
UNIT 9 JOB ANALYSIS, RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the issues relating to sales force management
- understand the importance of job analysis for better sales force management
- identify, evaluate and prepare lists of recruitment sources for a company
- design the selection process for hiring salesmen for a company
- frame application form and conduct interviews for screening the candidates
- select and administer psychological tests in the selection process.

Structure

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Nature of the Sales Job
- 9.3 Sales Job Analysis
- 9.4 Recruitment
- 9.5 Recruitment Sources
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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Attracting and selecting new sales personnel is an important aspect of the sales manager's job. This unit on job analysis, recruitment and selection will tell you about the procedures used for obtaining sales recruits with the potential capability of becoming good sales people. Once this pool of talent has been generated, it becomes feasible to select the individuals who match the needs of the organisation. Selection is a step-by-step procedure that the sales managers go through to staff the sales organisation. Selection which follows recruitment, requires that the sales manager must reverse the roles and become a buyer instead - a buyer of sales talent and potential.

9.2 NATURE OF THE SALES JOB

All sales related jobs, irrespective of the type of industry, have very distinctive characteristics. Some of the characteristics are as follows:

- i) As sales personnel works in the field, away from the head offices, they are responsible for managing their territories or accounts. Therefore, sales personnel are expected to take their own decisions for planning and executing their individual activities.
- ii) Most sales persons, while on their journey cycle, get fewer opportunities for interactions in person with their supervisors. Most of the time they provide feedback or receive instructions, telephonically or through fax in their hotel.
- iii) The third characteristics of the field sales job is that the sales personnel remain away from their home and family for days together. This is a regular feature. In some consumer product companies sales people *travel for as many as 21 days in a 'month*.



- iv) Another important aspect of the sales job is the job monotony. Each sales person is doing the same work, repetitively with different customers. For example, a medical representative, makes the same presentation to all the medical doctors, day-after-day.
- v) Lastly, success in a sales call doesn't depend on an individual's effort. It may so happen that the customer doesn't need your product or the customer was not happy with his previous experience, on delivery or after sales service or spares. All field sales job create, therefore, a normal tendency to get disheartened or discouraged.

Each of the above characteristics have specific implications for recruitment and selection, and therefore, it is recommended while you are developing your recruitment and selection policies, you should not overlook the above points. Accordingly, job specifications should be decided.

9.3 SALES JOB ANALYSIS

Sales force management is the personnel function in the marketing department of an organisation. The issues in sales force management are, therefore,, the same as that of the personnel management. However, these issues relate to only, those personnel who work in the sales department.

The starting point of all sales force management activities is the Job Analysis, as shown in figure 1.



Figure 1 Activites Involved in Managing the Sales Force

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In fact, the job analysis relates to the identification of job objectives, duties and responsibilities, analysis of working conditions, performance norms and the position in the organisation hierarchy to identify the reporting relations.

Typically, a job analysis helps in three distinct ways. Most importantly, it helps in the Job Description, i.e., in identifying various activities-major and trivial, to be performed under the job It also helps in identifying the qualifications, and individuals characteristics, in relation to the job, which is called job specifications.

A good approach to developing job description is to use a checklist of various activities relating to a sales personnel job. Some of these responsibilities are as follows:

Basic Responsibilities of a Salesman

Sl. No.	Sales Responsibilities	Specific Activities
1	Direct Selling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Locating prospects b. Determining prospects' needs c. Planning selling strategy d. Interviewing e. Creating desire f. Handling objectives g. Completing sales
2.	Customer Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Helping customers by solving their problems and providing special services b. Training customers to use their purchases c. Arranging displays and promotions d. Keeping customers up-to-date on new developments e. Settling complaints f. Establishing and maintaining good personal relations with customers
3.	Product Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Knowing products and their applications b. Looking for new products c. Keeping up-to-date on merchandise style and price changes d. Keeping up-do-date on competing products
4.	General Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintaining call records b. Carrying on routine correspondences c. Checking customer's credit d. Follow-up on inquiries e. Maintenance expense-account records
5.	Management Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Making required reports b. Reporting competitors' activities c. Working with other departments

A detailed account of basic responsibilities of a sales person help in the identification of qualifications and individual characteristics, iii relation to the job. The process by which qualifications and personality characteristics are identified, is called Job Specifications which the person may have at the time of joining or they are imparted to the sales person, through training.

Once the job specifications are laid down, it becomes easier for a company to initiate the process of recruitment and selection. Also training can help a sales person to fulfill job responsibilities more effectively.

Non the less, it is generally believed that recruitment and selection process should be such, that it should help *you* to handpick those sales persons with 'just right' kind of personality, since it *is* difficult to develop personality through the training programmes. Job Analysis also helps in clearly identifying the job performance norms based *on* which the job evaluation can be done. Such an exercise provides a good bases for compensation management.

(In the remaining part of this unit issues related to recruitment and selection have been discussed and in a separate unit sales training has been covered).



9.4 RECRUITMENT

Once a company has determined the number and kind of salesmen it requires, the next step in the selection is to get the right applications, in sufficient number, for the positions. All the activities involved in securing the applications for the sales positions are referred to as Recruitment. It does not include, but is followed by the selection process to evaluate and screen the applicants. The nature of recruitment effort for sales personnel differs from one company to another, mainly with respect to their recruitment sources. The recruitment policy of a company is influenced by its selling style, products, customers, financial resources and sales management policies. Different companies call for individuals with widely varying abilities, skills, education, training and experience. The scope of recruitment effort is influenced by the number of recruits desired, which in turn, is influenced by the size of sales organisation, rate of turnover, the forecasted sales volume, distribution channels and promotional strategy.

9.5 RECRUITMENT SOURCES

Frequently used sources of salesmen are as follows.

Advertisements

Advertisements are both a source of recruits and a method of reaching them. Newspapers, magazines and trade journals are the most widely used media for advertisements. Advertisements ordinarily produce large number of applicants in a very short time and at a low cost. However, this factor may be offset by the increased expense of carefully screening the large number of prospects and the average quality of applicants may be of questionable character.

Recruitment advertisements usually include information about the company, nature of the job, specific qualifications required and compensation. The specific details in the advertisement vary with the company and its situation. The quality of prospects recruited by advertisement may be increased by careful selection of media and by proper statements of information in the advertisement. For example, by advertising in a trade journal rather than in a daily newspaper, a firm is being more selective in its search. An advertisement in trade journal assures responses from people who are already in the profession and would be interested in selling. The amount and type of information given in the advertisement affects the quality and quantity of the applicants. The more the information given in the advertisement, the more it serves as a qualitative screening device. A firm, by stating minimum qualifications rather than optimum requirements can generate large number of applications, requiring more careful screening. There is no simple answer to the question of whether a company should place its name in its recruiting advertisement. The company name, if well-known, is prominently featured, whereas small companies often follow the policy of giving a 'box no.' in the advertisement. Further, on the mechanics of advertising, management must decide on such points as the day of the week to insert the advertisement, where to locate it in the medium and what size it should be. For instance, Sunday papers are read more leisurely and thoroughly, but in a week-day edition, a company's advertisement stands out more because there are fewer such other advertisements.

Employment Agencies

Many companies use employment agencies to get the recruits for the sales positions. To use this source effectively, sales manager must ensure that the agency understands the company and its needs thoroughly. Whenever an agency is used, it should have the clear understanding of the job's objective, job specifications and the literature about the company. Also agencies need time to learn about an employing firm and its unique requirements—thus considerable gains accrue from continuing relationships with agencies that perform satisfactorily. If the agency is selected carefully and good long-term relations are established with it, the dividends can be satisfying.



Educational Institutions

This source includes colleges, universities, technical and vocational institutes. This source is, tapped for getting qualified people for entry level positions in sales. Students from technical/ vocational institutes or with specific subjects like Physics, Biology, Hotel Management are recruited by the companies, where selling requires specialised knowledge and skills for that particular industry. College graduates are generally taken by the companies having formal sales training programme or for simple selling jobs. Recruits from educational institutions are more easily adaptable than their more experienced counterparts. They have no developed loyalties for a firm or industry and they probably have not acquired any bad work habits. Usually, they have acquired certain social graces, are more poised and mature. They are supposed to have developed their ability to think, to reason logically and to express themselves reasonably well. Ordinarily, they do a good job of budgeting their time and managing their daily activities. Their main limitation is lack of selling experience. Men recruited from this source need training and thus take time for reaching the desired productivity level. To use this source effectively, it is important for the company to develop and maintain good relations with suitable educational institutions.

Salesmen of Non-competing Companies

Individuals currently employed as salesmen for non-competing companies are often the attractive recruiting prospects. Such people already have selling experience, some of which may be readily transferable. For those, who have worked for companies in related industries-there is additional attraction of knowing something about the product and the market. Recruits from this source presumably have some selling skills and thus reduce the amount of training required. A firm that hires salesmen from other companies should be especially careful to determine, why the man is interested in changing jobs and why he wants to work for the hiring company. People hired from other companies may not have the same degree of loyalty, that recruits possess when promoted from within.

Salesmen of Competing Companies

The question of whether to hire competitors' salesmen is argued on ethical grounds and from an economic standpoint. It is considered unethical to recruit the competitors' salesmen actively, after he has spent the money on hiring and training them. Furthermore, these salesmen may be able to divulge company secrets to the competitors. It is also seen as an attempt to take away competitors' customers. From an economic point of view, these are mixed feelings regarding this source. On one hand, they know the product, customers and competitors. They also are experienced sellers and, therefore, no money is required to be spent for their training. On the other hand, it is a costly source as generally, higher pay must be offered to them to leave their organisations. Some sales managers, as a matter of policy, refrain from hiring competitors' salespersons, as their loyalty towards company is questionable. They feel that an individual hired away from one organisation for higher pay or other enticements may be similarly tempted in future.

In considering the recruitment of individuals currently working for competitors, a key question to answer is-why does this person want to leave his present position? When the new job will not improve the applicant's pay, status or future prospects, the desire to change the company may be traced to personality conflicts or instability. But the dissatisfaction with the present job does not always mean that the fault is that of an applicant. If the applicant has sound reasons for switching companies, the opportunity maybe presented to obtain a promising person, who is ready for productive work almost immediately.

Internal Transfers

The persons working in other departments of the company maybe transferred as salesmen to the sales department. This is generally used along with the other recruitment sources. Transfers are good prospects for sales positions, whenever product knowledge makes up a substantial portion of sales training. They are also familiar with company's objectives, policies and programmes. The accuracy of evaluating these men is more, as the management is able to observe their and evaluate their potential as salesperson before they are transferred to sales department. Factory and office employees may consider the transfer to sales department as promotion, which helps in increasing their moral and loyalty.



Recommendations of Present Salesmen

A company's sales force is a good source of leads to new recruits. Salesmen typically have wide circles of acquaintances, since both on and off the job, they continually meet new people and generally have many friends with similar interests. Their contacts may yield good sales people because of their understanding of the job and the kind of salesmen required by the company. However, management faces the risk that the salesmen may recommend friends or business associates on the basis of personal feelings rather than on an impartial evaluation of prospects' qualifications. The firm should be able to weed them out through its selection process. When an applicant recommended by a salesmen is to be turned down, management should explain clearly but diplomatically to the salesman why his recruit is not being accepted. Sales people are valuable source of recommendations, when job must be filled in remote territories because sales personnel in the same or adjacent areas may know considerably more about unique territorial requirements and local sources of personnel than home-office' executives.

Activity 1

Suggest suitable recruitment sources for the following

- a) Salesmen for selling a consumer non-durable.
- b) Salesmen for missionary selling for pharmaceutical company.
- c) Salesmen for technical selling for engineering firm.

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Activity 2

A sales manager has hired 10 sales people a year for the past five years, and has been keeping records of recruitment sources. A summary of this information is as follows :

Recruitment Source	No. of Recruits obtained	No. of Recruits hired	No. of successful sales people after one year
Employment Agency	40	12	8
Advertising	100	8	4
Sales persons' Recommendations	60	30	15

Should the sales manager concentrate on any one or two recruitment sources? If so, which ones?

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9.6 SELECTION

After a company has determined the type and number of salesmen it needs and the applications for the job have been received, the management is ready for the third and the final stage of the selection system, i.e. selection process. It involves processing the applicants to select the individuals who best fit the needs of a particular company. The sales force selection process refers to the steps, the sales management goes through to staff the sales organisation. Specifically the process involves

- i) Critical analysis and evaluation of each tool and procedure.
- ii) development of a system for measuring the applicants against the predetermined requirements.



The basic objectives of the selection process is to gather information about the applicants for sales job, which is used for predicting their success/failure probabilities. A selection system can be visualised as a set of successive screens at any of which an applicant may be dropped from further consideration. It can range from simple one step system consisting perhaps of nothing more than an informal personal interview to a complex multiple step system. The following figure shows an example of a selection system consisting of seven steps.

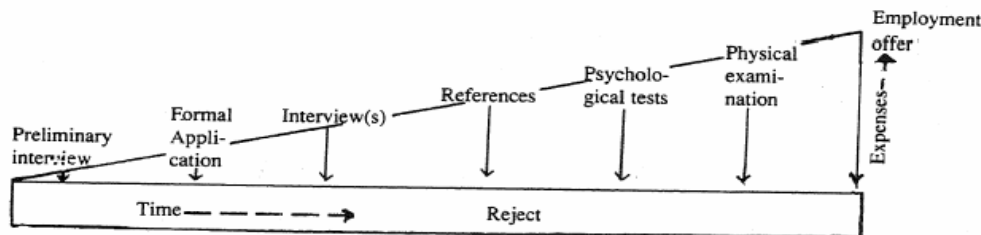


Figure 1 : A Seven Step Selection System.

Selection Policy Decision

- i) Which tools should be used?
- ii) In what order should the tools be used?

The type of selection tools and their order of arrangement varies from company to company. Each company must design its own selection system to fit its information needs and budgetary limitations. The factors like the size of company, type of industry, the type of selling job, the financial condition of the company, affect the selection policy decisions of the firm. Management must compare the cost of each tool with its ability to predict success/ failure probability (i.e. its helpfulness in hiring decisions) for deciding the type of tools to be used for selection process. For sequencing the tools, the principle that is generally followed is to use inexpensive and brief tools like short application form, brief interview or a simple test, in the initial stages of the selection process. The purpose of initial screens is to eliminate, as soon as possible, the obviously unqualified/undesirable recruits at the least cost. The more expensive and time consuming tools are used in the later stages of the selection process.

9.7 SELECTION TOOLS

The commonly used tools for selecting the salesmen are as follows.

Application Form

It is one of the two most widely used selection tools (the other is the interview). Generally, the application forms used by most of the companies fall under two categories: Short Application Form and Detailed Application Form.

Short application form is ordinarily used as an initial screening device. It asks for the factual information about the candidate in brief, so as to serve its purpose of eliminating the obviously unqualified applicants at the least cost and quickly. It includes items such as personal background, education and experience. This form can either be provided by the company or in the alternate, the applicants are asked to apply by sending their bio-data in brief.

Detailed application form is more extensive and covers each topic in depth. It is designed by each company according to its own information requirements. It varies widely from one company to another, for the designing depends upon the detailed description of the sales job. For example; a detailed application for sales engineer will be quite different from the detailed application form for medical representative. This form may be used as the only application form or alongwith the short application form. A longer form may be used as an initial screen if it is used to the exclusion of the short form. The facts stated on the form can



be the basis for probing in an interview, for instance, by asking several questions related to the job experience as stated on the form. Also, if the applicant passes through the initial screens, management may need to refer, many times to the information stated on the form. This form is also used as a source of information to study the backgrounds of its good and poor salesmen and to establish scores and weights on specific requirements.

Objective scoring of application form: Each company, according to its job requirements, decides the ideal personal history requirements that would make the person successful on the sales job. Individuals possessing all the personal history requirements are the ones most likely to succeed on the job. However, many potentially successful salespeople do not possess all the requirements. One company found that most of its best salespeople were of the age group of 30-35 years at the time of hiring, yet there were some as young as 19 and some as old as 48. Although the age group 30-35 years, may be the preferred age range, applicants outside this age range should still receive consideration, since other factors in their backgrounds may more than offset the fact that they are outside the desired age range. One of the ways to determine the total value of candidate is by using application form, on which an objective score has been assigned to each item. The maximum possible score for each of the item depends upon its importance in sales success. A higher score is allocated for the requirements which are more essential than those which are not so important. The points are assigned to an individual, for each of the item, according to its proximity to the ideal.

Example:	Education	Maximum Score	- 8
		High School	- 5
		Diploma	-6
		Graduate	- 8
Job Experience		Maximum Score	-10
		1-2 years	-4
		3-5 years	-10
		5-7 years	- 7

For example, in an application form of a firm, 12 personal history items are used as selection factors. A maximum value is assigned to each of them according to its relative value on the form. The maximum total score is 150 points and the cut off score is 100. All the successful salespersons in this company scored over 100 when hired and the company automatically disqualifies all applications with score under 100.

Information on the application form : Some of the factors that affect the type and amount of information requested on an application form, may be

- i) The objective, the company has in using the application form-if it serves as an initial screen, it is shorter than one that will be used for complete personal history record.
- ii) The other selection tools and records used, often influence the design of the application form. Use of patterned interview, for instance, may enable a concern to shorten its form. On the other hand, a firm may want to duplicate its questions in order to check on a recruit's honesty, by seeing, if his answers on the form coincide with those obtained from other sources.
- iii) The nature of the job is another factor that influences the questions asked on the application form, because different sales jobs call for different qualifications. A firm trying to hire men with 5-10 years of sales experience, for example, is not so concerned about a recruit's activities in school and college. The information required on the application form, for hiring a salesman, for sales engineer's job to sell the technical product will be different from the information for hiring door-to-door salesman for selling low priced consumer product.
- iv) Another factor is the degree to which the selection function is decentralised. If home executives take part in the hiring of salesmen, the application form, probably, is detailed. But if territorial managers do the hiring, the form may be short because the other tools, especially the interviews, can be used more extensively.



Ideally each company should prepare its own formal application form, since no two companies have precisely the same information requirements. But, if a company has only a small salesforce and recruits relatively few people, the time and cost of preparing its own application form may warrant the choice of a standard form.

Certain items of information, which are almost always relevant to selection decisions, make the standard form. The information that is typically requested on standard form includes personal background, education and employment record. Company using standard application form can obtain the additional information required, during the interview.

Activity 3

Frame questions that you would ask on the application form to determine whether an applicant possesses any of the following undesirable traits

- a) Has a history of not staying in one job for very long.
- b) Has domestic problems.
- c) Does not get along well with other people, is the lone wolf type.

Interview

The interview is the most widely used selection tool and in some companies, it comprises the entire selection system. This tool may be used as preliminary interview for initial screening of applicants and plays an important part in the subsequent stages of the hiring process as final interview. This is the most satisfactory tool to find out something about conversational ability, general appearance, personal impact on others and certain behavioural aspects. Personality traits like initiative, imagination, aggressiveness, tactfulness; enthusiasm can 'Come out, when an applicant is talking. Another purpose of interviewing is to verify and supplement the information obtained through other tools-Unusual or omitted references on the application form can be discussed, or more details about personality, attitudes and previous work experience can be explored. For example, the applicant might have stated that he was a district sales manager in some previous job. The prospective employer may ask: What were the man's responsibilities? How many employees did he supervise? What were his administrative duties? It is important that the interview serves as a two-way channel of communication. The interview is not only a means by which a company may assess an applicant's fitness for the job; it also offers the employer an opportunity to answer the recruit's questions about the company and the job. He can be told about such things as the nature of the job, the physical and social conditions involved, the compensation, the nature of training and supervision and the opportunities for the future. The nearer firm is to hiring a man, the more information it gives to an interviewee.

Interviewing decisions: The following important decisions are arrived at, by the management regarding interviews:

Who and where: Persons to do the interviewing and place for interviewing depends upon the shape and degree of decentralisation of sales Organisation. In large and highly decentralised organisations, it is done at local and regional level by district/branch/regional sales managers e.g. New India Assurance Company. In medium size organisations with less degree of decentralisation, initial interviewing is handled at the branch level and final interviewing at the head office. Interviewing is the responsibility of top personnel of sales and marketing department in small and centralised organisations.

How many : Number of formal interviews vary with the selling style of the company. One large steel which needs salespeople do the highly specialised selling to important customers, puts the applicants through three interviews, involving regional sales managers, the general sales manager and marketing vice-president. An office supply manufacturer, which requires sales personnel for routine trade selling, may hire applicants after two interviews. In another situation, where salesmen are required for door-to-door selling of simple products, one interview is enough to get the necessary information.



When: The interview may be used at the initial stage of screening process as preliminary interview and it also usually plays an important part in the subsequent stage of the hiring process, as final interview. At the initial stage, its main purpose is to quickly eliminate the applicants whose qualifications do not meet the job's basic requires , its. For example, a few of the company executives visit the college campus to do the initial screening of people, who have responded to the company's advertisement in the college. The detailed/depth interview is used at the later stage of the selection process. It is more time consuming and requires people with expert skills to probe the personality traits of the candidate in depth.

Techniques of Interviewing

i) Patterned/structured interview: It is totally guided and highly standardised technique of interviewing. The interviewers are given a specific list of questions or an outline of questions, designed to elicit a basic core of information. Each man interviewed is asked these questions and answers are recorded on standardised form. Since all the applicants are queried on the same points, different persons can do the interviewing at different places and the results will still be comparable. The reasons for using this technique of interviewing can be attributed to the situations, where the interviewing is to be done at different regions/ branches simultaneously or where the interviewers may not know in detail about what the job entails and what are the necessary qualifications, or, they may know what qualifications are necessary for the job but they may not know what questions will bring forth the information about the applicant's possession of these characteristics, or interviewers may be unable to interpret the answers in non-structured type of interviews.

ii) Non-directed/non-structured interview: This method does not follow a set format; instead it involves a relaxed discussion. The candidate is urged to talk freely about his business experiences, home life, school activities, future plans and on certain outwardly irrelevant topics. The interviewer asks few questions and says only enough to keep the conversation rolling along the desired line. The theory for this type of interview is that it produces truthful answers and thus draws out the real person. This technique yields maximum insight into an individual's attitudes, interests and personality traits. The interviewer is allowed maximum freedom in determining what will be discussed during the interview to probe an individual's personality in depth. Obviously, the major problem is that it requires skilled and experienced people for administering and interpreting it. Also the value of standardisation is lost in the non-structured type.

iii) Semi-structured interview: Most firms today use interview that falls somewhere between the two extremes discussed above. Usually the interviewer has in mind a prepared outline of topics to be covered during the interview and also has the freedom to deviate from the plan and to determine the depth to which a topic will be pursued for each candidate, at the time of interview itself.

iv) Stress interview: It is a more complex and sophisticated technique of interviewing. The interviewers create stressful environment for the candidate through interruptions, criticism, by asking him for solutions for tricky situations, by rapidly firing questions. While interviewing, the interviewer may hand the applicant an object and say, "Here, sell this to me," and may then raise unreasonable objections during his sales presentation. This technique is used for selecting the sales personnel who are supposed to work under stressful conditions in actual selling situations. The stress interview needs to be planned, administered and interpreted by well trained interviewers.

v) Rating scales: One shortcoming of the interview is its tendency to lack objectivity, a defect that can be reduced through rating scales. These are so constructed that interviewer's ratings are channelled into limited choice of responses. For instance, in evaluating an applicant's general appearance, an interviewer is forced to choose one of the three answers nicely dressed, presentable, untidy. It results in more comparable ratings of the same individual by different interviewers. One drawback of the rating scale is the lack of precise description of many personal qualities. It is a good practice, therefore, to encourage interviewers to explain ratings in writing whenever they feel that the comments are needed. Examples :

Enthusiasm : Bored, somewhat indifferent, normal enthusiasm, sparkling effervescence.

Judgement Jumps to conclusions, less than sound reasons for opinions; sound opinions and reasons, excellent judgement and uses reasons as problem solving device.

Sales drive: Low, normal, above average, pushes himself.



Attitude: Negative and complaining, pessimistic, positive and healthy, strong loyalty.

Guidelines for interviewing: Some general guidelines that will assist one in doing the effective interviewing are suggested below:

i) Prepare for the interview: Effective interviewing requires adequate pre-planning to be done prior to the interview. This involves renewing the job description, the company's personnel policies and procedures and existing data about the candidate. The review will enable the interviewer to determine exactly what he wants to know about the candidate and prepare the topics for discussion.

ii) Established rapport: A pleasant relaxed atmosphere must be established during the interview. The interviewee must be made to feel at ease by asking general questions about his family, education, experience, that is the subjects about which most people feel free to talk about. A quick review of the interviewee's application form may suggest a suitable opening for it. A pleasant rapport between interviewer and applicant must be maintained throughout the interview.

iii) Listen and observe : It is important for a successful interviewer to be a good listener and good at observation. He begins to learn about the candidate, as soon as, he enters the room-Is the applicant dressed appropriately? Is he/she poised and confident? Alert? Observation provides many a clues about the personality of the applicant. For instance, clasping and unclasping of hands, fidgeting, not maintaining eye contact are signs of nervousness, uncertainty and lack of confidence.

iv) Taking few notes: Most interviewers will need to refer to notes about the performance of the candidate at the time of the interview, for evaluating him, for selection decision. However, taking notes during an interview distracts the applicant and slows down the tempo of the interview. So, in most of the situations, candidate should be marked on the evaluation sheet after he/she has left the room.

v) Select a suitable environment: The interviewer must make sure that the setting is appropriate and conducive for interviewing and there are no interruptions during the interview.

Activity 4

When interviewing an applicant for a sales job, management is ordinarily interested in complete answers to the following 3 points,

- a) How badly does the applicant want the job? -
- b) Can the job furnished him with the success he wants or offer him the opportunity to realise his goals in life?
- c) Will he strive to achieve the level of work his capacity will allow?

Prepare a series of questions, an interviewer might ask with respect to each of these three points

- a)
- b)
- c)

Psychological Tests

Use of psychological tests as selection tool, though still in its infancy, is increasing for the reasons like-greater importance being given to selection as the sales management is becoming more formalised, rising cost of selection and training, increased size of sales force and increased knowledge of psychological tests and their applications. Psychological testing refers to having the recruit answer a series of written questions, the proper answers to which



have been previously determined. The major purpose of testing is to identify and measure more accurately, the various aspects of person's behaviour such as intelligence, achievements, interests aptitude, personality traits, etc. It requires trained specialists for designing, administering and interpreting the psychological tests.

Factors conducive to successful testing: The existence of following conditions are conducive to, a successful testing programme:

- i) The firm hires a relatively large number of men and its cost of training per person is quite high.
- ii) The firm is hiring young inexperienced men about whom little is known.
- iii) The persons being selected are not likely to be test wise, i.e. danger of faking is minimised.
- iv) The executives responsible for interviewing the recruits are not adept at discovering personality traits and selling aptitude.
- v) In companies, where the cost of a man's future development is high, the expense of testing may be a small insurance premium, just to be more accurate in judging a candidate.

Types of Psychological Tests

- i) Tests of Ability - Tests of mental ability
Tests of special abilities
- ii) Tests of Habitual Characteristics Attitude tests
Personality tests
Interest tests
- iii) Achievement Tests

Tests of mental ability : Give the administrator some idea of the man's present abstract intelligence. These tests are designed to show how well a person reasons, thinks, and understands and thus measure the abilities like problem solving and learning. Beyond a minimum level, this type of intelligence is seldom of vital importance in selling. In the alternate, if the sales job requires a man with higher than average intelligence, because of its being a complex job, then probably such intelligence tests should be made a part of the selection process.

Tests of special abilities : These tests measure the sales aptitude and the special abilities required for a person to be successful in sales position. Sales aptitude tests are designed to find out the recruit's behaviour in certain common selling and social situations. One such test asks, "You are a sales clerk. The best of your response to the customer's objection, 'It is not exactly what I want', would be :

- a) Do let me show you another style that is very popular this season.
- b) This is the latest style.
- c) I am sorry you didn't like what we have.
- d) We expect another shipment of articles next month.

Many sales managers administer their own informal aptitude tests by way of a situation in which they give a product to the recruit and say, "Here, sell this to me." General sales aptitude tests are used for measuring the basic qualities of a good salesman and specially designed sales aptitude tests are used for measuring special qualities required for a particular type of sales job of a company.

Tests of habitual characteristics : These tests gauge how the prospective employee would normally act in his daily work, i.e. when he is not at his best behaviour.

Attitude tests : Are more appropriate as morale measuring techniques.. They are used to ascertain employee's feelings towards working conditions, pay, advancement opportunities and like. Used as sales personnel selection device, they make limited contribution by identifying abnormal attitudes on general subjects.



Personality tests-- Success in selling depends mainly on the multitude of behaviour traits called personality. By adroitly asking many questions concerning what the test taker would do in certain situations, how he feels about certain things and what his attitudes are towards various occurrences, the test hopes to uncover specific personality traits. These tests attempt to identify and measure the traits like stability, tact and diplomacy, self-sufficiency, self-control, dominance, initiative, etc. The obvious difficulties in using these tests are first in stating precisely what aspects of personality *are* true job qualifications and then finding and designing tests which would measure these aspects correctly. These tests need to be administered and interpreted by skilled testers.

Interest tests: The basic assumption implicit in the use of interest tests is that a relationship exists between interest and motivation. Hence, if two persons have equal ability the one with greater interest in a particular job will be more successful salesman. Interest tests measure the extent to which one's interests are similar to those of successful people in a given occupation: Probably, a person who scores low on an interest test will not make a good salesman. These tests are relatively easy and inexpensive to administer.

Achievement tests : Provide an assessment of expertise, an applicant possesses in such areas as customer relations, marketing channels, product, etc. These tests seek to determine how much an individual has learned from his education, training and his knowledge about certain subjects.

Evaluation of Psychological 'bests'

Tests to be used for selection of salesmen are evaluated on the basis of following criteria

- i) **Validity:** A test is valid if it actually measures what it is supposed to measure. Following are the three ways to check the validity of a test : (a) A test is given to the present salesforce and test score of successful salesmen is compared with the score of unsuccessful salesmen. If there is close correlation between the score and job performance, the test is a valid test. (b) A test is given to all the applicants, but the test scores are withheld from the persons matting the selection decision. After the new salesman have begun work, their performance is compared with their test scores. Again the degree of correlation will reveal the validity of test. ((: mother way to validate a test is through the use of control groups. One group of salesman is chooses by making, use of tests along with other tools in the selection process, v% hire a. control group is hired without the benefit of testing. The job performance of both the groups is compared ,after a period of time to determine the validity of test.
- ii) **Test reliability:** It refers to the consistency of test results. A test has reliability, if an individual gets approximately the same score on subsequent retesting in the same type of tests. Perfect reliability is given the maximum score of I . The tests having the reliability near one, are considered as reliable tests for use in selection process.

Reliability

Example:	Social intelligence test .45
	Numerical ability test .95
	Vocabulary test . 75

- iii) **Test objectivity:** If the scorer's opinion does not affect the test score, it is an objective test. For a good test, it is important to have high objectivity.
- iv) **Time effort and cost:** Of administering the tests must be compared with their benefits.

How the psychological tests should be used : Any test should be used only as an aid to judgement, and definitely should not be the deciding factor in determining who should be hired. It is a mistake to automatically accept or reject a given applicant on the basis of his test scores. They are a tool to assist the sales executive in selecting the right kind of salesmen, but they should not relied upon the exclusion of other tool. Test results may help in avoiding a serious error, but they must not make the selection decision for the manager. Sales executives need to recognise the fact that psychological testing, although capable of making a valuable contribution, is but one step in the selection system. The sales manager should not believe that the best score on a test means that the man is the best prospective employee. *All that can be said is that a man does or does not fall within a range and all those"*



who do fall within that range should be judged as being equally qualified for the job. Test results should be used to probe deeper into any questionable areas.

Activity 5

The sales manager of one of the leading business machines manufacturers claimed that he uses psychological tests in selecting salesmen. When asked about their nature, he replied, One test has a lot of words in it, which must be matched with some other words and another test has a lot of figuring that must be done. The third gives several numbers or letters in a row and asks the test taker to give the next number in the series." What are the tests that the company is using"?

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References

Names of references are sometimes requested on the application form by the company. As a selection tool, the basic purpose of the reference is to verify the facts such as the dates of employment, earnings, sales volume, absenteeism and the nature of the past selling job. The typical procedure is to check the references by personal visit, telephone or letter.

Physical Examination

Many sales jobs are very demanding physically and/or mentally. So, near the end of the selection process, some companies require a physical examination to eliminate the candidates who do not meet the minimum physical qualifications deemed necessary for the job.

Activity 6

Given some specific examples of how each of these following factors can influence a company's choice of selection tools for its salesforce:

- a) Calibre of the salespeople
- b) Nature of the job
- c) Financial condition of the company.

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9.8 CONCLUSION

Appropriate recruiting and selection policies and procedures, and their skilful execution, result in greater overall efficiency of sales department. A higher grade salesperson is produced, and the advantages of having such employees make an impressive list-better work quality, improved market coverage, superior customer relations and a lower ratio of selling expense to sales. Moreover, good selection fits the right person to the right job, thereby increasing job satisfaction and reducing the cost of personal turnover. In addition, training costs are reduced, other because those hired are more capable of absorbing training or because they require less formal training.

9.9 SUMMARY

The recruitment and selection of sales people constitute one of the primary responsibilities of sales management. After a thorough analysis of each sales job, the sales manager prepares a list of qualifications to be used in recruiting. Depending upon the type of job to be filled and company policy, the sales manager then seeks applicants through various sources-educational institutions, other departments within the company, employment agencies, advertising and even competing or non-competing firms. Managers must evaluate the pool of applicants in order to select the most promising candidates. The selection process involves the use of application forms, inter-interviews, references and psychological tests in order



to identify those persons meeting the job qualifications. The final step in the hiring programme requires that the sales manager decide which, if any, of the candidates should be offered selling positions.

9.10 KEY WORDS

Patterned interview: Also called guided interview, this method employs a list of prepared questions that the interviewer asks in order to obtain the required information.

Unstructured interview: Also called a non-directed interview, this method has no set format or plan. It involves a relaxed discussion in which the interviewee is encouraged to talk.

Semi-structured interview: Also called an outline interview, this interview format combines the characteristics of both structured and unstructured interviews.

Stress interviewing : An interview technique in which stress is placed on an applicant through interruption, criticism or silence.

Rating scales: A widely used sales evaluation method that uses specific desired traits, behaviour factors or performance criteria.

Psychological testing: Tests designed to measure a person's behaviour and to attempt to predict employment success.

Test validity: The authenticity of the test as a measure of behaviour.

Test reliability : The quality of the test related to consistency of test results.

9.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1). One sales executive claims he knows a good man when he sees one, and therefore, he does not like to be bothered by so-called scientific selection process. What can you offer to refute this claim? Would your answer be any different if you knew that the sales manager who made the statement had a low rate of turnover in his salesforce and was running a highly profitable operation.
- 2). "Careful selection is important, but not essential, in building an effective salesforce. Improper selection of sales people can be overcome by a good training programme, sound supervision and an excellent compensation programme." Do you agree? Discuss.
- 3). When selecting salesmen many companies have adopted a policy of hiring only experienced salesmen and preferably men who have had experience of selling similar or directly competitive products. What are the merits or demerits of such a system?
- 4). The following firms want to hire salesmen, and as recruiting sources, the executives are considering—other departments of the company, competitors salesmen and educational institutions. Evaluate each of these three as sources of salesmen for each company:
 - a. Manufacturer of paper and paper products
 - b. Manufacturer of office furniture and equipment
 - c. Manufacturer of breakfast cereal

9.12 FURTHER READINGS

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