

Be Smart: Outsource Your Sales Recruitment Now!

By Laurie Kahn

Your sales manager is human and can be spread only so thin. The SM's goal, first and foremost, should be to make sure the station hits budgets and is profitable. To do so, the sales manager will need the right team with the right skills. Today's sales process is vastly different, as there is more emphasis on direct client service, new business and non-traditional revenue. In addition to possessing strong knowledge of marketing and promotion, salespeople need to know how to sell other platforms in combination with their Radio stations. Hiring correctly is critical to the stations' success.

Sales managers today are expected to do their jobs with fewer people. When training budgets have been cut or eliminated, managers must train as well. Sales managers must motivate and retain current achievers as well as updating them with new sales techniques. Additionally, managers must continually add sales staff to keep a top-grade team.

It costs the station when a salesperson resigns and that list is not adequately covered, or no one is bringing in new business. If the sales manager hastily hires the wrong person or does not train the newly hired person, the new hire has little chance to succeed — an enormous waste of time and money. The rule generally is that it costs double the salesperson's annual compensation package to hire and train a successful salesperson. That figure does not take into consideration the cost of lost business

or how much unemployment can take from the bottom line.

Hiring effective, talented salespeople may require going outside the industry or outside the market. Sales managers will be required to spend more time with hiring, training and closing deals, so the company must have a strategy on who and how to hire. We can't forget that this is an extremely litigious time. You will want to be assured that your managers know how to interview and hire effectively and legally — major issues that can affect your bottom line.

Of recruiting, training and closing, which is easiest and most cost-effective to outsource? Recruiting! Your sales manager knows your stations and how they should be represented. Does it make sense for them to give up training or closing deals? No. They must be available to listen to the needs of the current staff as well as clients' issues. Training and closing are areas that most need their attention.

Consider assistance in screening candidates, so your manager sees only candidates that fit your qualifications. There are several ways to do so, especially if you have eliminated several management jobs from your market. You can spend the saved cutback income on an outside source.

By having a thorough job description as well as someone who understands your sale, your company culture, and your market, you can successfully outsource a major time-burner for your managers. Hire a recruitment service, a retired sales professional, or a

consultant to work with you. Have them interview on a regular basis, bringing you qualified candidates that fit your job description. This is an excellent way to recruit a diverse workforce as well. You don't have to worry about "star interviewees" that dazzle in the interview and never perform, as an outside source will be looking at facts and comparing all candidates in a "like" manner. Outside sources can be paid on an hourly basis, a project fee, or on a percentage based on the

first year's income of those hired.

Keeping your managers focused on the bottom line and giving them assistance in hiring will ultimately save the company money. Hiring well is an art, as is the retention of good people. ☐

Laurie Kahn is founder and president of Media Staffing Network. She can be reached at laurie@mediastaffing-network.com or at 312-944-9194, ext. 108.



Take 30 Minutes To Plan Your Week

According to the *Manager's Intelligence Report*, most people need only 30 minutes to plan their entire workweek — if they follow the OATS formula. "What's that?" you ask.

O: OBJECTIVES. Determine what results you want to achieve by the end of the workweek. Write them down, rank them, then do them.

A: ACTIVITIES. Exactly what must you do to achieve the above objectives? List these activities on the same sheet of paper, in sequence.

T: TIME. How much time will each activity require? To develop a realistic plan, allocate more time than you think you need, just to give yourself some flexibility. Unexpected challenges always crop up.

S: SCHEDULE. Check your calendar and decide when you can tackle each activity. Many people underestimate the effectiveness of a schedule, but professional athletes — and professional managers — really can't get by without one.



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