



Where Are The Applicants For New Radio Sales Jobs?

Tips For Hiring — And Retaining — Great Sellers

Are you having a challenging time finding quality talent to fill your open positions? Are you finding great talent, only to have them turn down the offer before they start? Is your turnover rate for new hires higher than 50 percent?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. The days of radio sales managers having a drawer full of resumes from qualified and interested applicants are over.

With Baby Boomers starting to retire, the U.S. faces a major talent crisis expected to last until 2030. And not only will there be a dearth of quality talent to choose from, but those we do choose may not choose us!

THE BAD NEWS

This issue impacts the radio industry in particular because recent grads and 20-somethings didn't grow up listening to radio. They don't have the loyalty or passion for the medium that earlier generations have, and the thought of working on 100 percent commission scares them.

Research indicates that many other industries are poaching our young sales talent by offering much more, such as base salaries in the high \$30,000s to mid \$40,000s plus commission, car allowances, new laptops, BlackBerries with service, an immersed training program that is monitored for success, and more.

Why would a talented young seller choose to accept a radio sales position at 100 percent commission with only a 90-day guarantee of \$2,500-3,500 per month and no expenses? Although it is proven that radio can make money down the road, these next few generations will not have the same staying



power as the Boomers. If they don't see immediate financial success, they will lose patience and embark on another career path.

The stations don't want to pay for someone to learn and then leave. The talent don't want to forego compensation equal to what they could earn in other industries. So who wins?

THE GOOD NEWS


Here are some suggestions for getting the new hires up to speed more

quickly, allowing radio to remain a competitive choice for the sellers of tomorrow:

- Create a base salary as well as a bonus to be earned after they achieve stated goals, and put the salary in for a 12-month period. If a manager is organized and accurately monitoring the new seller, he or she will know if they can make it over the long haul. Make sure the salary only covers basics, so the employee can keep the incentive in view. Many new hires are so nervous about how they are going to pay the bills, they can't focus on their jobs.
- Build incentives around **goals**, not just sales.
- Provide intense sales training for 30 days, so they can start billing sooner rather than later.
- Have a strong monitoring process in place so corporate can keep an eye on what sales managers are really doing with the training programs.
- Barter with a local communications company so you can cover your sellers' cell phone bills. Gas prices should also be a consideration.
- Get the GMs involved! They should go on sales calls with the new talent to help them get up to speed and to build a stronger team. These younger generations eschew a hierarchical style in favor of teamwork.

Rather than discouraging prospective sellers by pointing out the negative aspects about radio sales in an effort to provide a realistic view, we should sell them on the tangible benefits of joining our team, our company, and our industry. ☎

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 **QUICKREAD™**

- Recent grads may not have the passion for radio that Boomers do, so enticing them to a career in radio sales will take some finesse.
- Provide early training and incentives that will keep the instant-gratification generation interested.
- Commission-only is daunting for new hires; provide a base salary and bonus based on stated goals.