

Your Guide to Common Sales Rep Interview Questions

July 3, 2023



Interviews can be a daunting concept in any industry, but sales interviews are often more complex than most. The questions hiring managers ask during sales interviews are designed to show business leaders how effective you are as a salesperson. After all, a great sales rep can sell anything, including their skills, talents, and experience.

Sales roles are often multi-faceted. To determine whether you're a good fit for a role, hiring managers won't just ask you whether you're good at cold calling or you know how to work as part of a team. Sales rep interview questions are designed to reveal your mindset, your knowledge of the landscape, and even what kind of strategies you use to sell.

Today, we're going to be looking at some of the most common questions you're likely to encounter in a sales interview, so you can prepare to answer them effectively.

How to Prepare for a Sales Rep Interview

If you already have experience in the sales landscape, then you should already be in a good position to answer any questions an interviewer might have in an engaging, compelling way. After all, an interview is really just an opportunity for you to sell yourself to a hiring manager.

If you know how to effectively sell a product or service, then you already have the skills you need to build rapport with an interviewer, highlight the unique benefits you can bring to a role, and essentially 'close the

deal' with your new employer. However, there are a few things you can do to ensure you're prepared for a successful sales interview, such as:

- **Researching the company:** The most important part of preparing for a sales interview is understanding the specifics of the job you're applying for. The more you know about the company, the products it sells, and its target audience, the more you can build rapport with the hiring manager, and demonstrate the specific skills they're looking for.
- **Reflecting on your achievements:** Your interviewer is likely to ask questions about your successes and failures in the sales landscape. Taking stock of your achievements ensures you'll be able to draw attention to your most appealing attributes when answering questions. It's also a great way to build your confidence before heading into an interview.
- **Gathering resources:** Think about how you collect information about the benefits of a product or service before pitching it to a customer. You can use the same tactics in your sales interview, to highlight your own value. Make a list of achievements you can highlight, with statistics, numbers, and accurate information.
- **Practicing interview techniques:** Consider practicing responses to common sales rep interview questions using the 'STAR' method. This means knowing how to explain the situation relevant to the question, the task you had to complete, the action you took, and the results you achieved.

Common Sales Rep Interview Questions (And how to answer them)

Researching common interview questions and answers in the sales landscape is one of the best ways to make sure you're prepared for an interview. While you might not be able to read answers from a script to a hiring manager, you can practice answering a few common questions, so you feel more confident when approaching the interview.

Here are some of the most common sales rep interview questions you're likely to encounter, and how you can answer them.

1. 'What do you know about our company, and why do you want to work with us?'

Most interviewers will ask questions like this for two reasons. First, they want to see evidence you know how to research a 'buyer' and establish product/market fit. Secondly, they'll be looking for an insight into how enthusiastic you really are about working for their company.

How to answer:

Before going into any sales interview, take the time to research the company and learn as much as you can about the product or service they sell, their target audience, mission, and goals. Using this research, you should be able to highlight your knowledge of the company, and draw attention to what makes you such a good fit for the business.

Sample answer:

'I've followed [Company] for a while now, and I've always been impressed by the [benefits of product/solution] you provide to [target audience]. I'd be keen to work with you, as I've always been passionate about [values of the company], and have years of experience in [niche].'

1. What are the short to mid-term goals you'd like to accomplish in this role?

Motivated, passionate workers with a strong growth mindset know how to set goals, and establish strategies for how to reach them. Your interviewer may ask you about your goals to determine what will likely motivate you in your role, and whether your targets align with the goals of the business.

How to answer:

When setting goals, it's important to be ambitious, but realistic. Think about your strengths and weaknesses in the sales landscape, and try to connect what you want to achieve as a professional with the overall goals of the business.

Sample answer:

'In the short-term, I would likely focus on improving my ability to build a strong connection with [prospects] and enhance my sales techniques. Expanding my knowledge of [x] and [x] will help me to achieve my long term career goals of [target].'

1. How do you generally generate, develop, and close sales opportunities

Every hiring manager or employer in a sales interview will want to see evidence that you know how to move through an effective sales process. They'll want to see evidence you can build a connection with prospects, find leads in a variety of different landscapes, and overcome objections.

How to answer:

Draw on your knowledge as a sales professional to highlight your approach to the standard sales cycle. You might discuss cold calling techniques you've used in the past, your ability to find prospects on social media and other channels, and your strategies for building rapport.

Sample answer:

'While I'm open to adapting my sales process to involve the strategies that work best for your company, I've experimented with a range of strategies in the past. With [previous employer] I would often generate sales opportunities by prospecting and client targeting via [channels]. I would then develop opportunities by listening to the needs of the customer, understanding their goals, and tailoring my responses to their specific requirements. I close deals by generating trust with leads, and finding ways to reach a mutually beneficial agreement.'

1. What would you consider to be your most significant achievement to date?

Hiring managers in a sales interview ask this question to give you a real opportunity to shine. They're giving you a chance to impress them by showcasing what you've accomplished in your career in the past. They're also looking for an insight into whether you can overcome challenges to achieve goals.

How to answer:

Detail is crucial when answering this question. Hiring managers are more likely to remember rich, informative stories about successful sales experiences. When talking about your biggest accomplishment, make sure you highlight the challenges you overcame, the tasks you completed, and the steps you took to achieve the end result.

Sample answer:

'In [Previous role] I had been looking for opportunities to find more relevant leads for the business. I found we weren't getting as many results as we wanted from cold calling alone, so I began experimenting with social media, and [other channels]. Although it took a while for me to qualify leads at first, I was eventually able to connect with a customer that led to a six-figure sale for the corporation. The customer is still working with the business today!'

1. Tell me about a time you failed to achieve a goal. What went wrong?

Even the most successful sales people don't win every deal. However, when they fail to achieve their goals, they also know how to learn from their mistakes. This question gives a hiring manager an opportunity to gauge your growth mindset, and determine how well you deal with challenges.

How to answer:

Think about a memorable time when you were unable to close a deal, or complete a specific task. Start by highlighting the goal you were pursuing, and why it was important to you, or the business you were working with it. Explain how you tried to achieve your target, and the reasons why you failed. Follow up by explaining what you learned from the experience.

Sample answer:

'When I first began my sales career, I was unable to meet my quota for deals. I examined my processes to find the root of the problem, and discovered I wasn't drawing enough attention to the benefits of the company's products, based on the pain points of our target audience. After conducting deeper research into the product benefits, and our target audience, I was able to come up with a more effective sales pitch, which allowed me to reach my quota.'

Close the Deal in your Sales Interview

Ultimately, a sales interview isn't too different from the standard sales process. You'll need to research your target audience, learn how to pitch your benefits as a professional, and build rapport with the person you're speaking to ' just as you would with any deal.

If you can apply the skills you have as a sales representative to the interview process, you should be able to convince any company to invest in you.

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