

# Top 10 Tips To Onboarding Salespeople

By Merit Gest

In a recent poll of business owners and CEOs of companies \$3-50 million in revenue, the number one most frustrating position to hire in the company was sales. Most of the talented sales managers were those who paid their dues, worked their tails off and clawed their way up the ladder. With that type of history, you would think they would want to do everything they can to assist a new sales hire in their orientation to the company. The truth is... they do want to do everything they can to make it easy for new salespeople to succeed. In fact, some sales managers earn their own income from the success of their team.

So what's the problem?

Most sales managers today were not brought on with a solid, structured, thorough onboarding program... so they don't even know it's missing in their own company.

Here are ten things to consider in order to ramp up new salespeople faster so they produce more and stay longer.

1. **Give them specific sound bites-** If you've been in business for more than one week, you should have a solid commercial that you can deliver so people know what you do in a way that makes sense to others. Don't make your new hires figure it out... give them a written, audio and video version of what it is so they can get to work.
2. **Build time into your orientation program (the first 90 days) for them to understand your products and services-** Do they need to use them? Can they learn how you build them?
3. **Create structured conversations with people throughout your company-** Give them time and supply them with a list of questions to include when they are getting to know people and different departments.
4. **Test their learning by creating assessment scenarios-** the goal is not for them to understand things intellectually, but to have a working knowledge they can draw on when faced with different scenarios.
5. **Understand their strengths and ensure supervisor trains and managers with those in mind-** everyone has strengths to build on and under pressure we all revert to our most natural ways of being. If you know what those are for new sales hires, you can use them to teach skills.
6. **Find ways to reward behaviors and actions you want to reinforce-** it's too late to reward only the results. If you reward the behaviors you know will lead to the results, you will get more results faster and more consistently.
7. **Determine what they need to know to start selling and teach that first-** your new sales hire is eager to prove themselves to you, to their co-workers and to

themselves that it was a good move to hire them/ take the job. Give them what they need to get going fast.

8. **Set realistic expectations for the first 90 days around learning and actions, not just results.** A good 90-day plan has milestones like this, “By the end of your first month you should be able to accurately input a customer request, demonstrate mastery executing each step and clearly articulate our value proposition. You should also have a list of 500 potential prospects in your territory.” That’s concrete, you can measure it and if they have it they are well poised to move to the next phase of orientation.
9. **Identify a “culture mentor” to be responsible for acclimating your new salesperson into the company culture-** someone is going to teach them the culture of your company... take responsibility and assign someone that role.
10. **Ask for their feedback and input to improve orientation in the future-** your on-boarding program is a living document. If you are not constantly improving it based on what you are learning and taking into consideration any changes in the company, you are missing the boat.

The beautiful thing about creating a structured on-boarding program that orients a new sales hire so they can ramp up quickly and achieve success in the first 90-days is that you have it forever. It’s always easier to edit than start from scratch. Once you know how you orient a new hire, and it is well documented, then you have more freedom to constantly be on the hunt for top performing salespeople... and when word gets out that you have a well structured orientation program, the top performers will be on the hunt for you.

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