Improving the Talent Mix for Inside Sales

For our third survey in an ongoing series, BCG partnered with the American Association of Inside Sales Professionals to examine the talent mix at inside sales teams. The survey of C-suite-level business leaders at Fortune 500 companies reveals that inside sales talent has become an increasingly critical resource—and that organizations must devote more attention to recruiting and retention.

The competitive market for top inside sales talent has been exacerbated by an increased demand for virtual sales due to COVID-19.

Companies may be limiting their talent pipeline by requiring a college degree for entry-level hires.

Inside sales teams have more churn than field sales teams do, but higher compensation and better career planning can improve retention.

Companies may be able to improve their recruiting results by tailoring their search criteria to specific roles.

For both entry-level and senior roles, companies are most likely to recruit from within. The main sources of talent are customer-facing groups in the organization.

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Less than half of firms have explicit diversity and inclusion targets. Instead, most use broad programs as a key means of attracting and retaining talent.

The ANNUAL ATTENTION RATE:

- 10%-20% for inside sales reps
- 5%-10% for field sales reps

The TOP QUALITY THROUGH CAPTIONS:

- Communication
- Agility
- Assertiveness
- Enthusiasm
- Confidence
- Resiliency
- Empathy
- Ability to Listen
- Rigor

The MAIN SOURCES OF TALENT:

- Internal recruiting/promotions
- Online recruiting
- Traditional manpower/search firms

The ANNUAL ATTENTION RATE:

- 10%-20% for inside sales reps
- 5%-10% for field sales reps

The TOP THREE SOURCES OF TALENT:

- 55% Customer success
- 42% Customer service
- 26% Technical sales

The MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY-LEVEL ROLE:

- 8 High school graduate
- 45 College graduate
- 26 1-2 years of relevant work experience

The TOP SOURCES OF INTERNAL TALENT FOR ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES:

- 55% Customer success
- 42% Customer service
- 26% Technical sales

The TOP THREE SOURCES OF ATTITUDES:

- 73% Competitive offers by other firms
- 39% Lack of career path or length of time to be promoted
- 29% Employee dissatisfaction

The TOP MEASURES TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

- Diversity and inclusion programs
- Diversity and inclusion training
- Leadership development

The COMPANIES WITH TARGETS, BY GROUP (%):

- Women: 40%
- Men: 30%
- Employees: 10%

The TOP SOURCES OF ATTRITION:

- 73% Competitive offers by other firms
- 39% Lack of career path or length of time to be promoted
- 29% Employee dissatisfaction