

## SALES FORCE MANAGEMENT

### B.A. (P) SEM VI

#### UNIT 4 – RECRUITMENT & SELECTION OF SALES FORCE

Effective recruitment and selection of salespeople is one of the most crucial tasks of sales management. It entails finding people who match the type of sales position required by a firm. Recruitment involves sourcing the prospective candidates and encouraging them to apply for the job. Recruitment ends with the receipt of applications.

Salesmen can be recruited through a number of sources as stated below:

##### 1. EXTERNAL SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT

**i. Newspaper advertisements:** The vacancy may be notified via way of newspaper classified ads. The nature of tasks, the qualification expected, prior sales experience, remuneration etc. can be stated in the advertisement itself. Interested candidates can be requested to send in their resume within a stipulated time.

**ii. Employment exchange:** The employment exchanges operated by the government may be contacted in this regard. The business establishments can also request such employment exchanges to furnish a list of eligible applicants. Job consultants and employment bureaus also offer similar services.

**iii. Campus interviews:** The firms visit universities every year to interview the students studying degree courses therein. Those candidates who are found suitable are placed with the companies and give appointment letters without delay. These selected candidates join the firms upon the completion of their degree course.

**iv. Competitors' sales force:** It is possible to attract competitors' salesforce by offering them better compensation packages. This form of hiring is often known as poaching. The benefit of such hiring is that the salespersons selected through this method are already well trained in that business and therefore can carry out their work with greater efficiency.

**v. Unsolicited applicants:** HR departments of the companies receive applications received from unsolicited applicants regularly. Any candidate's resume that matches the company's requirements can be recruited as and when any vacancy arises.

**vi. Web sources:** With the advent of the internet, companies have been increasingly relying on web sources like job portals and social media for recruiting the sales staff. The viral nature of social media makes them a popular tool for recruiting sales professionals.

##### 2. Internal sources of recruitment

**i. Employee Movements:** At any given point of time, some vacancies can be filled up internally by promoting the employees from within, by transferring the employees from one territory to another, lateral moves from one department to another.

**ii. Employee referrals:** Existing employees can recommend candidates from their circles whose credentials could match company's requirements. Existing employees are well acquainted with the work environment and expectations of the firm so are in position to recommend a suitable candidate for the organization.

## **SELECTION OF SALES FORCE**

Selection is the process of choosing the most appropriate candidates from among the pool of candidates who applied for the posts. Selection begins as soon as recruitment ends.

The typical selection process consists of the following steps:

**1. Pre-Screening interview:** The purpose of pre-screening interview is to screen unqualified candidates at the outset. It consists of asking the candidates a series of questions to know the candidates better prior to conducting a detailed interview. The questions in this interview relate to career goals, job profile preferences etc.

**2. Formal Application Form:** Once the preliminary interview is done, candidates are asked to fill out a formal application. The application form is a quick way of screening out unsuitable candidates and shortlisting suitable candidates for interview. The questions contained in the application form should enable the sales manager to check if the applicant possesses minimum qualifications, skills and experience in accordance with the job specification. The application form seeks to reveal crucial information about the candidates. Some applicants may be habitual job-hoppers; others may lack adequate educational qualifications. The application form acts as an initial screening device for unsuitable candidates. Careful designing of application form must therefore be accorded the highest priority for the HR.

**3. The Interview:** The personal interview is the most widely used selection tool used by companies to evaluate the candidates. It acts as a reliable source of collecting information about the candidate on the basis of face-to-face interaction. A candidate can be evaluated for his/her selling skills, confidence, personal appearance and courtesy, attitude towards selling and life in general by the interviewer during the interview.

### **Types of Interviews**

- i) Structured interview:** A structured interview requires the interviewer to ask a set of predetermined questions. It implies the same questions being asked to all the candidates. Also, each candidate is allotted the same time to answer. This allows the interviewer to assess the candidates in the most objective and unbiased manner.
- ii) Non-structured interview:** An unstructured interview does not contain a set of predefined questions. Here the interviewer asks the questions spontaneously as a part of free-flowing conversation, thus each candidate is asked different questions. The underlying principle for this interview is that it is able to generate truthful responses and brings out the real personality of the candidate. One of the major concerns for conducting this type of interview is that it requires immense skill and expertise on the part of the interviewer to administer and interpret the candidates' responses effectively.
- iii) Semi-structured interview:** It is a combination of structured and unstructured interview wherein only a few predetermined questions are asked by the interviewers while the rest of the questions are not pre planned. It allows for objective comparison of candidates along with offering a more personalized and spontaneous approach that allows for better selection.

- iv) **Stress interview:** A stress interview is an assessment tool that seeks to measure a candidate's response to stress. It generates useful insights as to how a candidate will respond while juggling high-priority tasks, how he will conduct himself while dealing with challenging clients. Here the interviewer creates a stressful environment for the candidates while interviewing by way of criticism, asking tough questions, creating interruptions etc. This technique works well for selecting the sales force that often needs to work under stressful conditions in actual selling situations.
- v) **Rating scales:** An interview rating scale allows the interviewer to record the score to the candidate on the basis of how well he answers the pre-planned questions. Each question in the interview rating sheet addresses a specific skill of the candidate. Candidate receives a high rating if he answers the questions as expected by the interviewer. Towards the end of the interview, the overall score is arrived at by compiling the candidate's ratings. The scores of various candidates are compared against each other to determine the most suitable candidate.

**4. Selection tests:** Tests act as an effective tool of selection when the organization wants to hire a relatively large number of salespersons. Various types of tests are stated as follows:

- i. Mental intelligence tests: These tests seek to assess candidate's intelligence quotient (IQ) and capability to learn.
- ii. Aptitude tests: These tests seek to assess a candidate's sales aptitude. It helps interviewer identify and hire the candidate with highest potential for sales success.
- iii. Interest tests: These tests are designed to compare a candidate's interests with the interests of successful salespersons in the field.
- iv. Personality tests: These tests assess the candidate's personality traits to ascertain their suitability for a particular sales job.
- v. Situation tests: These tests assess the candidate's ability to work in the real work situation. It appraises the competence of candidates to deal with different types of customers.

**6. References Checks:** Reference checks are done by the organizations to find out more information about an applicant pertaining to their conduct, character, ethics etc by the way of contacting their previous employer, colleagues, friends etc. Some employers do not find the information generated from reference checks reliable as they believe that references are usually hesitant to criticize their acquaintances.

**7. Medical Examination:** A good health is a prerequisite for good job performance. A medical examination of the candidate is done to uncover any health disorders if any existing in the candidates. Sales jobs demand a good level of physical fitness on the part of the candidates. It is also the moral responsibility of the candidate to disclose about any health condition he /she is suffering from.

**8. Determination of Terms of Service:** As soon as the candidate clears the above stages, terms of service relating to compensation, allowances, other perquisites, working hours etc are determined prior to issuance of appointment letter.

**9. Issuance of Appointment letter:** An appointment letter containing the details about the terms of service, joining date, probation period etc is issued to the selected candidate. This letter must be

signed by the competent authority and if the candidate is interested in the job offer, he/she is required to join the duty before the expiry date mentioned in the appointment letter.

**10. Induction & Orientation:** As soon as the candidate joins the organization, he is enrolled for an orientation programme wherein he is being provided with all the organization and job-related information. This helps the salesperson to assimilate smoothly into the company's culture and helps them adjust to their new jobs.