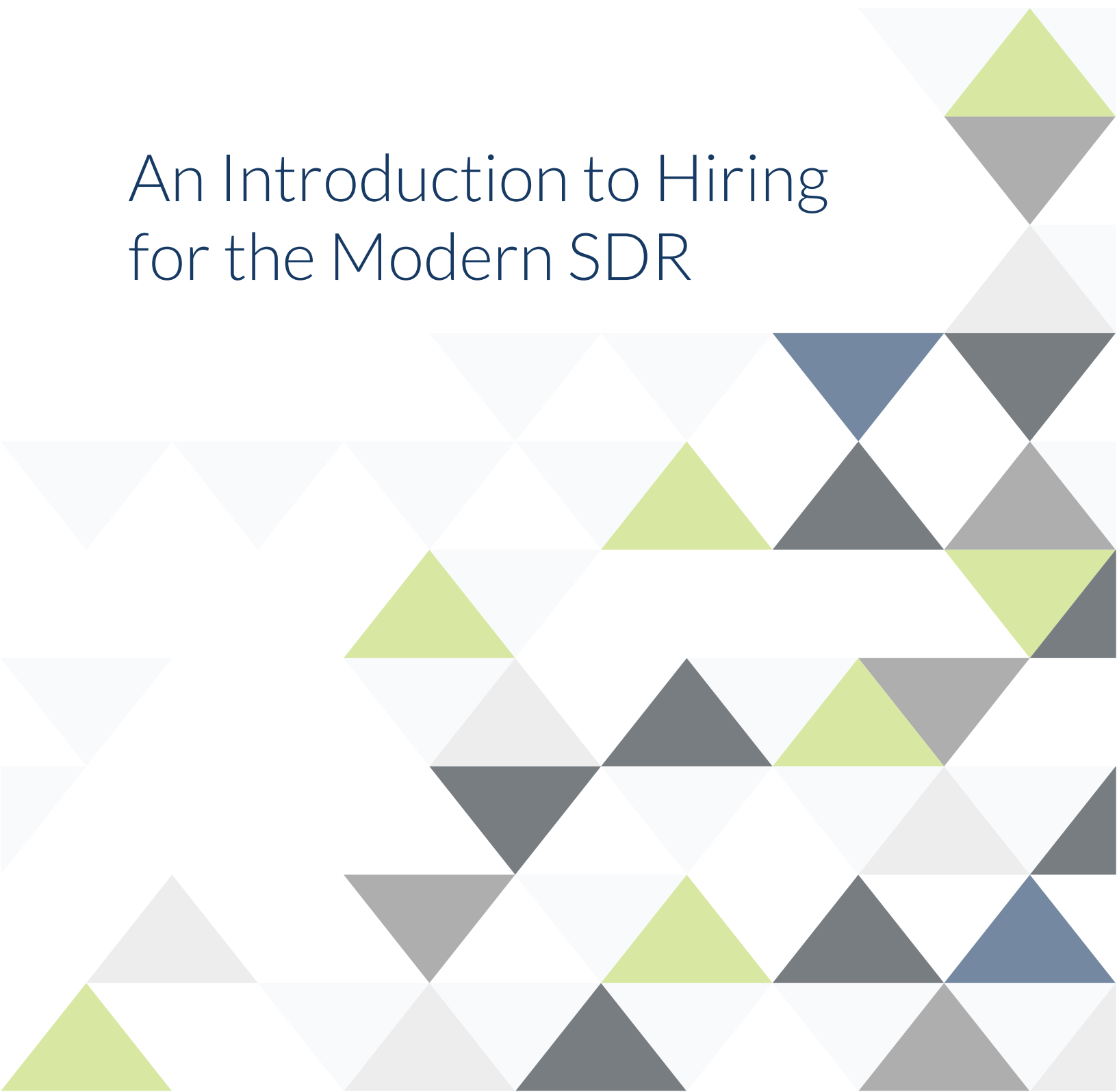


An Introduction to Hiring for the Modern SDR



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INTRODUCTION

A common frustration we hear from new clients is hiring and scaling a quality Sales Development Representative (SDR) team.

Traditional sales models are dying and the demand for highly specialized technical salespeople are at an all time high.

As Sales Trainer John Barrows puts it, “the average salesperson will die a slow and painful death” in the coming years as processes are becoming automated and antiquated sales techniques are being disregarded.

Traditional sales models are dying and the demand for highly technical salespeople are at an all time high.

 Tweet This!

Finding, training, and graduating SDRs into proficient Account Executive positions should be the focus of any emerging or growing company’s sales team strategy.

In this eBook we take an in-depth look into the modern SDR with the hope of providing insight you can use to build or scale your own SDR team.

“The average salesperson will die a slow and painful death.”

@JohnMBarrows  Tweet This!

THE MODERN SDR

The SDR is the front line salesperson and the foundation of any strong and successful sales team. Traditionally they performed two functions: cold calls and cold emails. The modern SDR is a much more technically demanding position and acts as a middleman between Marketing and Sales.

The modern SDR is a much more technically demanding position and acts as a middleman between Marketing and Sales.

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WHO THEY ARE







The first thing hiring managers should look for in a candidate is Sales DNA, especially if they're a new grad with limited experience.



**Hungry
Competitive
Energetic
Urgent
Listener
Personable
Confident
Organized
Polished
Intelligent**

WHAT DOES AN SDR DO?

A day in the life of a Modern SDR typically consists of:

-  Hunting leads on LinkedIn
-  Researching and web scraping
-  Making cold calls
-  Writing drip email campaigns
-  Qualifying inbound leads
-  Scheduling meetings for account executives

WHAT DO I PAY AN SDR?

We took a look at two of the hottest Startup Tech markets - San Francisco and New York - to determine what the average SDR was making.

AVERAGE



AVERAGE OTE



EQUITY



WHAT MOTIVATES THE MODERN SDR?

Things like culture, leadership and growth opportunities stand out most to the modern SDR and should be kept in mind as your company embarks on any hiring campaigns. Money is a short-term motivator while a solid vision or product will energize your SDR candidates for long-term commitment.

Since the landscape is incredibly competitive, getting creative in how you sell your company can be a major differentiator. The biggest trend we

have seen has been an established structure for growth. Any startup can offer ping pong and catered lunches, but having a framework or plan to help an SDR succeed is game changing. If you do not have this structure in place think about developing play books and professional growth plans.

Modern SDRs are looking for the best opportunity, not the first one.

Any startup can offer ping pong and catered lunches, but having a framework to help an SDR succeed is game changing.

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Money is a short-term motivator while a solid vision or product will energize your SDR candidates for long-term commitment.

 [Tweet This!](#)

BUILDING A DREAM TEAM: ACHIEVERS



INTERVIEW WITH

RALPH BARSİ

SENIOR DIRECTOR, SALES
DEVELOPMENT



HOW DID YOU START BUILDING YOUR TEAM?

Since joining Achievers, my focus has stayed on strategy, people, process, and technology – in that order. I continue to fine-tune our inbound and outbound efforts, and the technology that supports them; and am crafting a playbook that will reinforce everything.

"Sales Development leaders: Focus on strategy, people, process, and technology – in that order."

 Tweet This!

"He's constantly challenging us and making sure we never get complacent. There is always something we could do better and Ralph is very constructive, and you never take it personally."



JONATHON DAVIS 
Sales Development Representative

WHAT'S EXCITING ABOUT YOUR OPPORTUNITY?

We don't have much time together: The SDR role lasts roughly two years. Considering most SDR's are early in their careers, two years is a blip. That means the reps and I have a lot of work to do, and a lot to learn...like right now. When everyone's got that "let's get after it" mentality, the opportunity's exciting.

So, I set expectations in the recruiting and onboarding phase that we're driving a revenue pipeline, as well as

a people pipeline. They want to do well and become account executives; and I want them to master the Sales Development role, and represent themselves well when they ARE account executives.

There's a formal career path for our SDR's, that's broken into four 6-month periods (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). It breaks-out all the areas needing development and mastery in a given period. This way, there's always a lighted path towards their next role.

As a result of this focus, the SDR's have hit their team goals the last four consecutive quarters. And at this rate, I have no doubt they'll continue to crush it.

"There's a formal career path for our SDR's. This way, there's always a lighted path towards their next role."

 [Tweet This!](#)

"There were other offers I had before I met with Ralph, but I decided to take the interview because he explained to me how it was a stepping stone to a better opportunity, and that is what really sold me on not taking the other opportunities."



LUKE WALTERS  
Sales Development Representative

HOW DO YOU DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF WITH PERSONAL BRANDING?

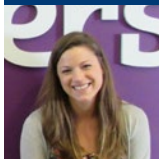
I believe in attracting what it is you want. For example, if someone chooses Inside Sales as their profession - and wants to be the best - they'll look for a coach, leader, or mentor who can lead by example. And candidates with that mindset, and the moxie to carry it out, are the ones I want. So, I add value in those circles, looking to attract the best.

I'm actively involved in the American Association of Inside Sales Professionals (AA-ISP), the largest group in this space, and serve the Silicon Valley Chapter. I've had the privilege to present at events like Dreamforce and the Sales Hacker Conference, and have done webinars for BrightTALK and others. Anything to help, and learn from, people who love Inside Sales, and Sales in general.

If someone chooses Inside Sales, and wants to be the best, they look for leadership by example. Ones with that mindset are the ones I want.

When frustrated with candidates I was interviewing, I published "How to Nail an SDR Interview." Candidates that catch wind of the article work hard to learn about Achievers, the SDR role, and me. The interview process runs smoothly now.

"In the end, it really was Ralph's excitement that made me want to work for him. I could tell that Ralph really wanted me here, and support me and help me grow."



ALLISON SCHULMAN 
Sales Development Representative

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SDR CANDIDATES THEN VS. NOW?

I think it is a lot different, definitely for the better today because of evolving technology. If I'm not in the loop on that I'm going to die on the vine.

70% of the buying process is done online before people engage with your company and the same is happening today with college graduates.

They're doing that research about the companies that they want to work for and how they need to differentiate themselves among other candidates way before they even call that company or apply. So when that company puts a job description out, they jump on it.

"Smart SDR candidates are researching companies and people they want to work for, long before hitting the market."

 Tweet This!

You know immediately who has done their homework and who hasn't. It's evident when they walk in the room if they have their act together and those are the people that I want. They're the ones who are going to be talking to our customers and have done their research, making the conversation about the prospect and not themselves.

"I wanted to get into sales, because I wanted to get into a more competitive environment and it seemed that this would be best for my sales career, where I'd learn the ins and outs of being an SDR, but also set me up for success further down the road in my career."



ZAC AKIN  
Sales Development Representative

WHAT ARE THE TOP THINGS THAT ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT?

In my experience, the strong candidates look for growth, opportunity, and culture. On a macro level, they want to be part of companies that are scaling, that offer them an opportunity to shine and build great careers, and a culture that makes it all fun and worthwhile. On the micro level, they want to join a Sales Development team that wins, so they can learn from and become the best at their craft.

Achievers provides solid mentoring and coaching, and colleagues that turn into lifelong friends. When we talk about this in the recruiting phase, we clearly differentiate ourselves from other SDR career opportunities. When candidates accept an offer from Achievers, they know they'll be celebrated, not tolerated.

"People go where they're celebrated, not tolerated. Companies and leaders need to celebrate their teams. Plain and simple."

 Tweet This!

"I had never heard of Achievers or recognition programs, so therefore it was last on my list, and was actually looking to get into an AE role, When I found out what Achievers was doing, and their \$30 Billion market, I passed up being an AE to be a part of what we're doing here."



ANDREW DOOLITTLE  
Sales Development Representative

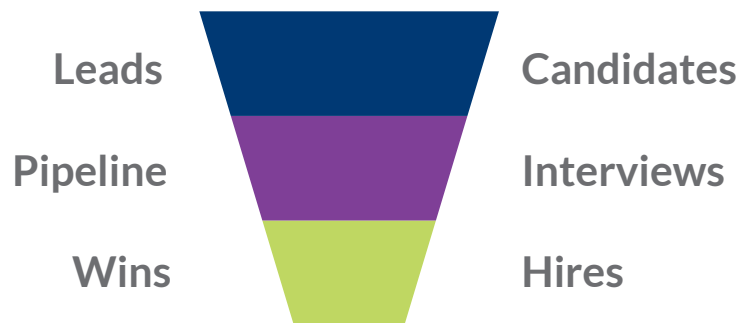
HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN DREAM TEAM

GETTING STARTED

If you're just starting to build out your Sales team or trying to expand your existing team, one of the most important areas to start is establishing your hiring process. SDR hiring typically has a 2-3 week turnaround. If your organization has a long hiring process, or none at all, it can kill deals.

When defining your hiring process, you should consider the hiring funnel to be almost identical to a standard B2B Sales Funnel. Keeping things simple and efficient offers better visibility into your hiring pipeline while also giving a candidate a clear indication of where they are in the process.

You should consider the hiring funnel to be almost identical to a standard B2B Sales Funnel. [Tweet This!](#)



Setting the expectation with the candidate from the beginning will enable your company to compete with other offers even if you have a longer process. As mentioned in the Achievers example, SDRs seek structure that will enable them to grow. By implementing a process, you will demonstrate to the candidate your level of organization and authority.

The importance of building a solid hiring funnel is crucial to scaling your Sales team. A bad hire can cost an organization as much as \$50,000, with 69% of employers reporting that they've been affected by a bad hire last year.¹



Don't be one of these blue people.

For hiring SDRs, the interview process will generally consist of four parts: Phone Interview, Voicemail/Email Test, Cultural Interview, and Role Play.

You should customize the hiring process to meet your own organization needs, but we have broken down each part to help you get started.

¹ Hireology, a platform enabling SMEs to organize their hiring process and make better hiring decisions, 2013 Hiring Statistics.

BUILDING YOUR INTERVIEW PROCESS

Most interviews for SDRs follow a four-step process beginning with a phone interview, a relevant assignment, a culture fit interview, and finally a role play.

The more detail and thought you put into your interview process can not only determine a candidate's qualification, but it gives you a gauge of the kind of training they will require if they join your team.



PHONE INTERVIEW



PURPOSE

The phone screen is an integral first step to the interview process.

30 seconds on the phone can tell you a lot about a candidate that you will never be able to find on a resume.

Sure, convenience plays a factor, if you can tell within the first few minutes somebody will not be a fit you shouldn't waste your or their time by bringing them into the office.

But even more importantly an SDR will be spending their entire day on the phone.

30 seconds on the phone can tell you a lot about a candidate that you will never be able to find on a resume.

 Tweet This!

There is no better way to gauge someone's phone skills than with a phone call.

We've included some sample questions on the next page to get you started.

There is no better way to gauge someone's phone skills than with a phone call.  Tweet This!

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR A PHONE SCREEN

- 1 Why sales?
- 2 When was the first time you sold something?
- 3 What is your cold calling experience? How do you feel about cold calling/how comfortable are you making cold calls?
- 4 Give me a 30 second pitch on X...
- 5 Can you explain to me how you've used a CRM system in the past?
- 6 How would you describe (Company) to friends and family around the dinner table?
- 7 Tell me when you were told "no"
- 8 We work on various roles, technologies, and candidate personalities. How do you adjust your sales pitch to different audiences?
- 9 How do you personally stay focused while working in an environment that has many distractions? How can you keep others focused?
- 10 What tools have you used in the past, and how have they contributed to your success?

VOICEMAIL / PROSPECTING EMAIL



PURPOSE

Testing a candidate on what they will be doing day-to-day is a major differentiator for most interview processes. It is ok to be more critical in the second round, but again focus on finding raw talent with a solid foundation of Sales DNA.

When coming up with the assignments make sure to give very clear instructions. You can even leverage your instructions to qualify out candidates who were way off the mark. In addition to clear instructions, be sure you give candidates feedback on their work!

Regardless if the candidate moves on, coaching an SDR on areas of improvement leaves a lasting impression.

 Tweet This!

Regardless if the candidate moves on to the next round, coaching an SDR on areas of improvement leaves a lasting impression and makes them a potential future advocate for you and your company.

PROSPECTING EMAIL TEMPLATE

Identify a company that you think would be a good fit for our SaaS Platform.

Steps:

- 1 Research the company you chose and determine who you think would be the best decision maker or point of contact.
- 2 Draft an email addressed to that person.
- 3 Use a concise subject line.
Be sure you mention Product X
- 4 Have a clear call to action to book a phone call with this person
- 5 Send the email to john@acme.com

VOICEMAIL ASSIGNMENT TEMPLATE

The person you wrote your email to responded with his phone number. You give him a call but get his voicemail. Craft a voicemail pitch:

Steps:

- 1 Keep the voicemail 45 seconds or less
- 2 Mention the email you previously sent
- 3 Have a clear next step in the voicemail
- 4 Leave your phone number

CULTURE INTERVIEW




PURPOSE

When structuring your culture interviews you want to include anywhere between 3-5 people from your company with at least 1-2 people who are not on your direct team or department. Be careful not to go overboard and have each interview last 10-15 minutes.

The interview should be centered around getting to know the candidate and letting them ask questions to get a better sense of your company culture.

Remember, good SDRs will have options and you want to approach this interview as an open conversation and not to qualify people out. By exposing the candidate to the people and atmosphere of your office, you will build more rapport than you would with a series of repetitive interviews.

Good SDRs will have options and you want to approach this interview as an open conversation and not to disqualify.  Tweet This!

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR CULTURE FIT

- 1 What excites you about waking up to go to work everyday?
- 2 How do you want to feel when you leave at the end of the day?
- 3 What shows that you're a good fit for a startup?
- 4 What do you like to do in your spare time?
- 5 Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
- 6 What excites you about technology?
- 7 What's your ideal work environment: one in which you can work on several dynamic projects at one time or one in which you can work on one task at a time through completion?
- 8 How do you personally stay focused while working in an environment that has many distractions? How can you keep others focused?
- 9 What do think makes a good team player? Would you describe yourself this way? How do you deal with those who are not?
- 10 Our organization is set up in a way that involves multiple people in the placement process. How would you build consensus for everyone involved in this process?

ROLE PLAY INTERVIEW



PURPOSE

The final step in an SDR interview process is a role-play interview. This is where you can put the candidate to a final test to vet out if they truly have Sales DNA.

The objective of the Role Play is to see what they learned from the first two steps and how they apply it in a live demonstration. You can structure the role play to be with multiple people in the room or 1:1 with a manager or even another SDR.

The objective of the role play is to see what they learned and how they apply it in a live demonstration. [Tweet This!](#)

Come prepared with different example scenarios to see how they handle different situations and personalities. You can even record the sessions to send back to the candidate for feedback, to review later with your team, or to use as examples of exceptional responses for a team play book.

EXAMPLE ROLE PLAY

You call into "Company X", and I tell you that I'm running to lunch. You have two minutes to pitch me.

Ready, set, go.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading our eBook on How to Hire the Modern SDR. We hope you find value in the material and we wish you best of luck in hiring your team!

Highlights to take with you:

- 1 The Modern SDR is a technical role in high demand
- 2 Establish an internal growth plan and framework for your SDRs
- 3 Treat your hiring pipeline as a B2B sales pipeline
- 4 Create a simple hiring process to test your candidates

THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK IN YOUR HIRING!



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