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One of my responsibilities was reaching out to potential sponsors and donors to get their support. However, I was not a salesperson. Instead of letting that get to me, I reached out to those sponsors again, asking if they would be open to sharing any insights on how I could improve my pitch. They appreciated my proactive approach and provided tips, which I adopted for my future pitches. This experience taught me that being rejected doesn't have to do with my abilities, and that I should see it as an opportunity for growth. I learned to listen to feedback, adapt my strategies, and stay positive throughout the process. Tips on how to answer Relate your answer to your past experiences like school, volunteer work, and previous jobs. Rejection is universal, it's not just a sales thing. Highlight what you learned from those instances of rejection and how you turned them into new chances. Emphasize your positive outlook (your ability to remain optimistic and driven is a big plus). Don't use examples from your personal life. If you don't have work experience, use an example from school. What do you believe makes a successful salesperson? Why they ask it The purpose of this question is to test your understanding of your future role and the key qualities that contribute to success. The interviewer wants to ensure you're on the same page about what a top performer is, since you have no previous experience in sales. Although my background doesn't include direct sales experience, I recognize that a successful salesperson must understand their prospects by actively listening and asking meaningful questions. The goal is not merely to sell a product, but to provide an effective solution and help customers. Apart from hitting quota, customer satisfaction is another metric that distinguishes between a mediocre and a great salesperson. The focus should be on relationship-building, demonstrating commitment, as well as always learning and adapting to the evolving market and customer demands. Tips on how to answer Mention what you've learned about the role from the job description. Translate the requirements into skills and character traits to show you understand what success would be for someone in your future position. Don't ignore your lack of experience, but insist on the universal qualities that define success. Can you describe a situation where you persuaded someone to see things your way? Why they ask it This is a twist on the well-known "sell me this pen" trope, which is a sales interview question staple. Your ability to negotiate and persuade can give the interviewer a good idea about your communication skills. The answer you give can shed light on how you would overcome objections and deal with disagreements. During my time in college, I found myself in a situation where I was at odds with another student over a critical campus project decision. We were project co-leaders in the middle of organizing a Sustainability Fair on campus. We both had strong, opposing opinions on how the timeline of the fair should be organized, and tensions rose to the point where it was affecting the entire team's productivity. I scheduled a meeting to understand her concerns, and made sure I was actively listening and trying to understand her point of view. I then presented my research and reasoning in a calm, clear and organized manner, using data from other campuses. Through open discussion and presenting an evidence-based argument, I was able to persuade my teammates to organize the schedule the way I initially wanted it. This experience taught me the importance of effective communication and the value of teamwork. Tips on how to answer For this answer to work, you need to pick a relevant example that will clearly demonstrate your persuasion skills. Show that you respect other people's emotions, beliefs, values, and concerns. How do you stay motivated? Why they ask it Sales takes a toll. It's like running a steepchase — trying to close a customer before your competitor does, and facing hurdles and challenges on a daily basis. So, it's easy to lose your mojo and give up. Interviewers want to know what keeps you grinding even when times are tough. I have a vision board at my desk, showcasing my goals, past achievements, and motivational quotes. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, a glance at this board refocuses and re-energizes me. Setting up a self-reward system is another tactic that pushes me forward. For every significant achievement or milestone reached, I treat myself with a nice meal or a concert ticket. I also studied signs of burnout and know how to recognize them if it ever happens. Tips on how to answer Provide concrete examples of personal strategies and external motivators. Focus on practical, day-to-day tactics rather than abstract concepts. Avoid bringing up any negative motivation factors (fear of failure, pressure from others, or money) as the sole driving force. How would you handle a situation where a customer wasn't initially interested in your product? Why they ask it This is to test how you overcome objections and how effectively you can turn the situation around. In sales, the ability to handle objections is fundamental, so the interviewer wants to hear about your strategic thinking, problem-solving, persuasion, and determination. If I were in a situation where a customer wasn't interested in leather shoes, my approach would center around understanding their reasons, concerns, and also reinforcing the value our leather shoes can offer. As I speak with the customer about their favorite shoe type and style preferences, I would listen actively to understand what their exact objections are and tailor my response. For instance, if the lack of interest is because the customer is no longer buying leather goods because of sustainability reasons, I would take the opportunity to emphasize that our leather is ethically sourced and that the company is aligned with today's conscious consumer values. My approach would be customer centered and warm. I would educate them on the benefits of genuine leather compared to synthetic options, and then let them browse at their own pace. I will stick around to offer assistance when they are ready. Tips on how to answer Mention soft skills like empathy and active listening. Show how you'd adapt your approach based on customer's reactions. Aim for a balance of determination and understanding. What research have you done about our products and services? Why they ask it Researching potential customers and learning about their needs, preferences, and pain points is the cornerstone of every successful deal. The same applies to landing a sales job, so the idea behind this question is to determine if you did your due diligence. For inexperienced candidates, the focus is not necessarily on the depth of understanding, but rather on the initiative taken to familiarize yourself with the company. I began by exploring your company's website in detail, especially your products section and client testimonials. What impressed me the most is that your brand is eco-conscious and cruelty-free, as I personally use only cosmetics not tested on animals. The next step was checking your company out on LinkedIn and Twitter, and going through the content you've shared there. I noticed your summer eye-shade palette is a tremendous hit. I also looked into a few of your competitors, and I must say that your insistence on locally and ethically sourced ingredients sets you apart. Tips on how to answer Show interest. Even without professional experience, showing you made an effort to understand the company's products or services will help you. Highlight methods or sources you used to learn more. Impress the interviewer by showcasing your leadership skills, the ability to work around unexpected obstacles, and staying calm in the face of a challenging and tight deadline. Don't be vague and offer as many details as possible to describe the gravity of the situation and illustrate how you overcame it with your creativity, professionalism, and confidence. How would you build relationships with potential clients? Why they ask it The interviewer's task is to assess your soft, interpersonal skills and understand if you can nurture relationships with potential customers. When I was in college, I took on the role of a student fundraiser for our annual alumni giving campaign. Although I didn't have formal sales training, the nature of fundraising required many of the same principles, especially building genuine relationships with constituents. One situation that stands out involved an alumnus who hadn't made a contribution in a long time. My predecessors had reached out to him multiple times over the years with no success. I was curious about this, so instead of leading with our donation pitch, I started our conversation by expressing genuine interest in his college memories and learning about his experiences post-graduation. As we talked, I discovered that he had fond memories of the drama club he was a part of during his time at the college. I used this piece of information for subsequent touchpoints and shared updates about the recent achievements of the drama club and how they were planning to expand their reach with more performances and workshops. I also shared stories of current students who were benefiting from the club. Thanks to this, he has become one of our regular and most generous donors. Tips on how to answer Don't simply outline theoretical strategies you would use if you were a sales rep. Illustrate your points and demonstrate that you understand what relationship-building actually means by providing a real-life example in which you employed active listening and persistence to make your prospect feel valued. Sales Interview Questions for Senior or Managerial Roles Senior sales positions require additional skills like leadership, strategic thinking, and taking responsibility, and the sales interviews will place a special emphasis on those types of questions. Pro tip: Expect to talk about your exceptional track record, results, and achievements. The interviewers will want to know if you can manage and lead teams. At least one question will center around a scenario to test your problem-solving skills and ability to make informed decisions under pressure, while taking into consideration short and long-term consequences. Can you describe your management style? Why they ask it When you apply for a managerial role, you'll be at the helm of an entire sales team, meaning you'll be in charge of leading, motivating, and guiding them. And you'll be the one to blame in case they consistently fail to crush their numbers. Another reason is to see if your management and leadership style matches the company culture. My management style is based on three core values: trust, collaboration, and results. I encourage my team to always share their issues and ideas with me. Honesty and transparency translate to a positive and stimulating work environment. Another factor I double down on is working together and learning from each other. Finally, I believe that the best results stem from setting clear expectations and attainable goals. This approach has helped me build a high-performing sales team that consistently meets or exceeds its targets. For example, in my previous role as a regional sales manager at ABC Inc., I led a team of 15 sales reps who increased their sales revenue by 25% in one year. I also improved their customer satisfaction ratings by 10% and reduced their turnover rate by 5%. If someone isn't meeting their goals, I'm quick to react and book a 1:1 to discuss any roadblocks, and come up with ideas on how to overcome them. Tips on how to answer Start by highlighting your core values and principles, but don't overdo it. Be realistic and don't oversell yourself because the employer will expect you to deliver on your promises. Support your statements by providing some numbers and achievements. How would you handle underperforming sales team members? Why they ask it Just like the previous question on the list, this zinger provides a peek into your managerial skills. The interviewer will try to figure out if you have the competencies to recognize, diagnose, and solve the underperformance issue before it snowballs into squandered business opportunities, missed quota, and lost revenue. In my previous role as a sales manager at RoboCat Inc., I had a sales rep who was consistently missing his quota by 20%. I didn't want to issue an official warning before giving him a pep talk. So, I conducted a performance review with him and found out that he was struggling with closing deals due to his lack of negotiation skills. Together with him, I created an action plan that involved attending a negotiation training course, shadowing a top performer, practicing mock negotiations, and increasing his quota by 5% each month until he reached his target. I coached him throughout the process and provided him with feedback on his performance. After six months, he improved his negotiation skills significantly and increased his sales revenue by 15%. He also received positive feedback from his customers on his service quality. Tips on how to answer Show your human side and problem-solving skills. Don't be a sofie — you still have to hold the underperforming sales rep accountable and insist on better results. Explain your action-oriented approach and talk about the steps you take in such situations. Provide a real-life example. How do you forecast sales? What methods have you found effective? Why they ask it Making informed data-driven decisions is what makes a difference between striking it lucky and creating a Predictable Revenue formula. That's why you have to know your KPIs, metrics, and sales forecasting tactics. In my previous role at HappyEmail, a SaaS company, I was responsible for predicting the sales of our newly launched product. Given that it was a novel product, I didn't have the luxury of historical data. So, I used a mix of methods. First, I talked to our sales team who were on the field, and they provided feedback on customer reactions and potential objections. This qualitative data was invaluable. Then, I looked at indirect competitors and analyzed their growth curve after launching similar products. By analyzing their quarterly reports and market reactions, I established a baseline for our potential trajectory. Finally, I used a sales forecasting tool and combined all these insights with our existing sales funnel data. We predicted a 20% MoM growth for the first six months. In reality, we achieved a consistent average of 18% MoM growth, which I consider a fairly accurate forecast with the uncertainties of a new product. Tips on how to answer Include real-life examples. Be specific by listing all the steps you took and providing numbers. A detailed account of the situation will showcase your savvy and analytical thinking. Explain how you managed to get your forecast right despite a lack of data. This will signal to the interviewer that you're capable of rising o the occasion. How do you maintain relationships with high-profile clients? Why they ask it The employer wants to know if you can handle high-stake VIP clients. Since such big clients are key revenue drivers, the employer wants sales managers who will secure these accounts and make sure they stay. At SoftTech Solutions, I was responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of customized software solutions for our high-profile clients. My primary goal was to ensure the software solution we provided was not just up to the mark but exceeded their expectations. I collaborated closely with our development team, ensuring they fully understood clients' unique needs. I organized weekly updates, where we showcased the progress and gathered feedback. This ensured that the client was always in the loop and any changes could be made promptly. When one of our biggest clients mentioned an upcoming product launch, I recognized an opportunity to offer additional support. We proactively developed an add-on feature to their software that would integrate seamlessly with their new product, thus enhancing its value proposition. I also made it a point to meet with them in person at least once a quarter, even if just for lunch or coffee. These consistent, personalized touchpoints, combined with anticipating their needs, ensured that we maintained not only a professional relationship but also a bond of trust. Small tokens of appreciation such as holiday cards and complimentary gifts also count. As a result, they increased their business with us by 20% in the subsequent year, and we received several referrals through their endorsements. Tips on how to answer Insist on your detail-oriented approach to getting to know important clients and understanding their business needs. Emphasize your proactivity and willingness to go above and beyond to delight the client since such an attitude speaks volumes about your level of commitment and engagement. Can you tell us about your experience with sales training? What kind of sales training methodology do you prefer? Why they ask it As a senior member of the sales team, you'll be expected to handle the onboarding and training process for the new team members. The interviewer wants to know how fast you can get them up to speed and which methods have worked so far. Over the last 4 years, we've been fully remote, so my sales training methodology has changed a bit. Shadowing is difficult in remote organizations, especially when doing product presentations online. Luckily, I worked with my team to prepare comprehensive training materials for the new hires. Some of the materials we have are the industry glossary, role-play exercises, recorded demos, a list of common objections, and a comprehensive guide to our sales procedures, policies, and tools. The new hires are usually given a week or two to go over the materials, after which we have a series of calls where we do discussions and do a Q&A. Once they are ready, they do product presentation simulations in front of the entire team. After a month, they are encouraged to do their first demo. Tips on how to answer Explain your experience with organizing sales training for new hires. Mention any certifications you may have. Briefly explain your sales methodology and why you find it effective. Tailor your response to the company you're interviewing with. What performance metrics do you focus on? How have you improved these metrics in the past? Why they ask it As a Sales Manager or VP of Sales, you'll need to track some metrics to know how individual team members are performing, and how close you are to quota. They want to know which sales metrics you consider relevant and if you can use data to make decisions. In my last company, the key metrics were the Expressed Interest to Demo ratio, then Demo to Customer ratio. We also tracked things like Average Deal Size, Churn, AR, and NPS. I'm not a big fan of activity metrics like cold calls made, emails sent or meetings booked, but I believe they're worth tracking as well. I'm happy to say that our Demo to Customer ratio improved from 17% to 48% in a single quarter — this happened when we introduced an automated demo for leads below \$K in deal size. Tips on how to answer List the key metrics you tracked and explain why each of them mattered for the team and the entire company. Make sure to provide an example of how you successfully improved one of these metrics. How do you handle a top performer who tends to violate company policies? Why they ask it They ask this question to see if you would turn a blind eye and be an enabler to make more profit and boost company growth, or take appropriate action and sanction the employee. It's basically testing where your priorities lie. It's also a test of your commitment to upholding company values and your ability as a manager to balance performance and ethics. Depends on the type of violation. Of course, I value exceptional performance, but I also firmly believe that abiding by company policies and values is crucial for maintaining a healthy work environment. For instance, if a sales rep starts giving discounts by default just to secure a sale or if they take leads from other sales reps — that's something I would handle in our 1:1. If, on the other hand, we're talking about a breach that could damage the company's reputation, like an inflated post on social media, then I would definitely take action. Either way, I would first make sure I have all the information and then schedule a 1:1 meeting with the person to discuss the issue. I would remind them how important company policies are and explain the potential consequences. If the behavior persists, I would certainly escalate the matter according to company protocols. Tips on how to answer There is no cookie-cutter response to this one. Instead of blurting out your answer on the spot, try a dose of diplomacy. Keep in mind that the question tests your ethical judgment, consistency, and fairness as a manager. At the same time, you don't want to come across as too rigid. Additional Tips to Stand Out in a Sales Interview Provide specific instances from past experience Avoid vanilla answers and boastful statements like "I was the best BDR in my last team." Instead, quantify your achievements to deliver your point more effectively and use storytelling to provide context — "I came up with a sequence of cold outreach emails which had a 78% Open Rate, and 43% Reply Rate. Out of those replies, I ended up booking 23 product demos in a single quarter, resulting in \$146,000 in revenue." Use the STAR method We already explained that most sales rep interview questions fall into the behavioral or situational category (you will be asked to give examples of how you've demonstrated specific skills or qualities in the past), and the STAR method is the golden standard for answering. It's a structured approach you can use to make sure your answer is concise, relevant, and well-organized. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result, where you'll need to talk about: Situation: start by describing the situation or context to give the interviewer some background information. Task: describe what your task or challenge was in this situation. Action: explain what you did to deal with the challenge, how you solved a problem, and what decisions you made. Result: share the outcome of your actions, note any quantifiable improvements or results of your actions, and what you learned from the experience. Show a positive, can-do attitude A positive attitude is a plus in any career, but for sales roles, it's a requirement. There will be objections and rejections, and you need a positive outlook on life if you want to bounce back quickly and keep chasing your quota. Another thing is the fast-paced environment and the nature of sales roles. The interviewer wants to see a positive attitude because it means you'll have the enthusiasm and energy to deal with challenges and stay motivated. Practice on camera You should be aiming for spotless, powerful delivery in your interview. This is crucial because if you're fumbling around in an interview, the interviewer might think this is how you'll be when presenting the product. There are two aspects of this — the structure and contents of your answer and the general demeanor and impression you make on the interviewer. Recording yourself on camera or using an interview preparation tool will help you: Be more aware of your body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and overall presentation. Polish up your presentation skills (Before selling a product, you have to present and sell yourself). Identify weaknesses like speaking too quickly or intense hand gestures. Manage your time better and learn how to keep your answers to under 2 minutes. This is what this looks like on Big Interview: Under Industries, pick Sales to get custom interview questions for your industry. There will also be subsets like Account Management, General Sales, or Manager. Go over questions and record your answers. Get AI feedback on 12+ key criteria like answer relevance, pace of speech, power words or filler words. Ask stand-out questions All the salespeople we interviewed for this article agreed on one thing — they would not even consider you for the role unless you asked a lot of questions at the end of your interview. Not having a single question will scream passivity and lack of motivation. If your interview is soon, and you can't come up with any questions to ask, we picked a few favorites: What does your tech stack look like? What is the current percentage split in your team between inbound and outbound sourced opportunities? How many of your Sales team members hit quota last year? Who has been here the longest, and what sets them apart? Do you encourage the use of AI in your sales efforts? Need more examples? Check out this article with 40 best questions to ask at the end of the interview. Summary of the main points And now a TL;DR of how to have a successful sales interview and increase your chances of getting the job: Cover all the general interview questions for sales reps. They may differ depending on your role, industry and seniority level, but some of them will be the same. If you're new to Sales, do your best to highlight your soft skills like problem-solving, negotiation, persuasion, motivation, and keep a positive attitude during the interview. Practice answering questions using the STAR format. Most sales questions are behavioral or situational, and you'll need to come up with a story and give examples in your answer. Prepare those in advance. Practice in front of the camera or use an interview preparation tool to iron out tiny details in your delivery (all those umms, pauses, filler words, or fidgety energy you may not even be aware of). Prepare a list of 3-5 questions to ask at the end of the interview. Practicing for your next sales interview? There are 3 ways we can help: Learn how to create a winning Sales Resume (with examples for various roles and seniority levels). Get step-by-step interview training (rated 4.9 out of 5.0 by 1M+ users) Practice selling yourself to turn more interviews into offers. FAQ What are the best questions to ask at the end of my sales interview? Some of the questions you can ask the interviewer at the end of the interview include: How do you measure success in this role? What sales tools and technologies will I be using? Are there any challenges the sales team is currently facing, and, if so, what are they? Are there any growth and advancement opportunities in this role? What's your onboarding plan like? How to answer "Tell me about yourself" in a sales job interview? "Tell me about yourself" is an ice-breaker that serves as an intro and allows the interviewer to get a brief walkthrough of your life and career. Start by summarizing your background and relevant experience. Then focus on your strengths and accomplishments that relate to the sales position you're applying for. If you have no previous experience, focus on your education and discuss the skills and abilities that make you a great choice for the role. Mention hobbies and interests to show off your personality. Finally, keep your answer concise and focused, without going into too much detail — a minute or two will do. How to answer sales interview questions if I have no experience? Draw from your experiences in other roles. If this is your first job, talk about relatable situations you encountered in college or during an internship and the transferable skills you acquired. Don't forget to research the company and its products or services in detail so that you can have enough material to include this information in your answers. What is the toughest sales interview question? How to answer it? One of the toughest to answer is "Have you ever had a manager you didn't like? Why?" This question is a test of professionalism, emotional intelligence, and your ability to handle challenging interpersonal dynamics. Avoid badmouthing your former manager and stick to differences in work styles. Recap what you've learned from this experience and state that it taught you to adapt to working with different personality types. How to nail a sales interview? Preparation is crucial — research the company, prepare specific examples showcasing your skills and strengths in action, work on your elevator pitch, and think of great questions to ask the interviewer. Be enthusiastic and show your interest by asking what the next steps in the process are. What strengths should I list during a sales interview? Mention things like coachability, organizational skills, empathy, problem-solving, business communication, adaptability, persuasiveness, self-motivation, storytelling, confidence, curiosity, and a goal-oriented mindset. What transferable skills are the most important for a successful salesperson? Communication skills, because you'll need them in many aspects of the sales job (relationship building, product demos, presenting, emailing and cold calling). Negotiation, because you'll need to negotiate pricing, contracts, terms and freebies. Problem-solving and resourcefulness (there are objections to overcome, and you'll need to think on your feet). Time management and working under pressure, because it's common for people in sales roles to balance multiple clients, leads, and administrative tasks.