

resst

EBOOK:

How to effectively  
recruit best-in-class  
SaaS sales talent.

It's often said that a company is only ever as good as its sales team.

The processes and services a company has are obviously integral, but the most important feature of success is being able to drive revenue quarter on quarter, and failure to do so is where most SaaS start ups fall down.

At Resst, we're used to seeing a huge demand for the positions needed to drive those revenues.

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# INTRODUCTION.

**If you're a Sales Director, VP Sales, CRO, CSO, COO or CCO, you'll know that the challenges you face are myriad.**

In the eBook, we will offer some guidance on the challenges and solutions you may encounter when recruiting and seeking out the best-in-class for positions such as:

- Business Development Representatives
- Account Executives
- Sales leadership teams  
(at Manager, Director, VP and C-Level)

At Resst, we seek out these roles, as well as helping organisations secure the right people in Pre-Sales, Customer Success, Marketing and Strategic Business Development.

There's a lot to be said on seeking out the root of challenges and then the solutions to these in recruitment. Here's our unravelling of what can be a persistent problem:



## IDENTIFYING THE PINCH POINTS SALES LEADERS FACE.

**In the world of Enterprise SaaS, we are used to a high-pressure working environment; ambitious targets and a working culture that sometimes leaves scant time available for operational challenges and recruitment is often one of these.**

Firstly, it's important to know what the challenges are. Setting out into the often competitive and cutthroat world of tech sales recruitment can often seem like a daunting task. Going in armed with the awareness of what it is that you need is often the first hurdle to overcome.

Early stage startups in tech often set out with little to no experience of what to expect, frequently picking up staff through existing connections and contacts garnered through experience at other major players in the industry or other startups that they have either worked at previously or have excellent connections to.

However after the first set of hires this strategy is often not scalable and future team growth means having to cherry pick the best talent in the market who are likely outside of their network.

For most SaaS companies, scaling fast and effectively is critical to success. Going into hypergrowth is only successful when we master the fine balancing act of growing the team fast, but ensuring the quality of talent being brought in is world class. In the world of SaaS, we all know that Sales and Commercial leaders need to hit the ground running – adding value from day one and doing what is needed to enable success. As scaling your team is a huge part of your role, getting the talent acquisition strategy for your team right to hire best-in-class talent time and time again is paramount.

Getting talent acquisition wrong not only impacts your company's growth targets, but impacts you personally and professionally. As an example, if you need ten Account Executives to hit your team quota, but you only have seven in the team and you are not able to find the right talent fast you will miss that target. Missing targets means losing commission. Additionally, ambitious SaaS companies are known to fire fast. So missing targets can mean losing personal earnings and even losing your job. With Tech companies lack of patience there is constant pressure to take performance to the next level. In short, being a sales leader is not easy.

## TEMPTING STAFF TO CHANGE LANES.

**There's a persistent challenge that as tech sales recruitment specialists, we see every day. Prising away top performers is difficult but necessary to scale your team with best-in-class talent.**

In this game, performance is everything and the rewards are many. Top performers can reap incredible rewards and those who consistently overperform find it hard to justify changing roles. If you are someone who constantly crushes your numbers, it is highly unlikely you are looking to move.

As an example, we see Enterprise Account Executives who might have an OTE of £200,000 but with overperformance and accessing accelerators are consistently doing £400,000 a year. This A Player level of performance is exactly what successful ambitious SaaS companies need – but asking those people to leave highly paid positions where they likely have pipeline is a core challenge.

Therefore, to get the very best, companies have to have a carefully-crafted, unique and exciting message to market. They also need to be able to get that message in front of the best-in-class talent – and inspire them to be interested. This remains a constant challenge and is one that professionals like us are able to help with, working out ways to get messages across that are both inspiring and effective at attracting talent. These are discerning individuals who know that they have skills that are in demand. The competition is fierce and the best sales leaders know this, hence the skyrocketing value of packages offered.

The point to remember here is that firms need a constant pipeline of talent at their disposal, otherwise they will miss out on the best talent or the best candidates will simply bypass them completely.

In order to scale fast, you need to ensure that your network is up to date and that your feelers are out for those seeking a new position. This is especially true if working for a hyper-growth pre-IPO start-up. Recruitment in tech therefore needs to be a constant, evolving process, not something that is struck up when needed from a stationary position.

It's also a matter of time management. Being realistic, the multitude of demands of a tech vendor on those who run it are stressful and change every day. There quite simply isn't enough time in the day to review bad CVs, to pre-screen OK profiles or interview below par candidates. The solution is to strategically build in a partner or a way of dealing with the constant and challenging task of recruitment. The time just isn't there for most vendors who should be more concerned with a working product, scaling and marketing.

## WHERE TO TURN?

**There's a very stark fact that many are willfully ignoring within tech, so we're here to say it. Some sales leaders simply do not know how to source the best candidates. The reasons are many, whether it is embedded old habits, an unawareness of the market or simply a reluctance to embrace the process.**

So what is the best way to find the best talent? Is it via advertising, headhunters or by leveraging your own network? There's a school of thought that says a holistic blend of all three is the most effective way to make your mark, but really the issue may actually lay within the quality.

On the following pages, we'll take a look at each as an example:



## Advertising

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### Pros:

- Can result in quick wins at low cost, but a higher chance of being a waste of time.
  - Most effective for 'low grade' roles – such as entry level positions.
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### Cons:

- You are in a sea of noise from other vendors and it is very difficult to tell a compelling and exciting story through an ad.
  - There is a high risk that you won't get the right candidates through and you could end up spending thousands in ad spend and even more spent on wasting your time reviewing wrong profiles.
  - Also, people who rely on adverts can easily get caught in the trap of hiring sub-standard talent because they were the best of the applications.
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## Headhunters

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There are many advantages to using headhunters and there are many ways in which you can unlock much more potential when seeking out the best talent.

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**A good headhunter would be able to offer:**

- Extensive Market Mapping
  - Access to an exclusive network of talent
  - A pro-active headhunting approach meaning you know that your employer brand is getting in front of the right people
  - End-to-end interview process management
  - Market insights
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**Done properly, this should mean that the results are:**

- Better talent acquisition
  - A reduced time-to-hire
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The market insight should enable you to make data-driven and insight-based hiring decisions. A good headhunter should have their ear close to the ground so can educate and consult with you based on what activity other industry thought leaders are engaged with.

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## Networking

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Networking has change over the past few years, but there is still mileage in the old agade of 'people buy from people'. The more people you know and that know you, the wider your circle of influence. There are obviously ways in which you can leverage your contacts and connections.

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### Some advantages are:

- It is always an easy port of call for vendors. In your contacts, who do you know who could be suitable for the job?
  - If you know them directly, or they come highly recommended by someone you know, this means a greater assurance of their quality. You already have a preconceived idea of their competencies and success.
  - It is often the cheapest and fastest way to recruit, providing you secure the right talent.
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### However you may find that:

- It isn't necessarily scalable for fast recruitment – once your favoured talent in your network is exhausted, you may well be left with either B-Player talent or have to spend a significant amount of time building your network further to seek out the right candidates with no guarantee of success.
  - You cannot be sure that there are not better options out there. In reality that person in your network could be distinctly middle of the road when compared to other candidates in the market that you simply haven't had contact with.
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## A Combination

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The key, however, is finding a way to combine all three effectively and finding the time to do so. The tech companies that survive and flourish are those which can spin out the idea of culture, grow effectively and by making sure they have all bases covered. Skimp on one and the others may topple.

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There is much talk of data these days. As a resource, it has been likened to gold. Using data that you have is one of the key ways to succeed in business of any kind but in tech, it can seem like a secret weapon. Too many companies sit on their own data or simply do not know how to use it and that is why there is a real deficit in awareness between firms.

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This lack of a data-driven approach to recruiting based on market research means that sales leaders have lengthy wish lists, but need support on benchmarking salaries, compensation plans such as commission structures, pension schemes, equity and RSUs. Data can also be used to understand which aligned and competitor companies are making moves such as expanding, hiring or firing. There are expensive options out there that will answer these questions, but for the most part, this information is something that Resst collects daily and often shares with clients to assist them in making data-driven recruiting decisions.

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## UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET MORE.

**As well as data, there is also an element that has to be lived or experienced to understand. For example, when dealing on an international scale as startups often do in tech, cultural norms can differ massively and really make an impact on your attractiveness as a company or career prospect.**

For example, did you know why the Pension Scheme you offer in Sweden is so important? When your Health Insurance policy in the US could be a showstopper for most candidates? Or how much equity you should offer a VP Sales when compared to other foundational employees?

Sales Leaders are typically very busy, and creating a top candidate experience takes time, so nobody would envy a startup heading into the cut and thrust of recruitment. Again, the idea of time rears its head. Consider not only the time it takes to source a candidate, but also to handle rejections, arrange interviews, provide feedback and all the other administration of recruitment on top of the daily grind that is tech entrepreneurship.

If this kind of task lands on a sales leader's lap this takes so much time away from them performing their core function, which should be creating and driving a winning sales team to ensure business success and continuation.

However, if you don't have a top candidate experience, then the risk of losing candidates is much higher and means you are wasting time on fruitless processes with drop-outs.



# NEED TO KNOW MORE?

If this short introduction to the sales recruitment sector in tech has sparked any questions or you simply want to know more, then get in touch with us at:

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