

---

# Hiring Rep Firm Winners

by NICKI WEISS

Rep firm business owners and hiring managers frequently say they can't find good staff, particularly salespeople, while also keeping their search costs under control. The following are some "easy wins" that will bring excellent candidates to your door at little or no expense.

**M**ake sure job must-haves and nice-to-haves stand out: Too often you read job descriptions that are so vague or convoluted you can't figure out what skills are needed to succeed in the role. When you are writing up a job description for a new person to join your rep firm, be as clear as possible on the minimum skill sets needed to land the job and excel at it. This practice will show potential candidates that you know what you are doing, and save you time (and money) while weeding out unsuitable applicants.

**Do what you say you will do:** Great people want great places to

work, and information about outstanding rep firms is spread by word of mouth. Follow the golden rule of "Do unto others..." and you immediately rank as a top rep firm. This means your rep firm establishes a good reputation by treating potential candidates with the same respect and follow-through that you would expect. Keep applicants informed about the hiring process, and be honest about their suitability for joining your rep firm. There is a saying, "I can deal with love and I can deal with hate. But I really struggle with indifference."

**Hand the candidate a sheet of paper, right here, right now:** Hir-

ing someone who seems great, then finding out that he or she doesn't have basic writing, analytical or organizing skills, can cost a lot in extra training or in another candidate search. As part of your interview process, hand each candidate a blank sheet of paper. Ask them to handwrite why they will be a sales superstar for your rep firm; what they would do in the first 30, 60 or 90 days on the job; and what it will take for them to be successful. In this interview step you will see the quality of their writing, their level of skill in analyzing and problem-solving, and their ability to organize their thoughts. This information is priceless.

**Pay employees for successful leads:** Ask your current sales team, or anyone else in your rep firm organization, to spread the word about a job opening. Pay them \$150 when the new salesperson joins, and \$1,000 six months later if the new person is still with your rep firm.

***When you are writing up a job description for a new person to join your rep firm, be as clear as possible on the minimum skill sets needed to land the job and excel at it.***

**Recruit from your suppliers:**

Do you enjoy dealing with your vendors? Which ones treat you professionally and command your respect? Ask the good ones to refer potential candidates to you and your rep firm, following the principle that “quality recognizes quality.” Reimburse a vendor who refers a candidate you end up hiring for your rep firm. Options for reimbursement are unlimited — from cash, to gift certificates, to personalized gifts, to weekend getaways, etc.

**Stay in touch with great candidates:** Sometimes great candidates don’t accept a job offer. Stay in touch with those people by sending your rep firm newsletter or information about upcoming events. They may reconsider a job offer somewhere down the line, or spread the word about your rep firm. Good people tend to have a network of equally talented contacts.

**Discover your employer brand:** For better or for worse, you and your rep firm already have a reputation in the industry, or a “brand.” Find out what that brand is by asking candidates what they know about your rep firm. After the hiring process is over, follow up with candidates who made your short list but whom you didn’t hire. Ask what they thought about their experience with you and your rep firm, and learn from what they say.

**It is OK to say no:** Keep your “brand” positive by letting candidates know quickly whether or not you have decided to hire them. Even if you are delivering a “no job offer,” this practice shows respect and allows candidates to move on quickly to their next prospect. □



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Nicki Weiss is a recognized Certified Professional Sales Management Coach, Master Trainer, and a workshop leader. Since 1992, she has trained certified and/or coached more than 6,000 business executives, sales managers and salespeople. Her company offers classroom training, distance learning and one-on-one and group coaching. Weiss focuses on increasing sales performance by helping rep firm managers become more effective leaders, and helping rep firm salespeople with their prospecting, selling, strategic and negotiating skills. You can e-mail Nicki at [nicki@saleswise.ca](mailto:nicki@saleswise.ca) or call (416) 778-4145.*

Copyright © 2007, Manufacturers’ Agents National Association  
One Spectrum Pointe, Suite 150, Lake Forest, CA 92630-2283  
Phone: (949) 859-4040 • Toll-free: (877) 626-2776 • Fax: (949) 855-2973  
E-mail: [MANA@MANAonline.org](mailto:MANA@MANAonline.org) • Web site: [www.MANAonline.org](http://www.MANAonline.org)  
All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.