

**What's the Gameplan:**

# How Does Your Company Personalize Sales Hiring and Training?



U.S. companies invested \$87.6 billion in sales training over the last year. A recent study by the Association for Talent Development found that the real barrier to successful training is a lack of time: 43% of participants admit to suffering from time constraints and scheduling conflicts in their daily routine. Given the importance of training, this is problematic.

**Studies show that sales training is necessary to improve sales force motivation, effectiveness, and performance.**



## How Does Your Company Personalize Sales Hiring and Training?

In today's digitized market, organizations face a new reality. On-demand purchasing behavior and an excess supply of goods require sales reps to find new ways to own the sales process and to stand out. At the same time, another challenge to overcome is the increasing customer expectations for personal communication. The pace of change is high, and the pressure to keep up weighs heavily. Time is running short for training practices. According to one study, 50% of sales managers are too busy to train and develop their sales teams on top of their daily management tasks.

Unfortunately, this results in a lack of qualified, tailored and consistent feedback, necessary to engage salespeople and foster fruitful growth. In this regard, one-size-fits-all does not work. Training needs to be flexible and repetitive to ensure lasting behavioral change. Thus, many companies have already started turning to AI and data-based online coaching solutions.

While hard skills can be seen in a resume, soft skills are harder to identify but are important for sales recruitment.

## Sales, a Competitive Field

Top sales talent is in demand, and it is difficult to find and hire them. According to data gathered by LinkedIn, persuasion is the second most in-demand soft skill. Sales leadership is also included among the 25 most in-demand soft skills of this year. However, there is not enough supply to meet demand; in some parts of the world such as the US and Germany, the unemployment rates are the lowest since decades, and labor markets are in the candidates' favor.

Unfortunately, certain traditional interview methods are inefficient and ineffective. A study even shows that interview predictions have very little correlation with job performance, with some showing that the interview was even harmful to hiring decisions and that blind selection would have led to better results. Moreover, interviews are commonly subject to interview bias and can be ineffective at identifying soft skills.

Some personality tests commonly used in recruiting, such as the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator, have been found to lack high validity, meaning it may be a waste of resources to use them for recruitment purposes.

There are certain soft skills and personality traits which can be indicators of good salespeople. For example, assertiveness, empathy, and optimism. But as a recruiter scanning through sales candidate profiles, how can you spot these traits? A sales candidate may be confident and have good self-presentation skills, but may not have other traits necessary for the job. Sixty-eight percent of talent professionals assess soft skills by picking up on social cues during interviews. Since interviews are limited in time and interviewers are subject to unconscious bias, it is time to adopt a more effective way of identifying soft skills.



# Personality: the new rule in sales hiring and training?

Personality makes a huge impact on the work life of an individual and a team. If a hiring manager decides to contract a more intuitive personality, they may be more comfortable working from home. Extroverted types are 52% more likely to be self-employed, for example. "Go-getter" personalities would turn unmotivated if they were told to execute the status quo repeatedly. Differences in personality can be a competitive advantage. Learning about the personality of job candidates can bring the biggest impact.

## Personality

Personality represents a person's coherent pattern of behavior, cognition, and desires (goals) over time. It integrates feelings, actions, and attitudes. It may be confused with emotion or a temporal state of being. Personality is to emotion as climate is to weather. What one expects at any time is personality, what one observes at any particular moment is emotion. The Big Five Personality Trait Model demonstrates there are five major dimensions of personality:

### Conscientiousness

The extent to which someone is organized, works hard, stays on task, and perseveres to finish the job.

### Introversion/Extraversion

The extent to which someone is outgoing, assertive, friendly, and active.

### Agreeableness

The extent to which someone is cooperative, trusting, polite, and compassionate.

### Neuroticism

The extent to which someone worries, and is irritable, or easily stressed. The opposite of this trait is often called Emotional Stability.

## Openness

The extent to which someone is curious, imaginative, flexible, and interested in trying new things.

Organizations turn to the Big Five Personality Model (also known as O.C.E.A.N.), to assist them in understanding employee behavior. For example, conscientiousness is the greatest predictor of how well someone will perform. This finding is consistent across a large number of research studies.

Personality is a relatively stable set of characteristics that influence an individual's behavior. HR managers must be able to identify individual behaviors and traits so that they can understand workers' different personalities. Personalities should be discovered, helping companies and individuals apply their special traits and skills to the right role and ascertain job and cultural fit.

## Artificial Intelligence in sales and hiring

Someone will make a first impression in under seven seconds, and body language has a great influence. In fact, nonverbal cues have four times the impact on the impression you make than the words you speak. Artificial intelligence can now aid you in reading candidates' body language and emotion by analyzing these features together with verbal expression to create personality trait profiles and identify hard-to-spot soft skills.

### How does it work?

Software algorithms have been created from a wide breadth of images and videos. From these images, parameters such as facial features are analyzed, signifying various emotions. In addition to software algorithms, Retorio created a database with more than 10,000 video clips of peoples' reactions to presenters in order to see how people respond to these presenters and if they find them authentic. In this way, artificial intelligence can "read" body and facial language as well as vocal tones to decipher how honest or enthusiastic a candidate may be.

Recruiters provide the artificial intelligence software with a hiring profile of desired traits.

- Candidates record one-way video interviews.
- The AI analyzes the candidate videos.
- Different features are studied together; facial expressions are analyzed together with voice, language, and gestures.
- Voice is looked at in terms of emotions, nervousness, understandability, etc.
- Speech flow and sentiment of language are inspected, and gestures are also analyzed in terms of being static vs. dynamic.

The AI tool then sends the recruiter the best candidate matches, along with observations on each candidate such as soft skills and personality traits.

## A Better Way to Spot Soft Skills

Fifty-seven percent of talent professionals currently struggle to accurately assess soft skills, yet they realize their importance. Eighty-nine percent of talent professionals said that a new hire didn't work out because they lacked soft skills. Personality tests and traditional interview techniques don't seem to be doing the trick, and moreover, recruiters only have a limited time to evaluate each candidate.

Now you can go ahead and skip some of the traditional interview methods and cumbersome personality tests. Artificial intelligence can be a recruiter's best friend by giving you emotion recognition insights from analyzing facial expressions, body movement, and language to help you narrow down your list of potential candidates. This allows you to spend precious face-to-face time just with the resulting best matches.

Flowers are in bloom and it's time for your company to do some spring cleaning—get rid of your outdated sales training techniques and make way for new, innovative methods. In times of constant digital transformation, sales reps face new challenges.

The Objective Management Group—a leading company in sales force evaluations—identified shortfalls in sales reps' effectiveness, execution, and realized potential. While 60% of sales professionals show weak levels of responsibility, 65% feel uncomfortable discussing money. Controlling emotions is a struggle to 64% of all salespeople, and only 53% are marginally able to sell value. It comes as no surprise then that around 25% need to improve their presentation and relationship building skills.

**57% talent professionals currently struggle to accurately assess soft skills**

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Managers can assess and monitor these data and, with more time at disposal, focus on unsolved and long-term communication struggles of their reps. Moreover, they can develop best-practice approaches to improve the overall sales performance of their team. In the end, AI-based sales training solutions not only save time but also reduce costs.

In order for staffing firms to fully utilize AI by using data to give insights to their sales teams by creating compelling training programs.

AI can be used to in these ways for sales hiring and development

### Learning Styles

An individual's learning style can be influenced by age, ethnicity and cultural background. For example, a study by Wainhouse Research found that there are small differences in the way different age groups prefer to learn. People over 50 years of age reported being slightly more interested in coaching and mentoring than other training, learning and development techniques. Millennials preferred learning in segments, called "microlearning", most often in the form of watching short, how-to videos.

In general, all groups want personalized, instructor-led training. This is especially important in training the new workforce that's largely now composed of Millennials. Research shows that lack of learning is one of the top complaints of new hires. More coaching and hands-on-learning is one of the most valuable tools for managers and teams. AI tools like Retorio provide personalized and accelerated learning, freeing up more time for one-on-one instruction.

### Learning-on-Demand

Results must be delivered from anywhere and anytime by sales professionals. They need tools that are able to deliver training anywhere and at any time as they grow within an organization. Rather than shadow an employee for a few hours at a time or be lost in the crowd of a giant online class. AI tools that offer personalization creates a special learning-on-demand atmosphere. This makes it convenient and effective in allowing employees to create their own schedules for team training. Speed and accessibility are what teams receive when working with an AI-powered tool.

### Personalize the Learning Experience

Using an AI tool, a training program can be more adaptive to a certain learning style. Some sales team members may need to see a technique in order to fully understand it. Others may need to know where their strengths are and really hone those. The right AI technology and tool can be used to suit the needs of employee training needs. With Retorio, by understanding a specific team member's needs and motivations, training can be tailored to how they view customer interactions or how they come across when managing their sales peers. By understanding the person, the learning experience becomes more effective.



Is your organization leveraging AI for sales training, learning, and development? What steps is your organization taking to individually support your sales team members and the development of their competencies?

Sign up for a free trial and learn how Retorio supports sales hiring and training.

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