

Why is sales recruitment difficult in an SME?

- It's a common problem. The business has grown because the founder or one of the Directors is great at selling the product or service – but they just can't hire anyone else who can do the same. The trap goes something like this:
 - o Hire someone who has had "sales" in their title previously
 - o Explain the product & market
 - o Give them a target, a car, a laptop and a mobile phone
 - o Cross your fingers
 - o Get increasingly worried over the next 6 months
 - o Fire them
 - o Repeat
- Business owners can go through this 6 or 7 times

What is the solution?

- There is no magic bullet. Hiring staff is difficult to get right – with salespeople it just becomes obvious that it's going wrong sooner, and in numbers
- However, systemising your business (and your sales process, and your hiring) can move the odds of success in your failure. Here's a different approach:
 - o Analyse who and what succeeds in sales in your business
 - o Be crystal-clear about your niche, problem and proposition
 - o Define your selling process down to script and question level
 - o Implement a sales management process supported by effective tools
 - o Write a job description
 - o Write down the proposition for your business – hiring someone good means selling them your vision
 - o Use a recruitment process that is designed to reject: Include a sales aptitude psychometric test, proof of earnings, references, a sales presentation and interviews
 - o Use a selection panel, not just you
 - o Define and follow an induction process that includes training, coaching and regular 121s
 - o Set ramp-up targets
 - o Take a longer-term view. Look for employees inside your business who are bright, have a passion for the product and get on with people. Devise an internal sales development path for them