

Selecting great sales managers

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I had the great privilege of running an Assessment Centre with a client recently. We've been working together for many months, but this was the first time we'd met face-to-face (*he was much taller than I expected*).

While meeting offline was a joy in itself, what really made the day for me was the energy and commitment brought by the candidates. On this occasion, they were all internal, looking to make the transition from individual contributors to player managers, a key career step for them. And implementing this new layer of management is critical for scaling up their very successful, high-growth business.

Because we've had such an in-depth engagement, we were able to create some immersive role plays using relevant data from their business that probed precisely the behaviours that we wanted to understand - in this case, emotional intelligence and coaching skills. We combined this with classical group exercises, presentations, competency-based interviews and reasoning tests - although we came up with a new twist on the presentation exercise that made it more fruitful (*no, it wasn't the 30/60/90 day plan*).

Underpinning the whole day was a defined competency framework, which not only enabled us to design and assess the exercises but will also form the basis of the individual development plans for each participant. So, a big thank you to my colleagues Jason Walkingshaw (*our competency framework guru*) and Emile Hall and Emma Prunier (*who played the role of miserable and failing salespeople with a vivid brilliance that brought a tear to my eye*).

One of the things that gives me great pleasure to be working at SBR Consulting is our commitment to deliver value to clients by working from strategy right through to execution. We're not just here to admire the problem (*"Your span of control is too broad."*) or scatter some advice around (*"You should think about installing a regional sales management layer."*). We get right into the trenches with our clients. Here, that looked like creating the competency framework, helping draft the job description, working out sales comp plan options, and then designing and running the Assessment Centre.

And we'll be there for the next phase too - fleshing out the development plans, making sure there are metrics for each competency, showing how each individual can get from Foundational Capability to Mastery and running bespoke training to give the whole team a common language and process to coach and support their individual sales contributors. Beyond that, there may be some dedicated support to help set up their Inside Sales Team, something to help onboard new salespeople more quickly and get them up the ramp, perhaps a Sales Playbook, some work on methodology ...

We'll see. **Whatever we do, I know we'll bring the same commitment to concrete delivery and business impact that is part of the SBR Consulting DNA.**

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