

The Car Sales Simulator®: Recruiting and screening job applicants

A new customer was waiting on the lot. Steve Wilson headed out to greet the man, a fortysomething who was checking out trucks. Steve learned that the customer was waiting for his wife to arrive. "She wants to look at SUVs. She thinks they're more practical," said the customer, who seemed unhappy with his wife's perspective.

After a lengthy conversation with the couple, followed by a test drive and negotiation session, the wife gleefully drove her brand new SUV off the lot. Steve set his laptop aside, slid out of bed and headed for the kitchen to grab a bite to eat before heading back to tackle a second customer.

Steve just applied for a sales job with a local car dealership. The realistic, customized "sales simulator" used by the company to assess applicants afforded him the opportunity to step into the shoes of an actual car sales rep and sell two cars. Not bad for a slacker in his night clothes. In the process, the local Ford dealer considering him for a job got a much more reliable idea about the candidate's skills and weaknesses than they could using traditional methods. The simulator provided them with a detailed, scientific analysis that tells them a great deal about what this candidate can actually do, as opposed to what he says he can do.



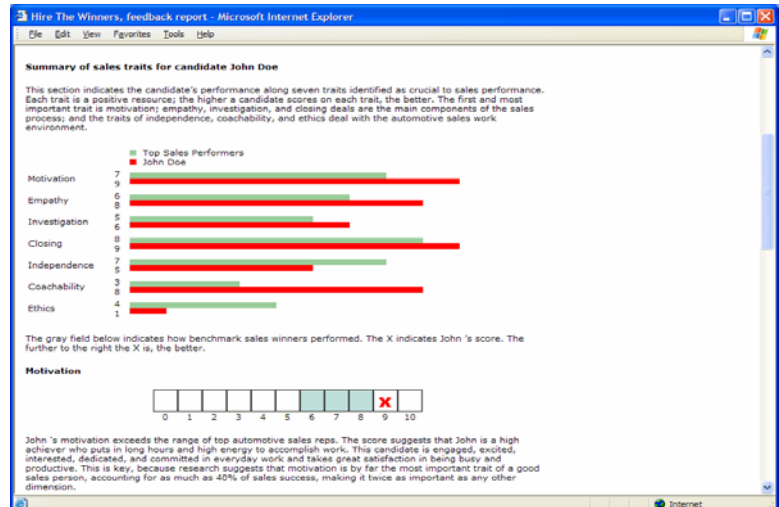
Simulations like the one described here are powerful new weapons in a looming talent war. Aptitude-simulations take applicants out to the floor, the lot or field and let them perform the specific sales and service tasks they will be hired for.

Recruiting and selecting the right people is one of the most important tasks facing any sales or service organization. All too often, the principal cause of poor performance is that the wrong people have been hired for the job. But as obvious as this seems, most companies still have ill-defined processes and woefully low standards for who they hire. They rely on chat-style interviews with a handful of candidates, a technique that's both time consuming and a poor predictor of eventual candidate performance. As a result, most sales and service staffs operate like revolving doors. In the automotive dealership sector alone, the average turnover rate for reps exceeds 45 percent per year. In the insurance industry is the figure is between 80 and 85 percent during the first five years, and in other corners of the retail world turnover can hit several hundred percent annually. Companies often assume this condition as a natural and necessary cost of doing business without ever exploring whether or not things can be changed.

Competing for talented front-line people requires that companies cast a wider net and set higher standards for hiring. Fortunately, new behavioral simulations have emerged in recent years that can both recruit more persuasively and select more accurately. Using video and computer-driven interactivity, these applications show the employer how a candidate can think on his or her feet and offer a preview of areas in which the future employee might need additional training or mentoring.

Hire the Winners, a business venture dedicated to improving the quality of recruitment, training, and performance of automotive sales professionals partnered with the Gronstedt Group to develop this revolutionary interactive online [Car Sales Simulator™](#), that Steve Wilson took. The dealer was impressed with Steve's results on the simulation and called him in for an interview, during which the employer asked probing questions about strengths and weaknesses of Steve's selling style based on a comprehensive report of Steve's simulation performance. The information from the interview and simulation gave the dealer

the information they needed to confidently offer Steve the job. Immediately after a candidate has completed the simulation, the dealer receives an overall score and a comprehensive and easy-to-understand report with that will red flag possible problem areas, show how the candidate compares to benchmark sales leaders, and suggest interview questions. It will score candidates on the seven criteria identified by top industry analysts as prime indicators of auto sales success, including motivation, closing skills, empathy and independence. With this report, they have critical information for making important hiring decisions, conducting more focused job interviews, or develop their staff.



The Car Sales Simulator™ isn't afraid to get in your face. The professionally scripted, directed, acted and produced video scenarios feature realistic sales situations, demanding customers and a grumpy sales manager. No traditional interview or aptitude test can give applicants such a vivid inside look into a profession. Many ill-suited applicants will decide to withdraw voluntarily from consideration once they see how wrong they are for the job. Non-traditional recruits like Wilson (who had never worked in the auto industry before) will be attracted to the job. Perhaps these factors help explain why the development and deployment of simulation-based recruiting and assessment tools, which are also effective applications for promotion decisions and development planning, is expanding rapidly.

Pre-employment simulations enable the sort of efficient, just-in-time hiring approach popular among high-performing corporations. One of the key conclusions of the McKinsey Corporation's report on "The War for Talent" is that "talent-winners also recruit continuously, rather than simply to fill openings. Best practice companies are always looking for great talent and bring it in whenever they find it." Simulations are always on and have the additional advantage of being convenient for the job applicants, as well. The applications help brand the company as a fast-forward, desirable employer, and word gets around quickly in today's wired world.

The talent war is heating up, and your competitors are seeking to out-compete you by attracting better talent, a key reason why companies are turning to the Gronstedt Group for recruitment simulations that promise to be the most potent weapon the market has seen in a long time.