



One Way is the Wrong Way



I might be biased, but I think one of the most important hiring decisions you make is who to add to your sales team. Revenue is the lifeblood of your organization. So why do so many companies have a one-way interview process?

What do I mean by this? I mean that the interview process is only designed to make sure the candidate is a fit for your sales role and organization. Most of the time is spent interviewing, assessing, and evaluating the candidate. How much time are you spending helping the candidate learn about the role, product, sales process, team, leader, and company to make sure they will be happy and confident they are qualified to hit quota?

Let's breakdown the typical interview process:

- Review the resumes of candidates that apply or are presented by a recruiter
- Phone screens are held with candidates who look good on paper
 - 25 minutes is spent asking the candidate questions - 83% of the time
 - 5 minutes is allowed for the candidate to ask questions - 17% of the time
- An hour-long formal interview is held with a

company leader

- 45 minutes is spent asking the candidate questions - 75% of the time
- 15 minutes is allowed for the candidate to ask questions - 25% of the time
- An assessment or test is given
 - 60 minutes is spent asking the candidate questions – 100% of the time
- A 2nd interview with a company executive
 - 45 minutes is spent asking the candidate questions - 75% of the time
 - 15 minutes is allowed for the candidate to ask questions - 25% of the time
- Offer made

3.5 total hours spent interviewing a candidate before making an offer and only 35 minutes of that time allowing the candidate to become an educated consumer. Only 17% of the hiring process is spent helping the candidate figure out if this is a role where they can be successful.

Wait!

Don't send me hate mail just yet. I know what you're going to say. We can't leave the decision up to the candidate. They all think they're qualified, are a fit for the role, and will "crush" quota.

Not Top Ten Percenters.

Top Ten Percenters know that not every role is a fit for them. They are aware that not every job will play to their sales superpowers or has a product they can and want to sell. They are also interested in selling into an industry where they can become a subject matter expert.

Top talent will insist the interview process be a 2-way street, and I agree. Here's what I tell the candidates I interview, "You know yourself better than I ever will after spending 3-4 hours with you, so I want to make sure that you're an educated consumer. I want you to be able to make an informed decision as to whether this is a sales role that matches your sales superpowers, a product you can sell, an industry you want to sell into, and a company that will support you and your efforts so you can feel confident that the OTE we presented is achievable.

Does the above statement apply to all the candidates I phone screen or have a formal interview with? No. Most will never reach the part of the interview process where I flip the script and let them really interview us, meet with other members of the team/company, and even speak with a customer or former customer. But, if they do reach that stage of the interview process, I work hard to make sure they have all the information they need to make the right decision for themselves, which I believe will be the right decision for both of us.

In September I was brutally honest with a candidate when he asked me some hard questions about the role and company. At the end of that call, he asked ME if he could take 24 hours to think about the

information I'd shared and get back to me. He didn't ask if I was interested in moving him forward, he just assumed I was. That's when I knew he was Top Talent.

I receive an email from him the next day, as promised, (Top Ten Percenters walk their talk) and it read:

Hi Kristie,

Thank you for your time yesterday!

ABC company seems like a great organization. However, I do not feel like this is the right fit for me, and I do not want to waste the team's time.

Thank you so much for your time, and please keep me in mind for future opportunities!

Sincerely,

X

My response to him:

X,

You're a man of your word. Thanks for getting back to me and knowing yourself and your sales superpowers well enough to self-select out.

Good Luck! kkj

If you give candidates a chance to become educated consumers it will not only make it easier to separate the players from the posers, it will help reduce your turnover rate.

Kristie K. Jones is the author of *Selling Your Way IN*. She helps founders and sales leaders build and improve their sales processes and manages the hiring process of top talent for her clients. She also provides keynotes and workshops to help sales professionals become Top Ten Percenters. Learn more [here](#).