sales.
- **Ignoring personality fit for the role** – Hunters and Farmers play different sales roles that require different skills and traits.
- **Failing to assess resilience** – Sales is full of rejection, and not everyone can handle it effectively.


The good news? Organizations can build high-performing sales teams that thrive in any market by understanding key sales personality traits, leveraging assessments, and adopting a structured hiring process.



Omnia Pro Tip

Use behavioral assessments early in the hiring process to identify candidates with high assertiveness and resilience—two traits that consistently correlate with top-performing sales reps.

Don't wait until interviews to evaluate fit.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing an orange blazer over a white and blue striped shirt, is smiling and shaking hands with a man whose arm and hand are visible on the right. They are seated at a wooden conference table. The background is a blurred office setting with glass partitions and lights. Two vertical blue lines are positioned on either side of the text.

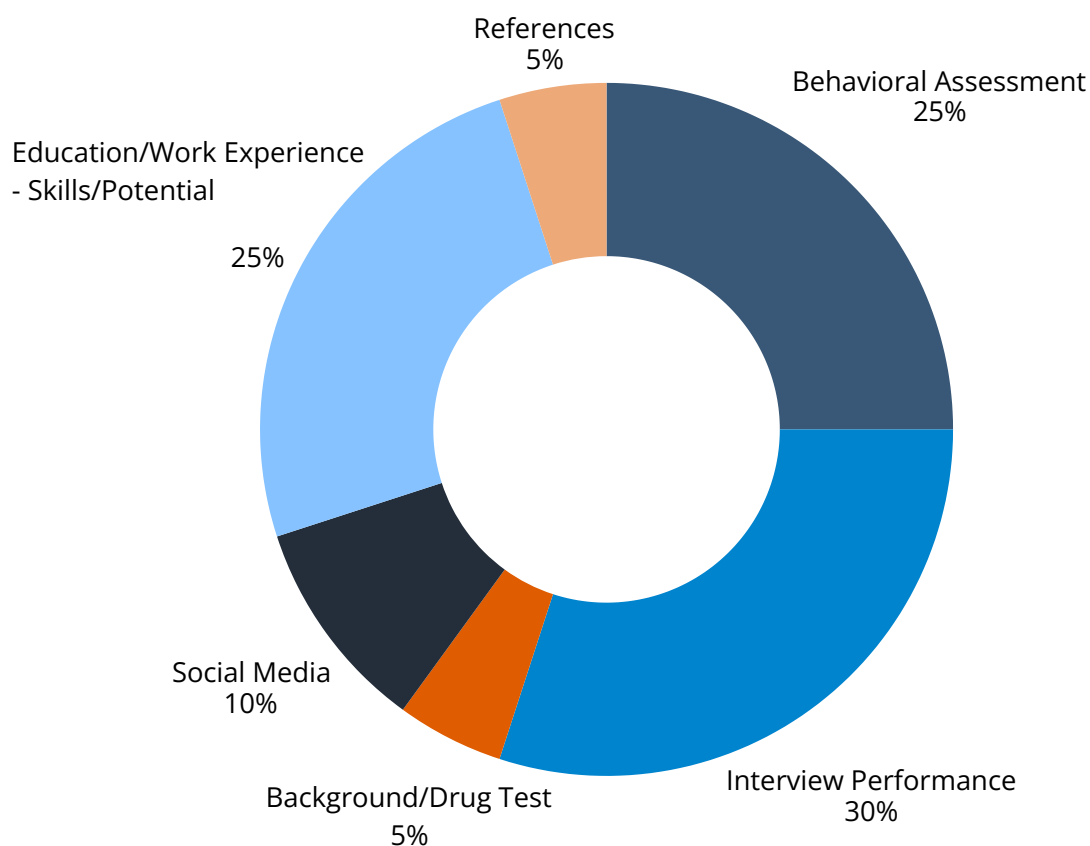
You can train for
skill—but you can't
train for drive, grit,
or fit.

Chapter 2

How to Hire the Right Salespeople

Given the high cost of a bad sales hire, it's essential to follow a consistent set of best practices when you're hiring. Each practice has varying rates of impact on your ultimate decision, but each is a critical part of the whole selection picture. Together these practices help take the guesswork out of bringing your next top sales rep onboard.

Hiring Best Practices



This graphic depicts Omnia's view of selection best practices and the weight by percentage each factor should have on your final decision. While a behavioral assessment can provide insights that are highly valuable in the hiring process, we strongly encourage our clients to consider other factors, in addition to an assessment, when making hiring decisions.

Ten Steps to a Successful Sales Hire

Most small companies lack a dedicated HR department, and hiring for sales roles can be especially challenging. Sales success hinges on traits like drive, resilience, and self-assuredness, and it can be difficult to tell which candidates possess these traits based on a resume alone. With high turnover and direct revenue impact, making the right sales hire is critical.

This 10-step process will help you identify, attract, and hire top-performing sales talent while avoiding common and costly missteps.

- 1 Define Your Sales Hiring Needs
- 2 Expand Your Sales Talent Pipeline
- 3 Optimize Job Ads
- 4 Filter Candidates for Key Sales Traits
- 5 Conduct Initial Phone Screenings
- 6 Assess with the Omnia Assessment
- 7 Conduct Multiple, Role-Relevant Interviews
- 8 Provide a Sales Role Preview and Peer Interaction
- 9 Run Background and Reference Checks
- 10 Extend a Clear and Detailed Offer Letter

Step 1. Define Your Sales Hiring Needs

- Develop a checklist tailored to the sales function, e.g., outbound vs. inbound, territory size, sales cycle complexity.
- Decide if the position should be filled internally, outsourced temporarily, or if restructuring makes more sense.
- Identify the key traits required for success in the role, e.g., assertiveness, comfort with commission rate, resilience, competitive spirit, technical expertise vs. relationship-building proficiency.
- Consider personality fit with your sales culture, e.g., high-autonomy vs. team-driven environments.
- Use tools like the Omnia Assessment to assess ideal traits aligned with successful salespeople, e.g., persistence, sociability, urgency.

Step 2. Expand Your Sales Talent Pipeline

- Avoid relying solely on industry experience. Many successful sales professionals transition in from other sectors.
- Engage sales managers in sourcing and referrals.
- Tap into sales-specific communities, e.g., LinkedIn Sales Navigator, RevGenius.
- Use social platforms to observe candidates' digital presence and communication styles.

Step 3. Optimize Job Ads

- Use language that appeals to high performers, e.g., "high earning potential," "fast-paced," "performance-driven".
- Highlight commission structure, quotas, and growth potential.
- Get expert feedback on clarity and relevance to avoid attracting non-sales-focused candidates.

Step 4. Filter Candidates for Key Sales Traits

- Screen resumes for achievements, not just responsibilities, e.g., Exceeded quota by 130%.
- Look for signs of drive (promotions, awards, or sales competition wins).
- Send "not interested" letters to candidates who don't meet your criteria; don't just leave them wondering. Maintaining a positive reputation is crucial.

Step 5. Conduct Initial Phone Screenings

- Use this step to assess communication skills, confidence, and enthusiasm.
- Ask role-specific questions like: “How do you handle cold calling?” or “What’s your biggest sales win?”
- Clearly explain what the role entails, your hiring process, and the next steps.

Step 6. Assess with the Omnia Assessment

- Have qualified candidates complete the Omnia Assessment and receive their Omnia Behavioral Profile.
- Compare candidates’ traits with benchmarked top-performing salespeople.
- Tailor your interview questions and understand their personality traits.
- Prioritize candidates whose profiles align with the demands of your sales environment.

Step 7. Conduct Multiple, Role-Relevant Interviews

- Include both sales leaders and peers in interviews.
- Use behavioral and scenario-based questions, e.g., “Walk me through how you closed your toughest deal.”
- Evaluate punctuality, consistency in responses, engagement, and how well they sell themselves.

Step 8. Provide a Sales Role Preview & Peer Interaction

- Have candidates shadow a top rep or attend a team huddle.
- Include mock pitches or objection-handling exercises.
- Let peers give input—team fit is essential in tight-knit sales groups.

Step 9. Run Background and Reference Checks

- Verify sales performance claims with previous employers (quotas, rankings, earnings, etc.)
- Be transparent that checks will be part of the process.
- Check for licensing or credential requirements if relevant.

Step 10. **Extend a Clear and Detailed Offer Letter**

- Outline the position, performance expectations, benefits, and compensation breakdown (base + commission).
- Reinforce career growth potential and performance-based rewards.
- Emphasize urgency in acceptance to reflect sales urgency and secure top talent quickly.



Five Steps to Building a Sales Talent Pipeline

Creating a talent pipeline saves time, reduces uncertainty, and eliminates starting from zero with each hire. Instead of posting jobs, sifting through resumes, and making countless calls, you can directly contact pre-vetted candidates ready to join your team.

A talent pipeline is "a ready pool of potential candidates who are qualified and prepared to step up and fill relevant key roles within the organization as soon as they fall vacant" (*Spiceworks*).

Here are five steps to building your sales talent pipeline.

1. Identify your needs

There are always surprises in staffing – someone moves to a new field, a spouse is transferred, an employee needs to care for a family member full time – but not all job vacancies are unexpected. You can take stock now of where the positions are going to be in the future. These might include:

- In areas where you are planning to expand (new initiatives, departments, or branches).
- Replacements for excellent contributors who are on a divergent educational path. You love them, they do excellent work, but they're completing a degree in an unrelated field and planning to shift careers.
- Positions where there is a lot of lateral and upward movement. These are the roles that prepare your employees to move up in the company.

Most companies are always ready to hire a commission sales superstar, no matter the current staffing level. It just makes sense to bring on someone who is going to take your revenue to the next level.



2. Prepare to sell the benefits of working for your company.

You know it's a great place to work, but what is your plan for letting other people know? This should go beyond a dry list of HR benefits. What are the personal benefits of working there? Why would you recommend it?

Create marketing to attract sales talent the same way you would attract sales prospects. Spotlight your brand and workplace culture by sharing day-in-the-life employee content and authentic testimonials on social platforms, painting a picture of what it's like to be part of the team. Featuring company values in action, like community involvement, makes culture tangible. When job seekers see real people thriving in a supportive environment, it transforms the organization from "just another company" to a place they can envision belonging.

3. Scope out your people.

- **Start in your backyard.** You may have a few stellar employees in mind for your sales team. These people are gold because you know their work ethics, skill levels, and reputations.
- **Talk to the people you trust most.** Ask your highest-performing employees if they know any potential sales candidates. They understand what success looks like in your organization, which can make their referrals some of the most predictive and high-quality candidates you can find.
- **Scope out external business contacts.** Chances are you've built relationships with bright, motivated people outside the company — contacts from vendors or services you use, for example. It can't hurt to feel around and see if they are interested in a change.
- **LinkedIn, Indeed, and social networking.** LinkedIn is always a great place to start because of its well-defined keywords and the ability to review people's resumes and histories. Indeed also allows you to search resumes, although you will have to buy a subscription. Conduct strategic scouting by searching platforms like TikTok and Instagram to spot individuals who demonstrate the ability to influence an audience through engaging content or who are posting about their latest sales win. Also, check out industry-specific social media groups such as LinkedIn communities or industry subreddits to identify people who are contributing content and promoting their sales finesse to find people who really know their stuff.
- **Local business networks.** Virtual and in-person networking events offer a great opportunity to meet reputable people in your area seeking new opportunities.

4. Make sure they are a good match.

You may like everything about the person, but they must be more than likable; they must be well suited to the job. Remember, a great conversationalist won't be successful in sales if they can't close deals.

5. Make and maintain a connection.

Reach out to potential employee leads and find out if there is interest. Be open and honest about the timeline, and make it clear that this is not a solid offer of a position but the possibility for a mutual future opportunity. Find out the best way to reach these individuals and keep in touch. Provide updates as the possibility of a role comes nearer.

Start building your talent pipeline now to stay ahead of unexpected staffing changes and ensure access to top sales talent when you need it.




Omnia Pro Tip

Pair every interview with a behavioral profile. A candidate may ace the interview but still be a poor fit. Use Omnia's benchmarked sales profiles to compare candidate traits with proven success patterns in similar roles.

"The first thing to look for when searching for a great employee is somebody with a personality that fits with your company culture. Most skills can be learned, but it is difficult to train people on their personality."

Sir Richard Branson

Founder of the Virgin Group



Build your team like
you build your
business.
Intentionally,
strategically, and with
the future in mind.

Chapter 3

Seven Steps for Cultivating Sales Talent

A thriving sales team is the heartbeat of a successful company.

When sales soar, so do profitability, morale, and optimism for the future. But a strong sales team doesn't build itself—it's the result of smart hiring, intentional development, and a culture that fuels success.

On the flip side, a poor performer can leave a lasting impact, dragging down productivity, morale, and even the sales manager's effectiveness. The key to preventing this? Understanding why sales reps struggle and taking proactive steps to ensure they have the motivation, skills, training, and guidance to thrive.

Here's how to cultivate a high-performing sales team that drives lasting growth in seven steps.

- 1 Establish a Sales Culture
- 2 Deploy Modern Tools
- 3 Hire Intentionally and Onboard Thoroughly
- 4 Set Attainable, Challenging Goals
- 5 Provide Ongoing Training and Mentorship
- 6 Give Regular, Detailed Feedback
- 7 Recognize Accomplishments

1

Establish a Sales Culture

There's a lot of literature out there that supports the benefits of a good company culture. Your sales team should have its own. It doesn't have to be fancy. A short statement of the values your team shares works just fine. Be sure it's not just words on paper that came out of the last sales management book you read. Engage your sales team in identifying and agreeing upon which values matter most to them. You'll want to all agree and uphold the values that differentiate your company's brand and your clients' experience and will ultimately lead to your sales success.

Your sales culture will help align everyone on the team and keep members motivated. The shared values will ensure a more consistent experience for your customers.

You and your team should do everything in accordance with the sales culture you establish, and members of the sales team should share openly and hold each other accountable to your established values. When stress piles up and numbers are hard to hit, values are often pushed aside, especially if they're viewed as just words on paper. As the leader, set the tone to make it OK for all to hold each other accountable for upholding these values and speaking up when things go off track.

2

Deploy Modern Tools

It's tough to close deals when the technology your team uses is slow, hard to use, or flat-out doesn't work. Make their jobs easier by purchasing and providing modern tools that help them efficiently track customers, prospects, and sales conversations, along with sales enablement playbooks and organized content marketing. Any technology investment should be focused on decreasing new hire ramp-up time to full productivity and increasing the productivity of your existing reps.



3

Hire Intentionally and Onboard Thoroughly

With your sales culture in mind, think about your ideal sales representative. Write your job description and advertisement based on that ideal. Of course, you may need to be flexible in nonessential areas so that you're not endlessly chasing unicorns. Still, hire with intention so there's a greater chance of culture fit.

As you consider what your next hires need to look like, take a close look at your existing sales team, your target markets, and your clients to determine what gaps you need to fill. What personality traits or specific skills will take your team to the next level? John F. Kennedy once said, "A rising tide lifts all boats." He was speaking about the economy, but this applies to sales teams too. Every person you hire should bring something new to your mix that takes the whole team up a notch.

Your new sales associates will need personal attention early on to set them up for success. Besides the typical human resources content, your onboarding should include:

- A review of the sales culture and how it impacts the sales process
- In-depth training on the company's products and services
- A discussion about learning and recognition preferences
- A close look at the sales process/sales playbook so they know where to go to find support once they are active in the market

A thorough onboarding helps new sales associates feel welcome and engaged. It also gets them familiar with what they're selling and how they're expected to sell it.



4

Set Attainable, Challenging Goals

Sales goals are necessary to drive production and measure achievement. They must be set strategically. You want sales representatives to feel challenged enough to make them work hard and to stave off boredom or apathy. What you don't want is to set the bar impossibly high. If you do, both sales and morale will go down, and you won't hit your goals.

As a rule of thumb, most of your sales associates should be able to hit their targets. These targets should be aligned with overall organizational growth goals that are attainable and inspiring and, ultimately, something everyone will feel a sense of celebratory pride over when the majority of the team achieves them.

5

Provide Ongoing Training and Mentorship

All that time you spend onboarding your new hires can quickly go out the door if you don't provide an ongoing method for training, skill development and coaching. Within three months of sales training, most reps have forgotten 84%-90% of the information delivered in the training (*Ardent Learning*). Robust onboarding lays a solid foundation, but it's not enough. You must provide ongoing training and mentorship to keep your sales team growing. Your training and development plan should include:

- Group training to reiterate basic, but essential, sales skills and introduce new ones
- Private coaching to work on specific sales situations and issues
- Mentorship opportunities for seasoned representatives to share best practices with new members of the team
- Encouragement to seek development opportunities outside of the office

Establish a cadence of weekly sales huddles to share wins, discuss challenges, and set short-term goals and focus points. Also, take the time to hold regular cross-functional meetings with sales, service, marketing, and operations, with an agenda item similar to your sales huddle.

Providing an environment of ongoing communication and cross-development gives everyone an opportunity to grow in their profession while building a team climate of shared goals and focus.

6

Give Regular, Detailed Feedback

Your sales associates need to know what they're doing right so they can do more of it – and what they're doing wrong so they change it. That insight comes from your regular, detailed feedback. Make it a point to speak to each sales associate on a set schedule of one-on-ones and include ample opportunity for sales call observation. Build out time in one-on-ones that goes beyond reviewing deals and pipeline health.

Use these meetings to establish and review personal and professional development goals. This is your time to get to know what inspires and motivates every sales rep, and it can also help uncover what's getting in their way, whether it be a skill or mindset gap.

7

Recognize Accomplishments

When an individual sales associate or the entire team does well, celebrate it. Show them that you're proud of them and appreciate their contributions. Recognition will show them that you're paying attention to their achievements, make them feel good, and motivate them to replicate that feeling by achieving more success.

Be sure to understand what type of recognition motivates each individual. Some reps are inspired by group praise and all-company applause, while others would rather hide under a rug than be in the limelight. Sending an email to the employee outlining specifically how they excelled or posting a message on the company's virtual message board can be more meaningful and effective with reserved individuals than a shout out on a company call.




Your sales team drives the financial success of your organization. To have an effective selling machine, you must identify the right talent, put it where it will thrive, and continue to develop it.

The sales leader is the thermostat that sets the climate for the sales team and cultivates the growth of the team and the success of each sales rep. Commitment to establishing these practices creates the soil and foundation for your team to hit goals and thrive together.



Omnia Pro Tip

Assess your current team—not just new hires. Omnia's behavioral assessments can reveal coaching needs, team dynamics, and opportunities for role realignment to improve performance and retention.

A woman with long brown hair, smiling, wearing a teal blazer over a light-colored patterned top. She is holding a stack of papers in her left hand and pointing her right index finger towards the viewer. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting. Two vertical teal lines are positioned on either side of the text.

Great coaching
doesn't change
people.
It reveals their
potential.

Chapter 4

Coaching Strategies for Different Sales Personalities

Salespeople come in many forms and have a mix of personalities. These differences call for adaptation in developing, coaching, and motivating your team.

Through 40 years of personality data analysis, Omnia has identified 17 distinct personality groups. They break down even further into unique sales styles.

In Omnia terms, the most successful sales personalities have two commonalities — they all have a tall column 1 (high level of assertiveness) and a tall column 7 (resilience and independence). The uniqueness comes through in their communication and problem-solving styles and pace. Below are some examples of different personality styles and how to coach them based on their distinct combination of traits.

Three Key Sales Personality Styles and How to Coach Them

1. The Visionary

This classic sales personality (tall columns 1-3-5-7 in Omnia's instrument) is assertive, competitive, outgoing, fast paced, and decisive. Visionaries are optimistic, expressive, and determined to win. They accept risk in return for high reward and naturally take charge.

Visionaries aren't afraid to speak up when they see something wrong, which can challenge sales leaders who lack confidence. They're forthright with opinions, comfortable with conflict, and push back when they disagree.

Coaching tip

Keep your ego in check and be OK with not having all the answers. If you have a strong Visionary who hits their numbers while earning respect, support and guide them while removing obstacles. Let them shine and be there when needed.

2. The Persistent Visionary

With a profile of tall columns 1-3-6-7, the Persistent Visionary loves doing things their way at their own deliberate pace. Assertive, outgoing, independent, patient, and focused, they're committed to results and love the limelight.

Persistent Visionaries are motivated by individuality and often resist coaching they don't agree with. They can get stuck on unlikely deals, working tirelessly rather than giving up.

Coaching tip

Stroke their ego and nurture confidence while keeping their eye on the right priorities. Give assurances and be prepared for battles if they disagree. They dislike being rushed or told how to do things.



3. The Innovator

Innovators are ambitious, straightforward, multitasking, and self-directed; their Omnia profile shows tall columns 1-4-5-7. They are competitive, quick paced, and comfortable adjusting their sales strategies based on the individual deal.

Instead of focusing on relationship building, Innovators take a more fact-focused, consultative approach to sales. They position themselves as problem solvers and subject matter experts who pinpoint prospects' specific needs and provide targeted recommendations, backing up their assertions with data.

Coaching tip

Offer opportunities to attend seminars, workshops, and webinars, as Innovators want to stay up to date on relevant industry knowledge. Be specific when offering them performance feedback and motivate them by asking for their expertise and input when making plans and setting goals.

Coaching Tailored to Individual Sales Personalities

When salespeople are aligned with roles that fit their natural strengths and are coached by leaders committed to their development, success is within reach. Research by the Sales Executive Council shows that high-quality coaching can improve sales performance by up to 19% (*The Center for Sales Strategy*). The challenge? Coaching isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor.

A great sales leader understands that different personality types require different coaching approaches. Employee behavioral assessments provide insight into each rep's strengths, weaknesses, and motivators, allowing leaders to adapt their coaching for maximum impact.

Here's how to coach based on the four key traits of the classic sales personality:

1. High Level of Assertiveness

Highly assertive reps are self-motivated and thrive on competition but may come across as overly aggressive. To coach them effectively:

- Observe their sales calls and assess their tone and buyer interactions.
- Encourage them to recognize when to push forward and when to step back.
- Keep them engaged with goal tracking and recognition but avoid micromanagement.

2. Socially Outgoing Communication Style

Some reps are natural rapport builders, making them great at engaging clients but potentially weak in uncovering objections or decision-making authority.

Coaching strategies can include:

- Ensure they focus on active listening and identifying true client needs.
- Encourage strategic questioning to uncover the real barriers to closing deals.
- Provide structured deal reviews to help refine their approach.
- Give them opportunities to collaborate and network to maintain energy and engagement.



3. Fast Pace

Sales professionals who work at a rapid tempo want to see quick results for their efforts. They enjoy having several deals in progress at the same time but can sometimes take on too much at once, resulting in overextension. Coach these reps by:

- Encouraging them to use time-management tools and calendaring apps to keep their sales activities organized.
- Asking for regular status updates to confirm they follow up on promising leads that need additional time to close.
- Allowing them to divide lengthy sales cycles into smaller components that allow them to easily visualize their progress.

4. Strong Need for Autonomy

Sales reps with a high need for autonomy and a big-picture focus can struggle with administrative tasks and resist micromanagement. Effective coaching includes:

- Supporting them with resources such as sales engineers or account managers to handle complex details and ensure accuracy.
- Keeping performance expectations clear without unnecessary oversight.
- Asking for their input when setting goals and establishing plans to give them a sense of ownership.

While different personality traits require different strategies to bolster strengths and improve challenge areas, it's important to be consistent in coaching and development across your sales team. Nobody is motivated when they're held to a different standard, perceive they have less support, or feel they don't have the resources to effectively do their job.



Implications of Poor Coaching and Key Questions to Ask

Poor coaching isn't just frustrating—it's costly. As much as 60% of salespeople are more likely to leave their jobs if their manager is a poor coach (*The Center for Sales Strategy*). And when turnover rises, performance drops, hiring costs skyrocket, and morale takes a hit.

Coaching requires practice, consistency, and focused attention. To evaluate and improve your effectiveness as a sales leader, start by asking yourself these key questions:

1

Have I clearly defined expectations?



2

Have I provided sufficient training?



3

Have I "inspected what I expect"?



4

Am I adapting to changing circumstances?



5

Have I asked for feedback?



1. Have I clearly defined expectations?

Success shouldn't be a mystery. Your team needs to know exactly what winning looks like and what behaviors drive results. Set crystal-clear expectations around:

- Key activities and performance metrics
- Accountability—ensuring everyone pulls their weight
- Standards for consistency and fairness

Nothing demotivates a team faster than watching someone else get away with underperformance. Hold everyone to the same standard to maintain trust and engagement.

2. Have I provided sufficient training?

Not all salespeople come in with the same skills or experience. A one-size-fits-all approach to training won't cut it.

- Conduct a gap analysis to identify skill deficiencies
- Provide tailored coaching and development plans
- Offer ongoing training—high-performing sales organizations are twice as likely to invest in continuous training compared to low-performing ones

The best sales teams are always learning. Make sure yours has the tools and knowledge to succeed.

3. Have I “inspected what I expect”?

Setting expectations is one thing; following up is another. Coaching doesn't stop once instructions are given.

- Recognize and praise team members who meet expectations
- Highlight how their efforts drive success to reinforce behaviors
- Identify those who are struggling and double down on coaching

If someone isn't meeting expectations, ask why:

- Do they need more training?
- Are they lacking motivation?
- Or are they simply not the right fit for the role?

Either way, taking action is essential.

4. Am I adapting to changing circumstances?

Sales environments are never static; what worked six months ago may not work today. Be agile.

- Adjust goals and expectations based on market shifts
- Keep coaching strategies relevant and realistic
- Recognize that salespeople are motivated by wins, and ensure they have the tools to succeed in the current landscape

Great sales leaders don't just manage—they lead through change.

Sales leadership is about more than hitting targets; it's about empowering a team to grow, succeed, and stay engaged. By understanding individual motivations and coaching accordingly, leaders can build a team of confident, high-performing sales professionals who drive results.



Omnia Pro Tip

One-size-fits-all coaching doesn't work. Use individual Omnia profiles to tailor your coaching strategy by communication style, assertiveness level, pace and desired level of structure. This builds trust and accelerates development.

5. Have I asked for feedback?

Let's be real: **No one has all the answers.**

Asking your sales team for feedback isn't a sign of weakness—it's a sign of strong leadership. There may be:

- Unintentional barriers you've created
- Processes that frustrate rather than help
- Coaching approaches that don't resonate

Put your ego aside and listen for patterns. And most importantly, act on what you hear.

Conclusion

Mastering the Art and Science of Hiring Sales Talent

The success of any sales organization depends on hiring, developing, and leading the right talent. Assessments provide the insight needed to make smarter hiring decisions, tailor coaching strategies, and build high-performing sales teams.

By integrating assessments into your talent strategy, you can streamline hiring, enhance training, and develop sales leaders who inspire success. Implement the action items outlined in this eBook to master the art and science of hiring sales talent—backed by data, not guesswork.



Omnia Pro Tip

Make assessment data part of your long-term talent strategy. From hiring to leadership development, Omnia's tools provide consistent insights that help you build and sustain a high-performing sales organization.



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Our 2023 validation study confirmed that salespeople who possess Omnia's primary sales trait consistently earned top ratings from their managers, reinforcing the assessment's predictive power in sales performance.

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