



Should you choose Industry experience or superior selling skills for your next recruit?

Recruiting a salesperson is a vital decision and should be considered to be a long-term investment.

Even if you poach a candidate from a competitor, there is rarely an off the peg, select and forget' solution to find the ideal construction sales professional. This leads to the question, what is the best route to take in your selection process to maximise your return on investment.

- Appointing a salesperson with industry specific experience and contacts?
- Appointing a high-calibre sales professional from another industry who can learn about the building products and construction industry and provide your company with even greater skills and rewards?

A salesperson, or any customer-facing professional, is given a huge amount of trust by their employer. To many involved in the purchasing of your products, the salesperson is the company and their opinions on the company can be formed from the

professionalism, reliability, approach and knowledge of the individual or team that they deal with.

Your product is naturally of paramount importance too, but the salesperson can make the difference between someone selecting yours from two products of similar specification. It is no good having a great product solution if the benefits are not explained to the right people in the right way that supports the marketing activity of the company.

Selecting someone with direct industry experience is often the correct decision, but it can also be the easy option for the employer - the one that, once the appointment has been made, they can just leave the sales person to get on with it, as they assume that they know what they're doing!

Companies often lean naturally towards this approach as they will get some initial easy sales conversions and do not need to invest as much in training.

They also feel that it gives confidence to the customer that the sales person knows what they are talking about – although this is not always true!



However, the key area that is much more difficult to train someone in is how to actually sell? This is a talent, whereas industry experience is just acquiring knowledge and grasping it. Skills are transferable and can be used to sell any product to any market. If an employer is looking from outside the industry, they should evaluate the candidate on the following:

- What is the buying process and the motivations of those involved in the products that they have sold?
- How do they overcome objections from customers?
- How do they deal with the competition?
- How do they promote and position the products/services that they have sold and focus on the product, not just price?
- How do they meet and exceed the customers' expectations?
- How do they adapt their approach to different customer types and personalities?
- How do they build trust and confidence with their customers?
- How can they demonstrate that they are keen to learn and develop their knowledge?

If the approach that the candidate takes in the above areas can be applied to the product and market that you deal in, then you can confidently think about making an appointment.

These are also the questions that candidates should be asking themselves if they are looking to move from another industry, as selling skill relevance is perhaps the most important factor that can make them stand out from the crowd.

Of course there are many salespeople with industry-specific experience that have superb sales skills and techniques - they are the candidates that an employer should ideally be looking for.

Our advice to employers is not to rule out candidates from other industries and cloud the decision-making process just because another candidate has industry experience. Experience can be gained - talent is something that is much more difficult to acquire.

At Pinnacle Consulting we select candidates from across industries that we believe have the skills to succeed in the building product sector. This is why we will take the time to get to know our candidates and their skills as well as their experience. We aim to provide employers with one of the following two candidates:

Someone that has industry experience combined with excellent sales skills.

Someone from outside the industry that has excellent sales skills that are appropriate to be applied within the building product sector and that has the ability to use these skills in our industry.

Further guidance

Pinnacle Consulting is a leading sales and marketing recruitment agency operating exclusively in the building products sector.

If you are an employer looking to recruit, please call us to discuss your requirements on **01480 405225** or us at email recruit@pinnacleconsulting.co.uk.

If you would like to discuss a sales or marketing career in the Building Products Industry, you may wish to attend one of our PinBuild Career Development Clinics or have a Skype interview.



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