



The Ultimate Guide How to break into Tech Sales

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The Ultimate Guide How to break into Tech Sales

This white paper gives job seekers the lowdown on how to get into tech sales. It gives a step-by-step plan to help candidates do well in interviews by covering all the important parts, like answering typical questions and doing role-play activities. It also helps candidates create a great CV and find companies that match their personal values and professional goals.

It's full of useful tips and advice from experts. This guide will help you feel confident and know what to do in tech sales interviews. It's great for anyone, whether they're just starting out or thinking about a career change.

Why this guide:

Tech sales offers one of the lowest barriers to entry in tech. But the quality of your first role makes all the difference. It determines what habits you form, what playbooks you learn and ultimately, how fast you grow.

1. Introduction

The high demand for tech sales professionals in the SaaS and broader technology industries highlights the importance of structured interview preparation. Success in tech sales interviews hinges on showcasing a robust grasp of sales methodologies and the sales cycle, as well as a proactive approach to navigating challenging scenarios.

Goals of this Guide:

- Give job seekers the tools they need to thrive in tech sales interviews.
- We'll share insights into common interview scenarios and proven techniques for handling them effectively.
- Help candidates match their personal goals with opportunities that will help them grow in their careers over time.



2. Where to Start and Which Positions Should You Apply For

Breaking into tech sales often begins with entry-level positions such as Sales Development Representative (SDR) or Business Development Representative (BDR). These roles are designed to be stepping stones into the world of tech sales and are ideal for building the foundational skills needed to succeed in the industry.

As an SDR or BDR, your primary focus will be on prospecting and qualifying potential customers. This means identifying businesses that could benefit from your company's product or service, reaching out to decision-makers, and setting up appointments or demonstrations for senior sales team members (=Account Executives). These roles are excellent for learning how to effectively communicate, handle objections, and develop a strong understanding of your company's offerings.

The great thing about starting as an SDR or BDR is that you don't necessarily need prior sales experience to get your foot in the door. Companies often look for candidates with strong interpersonal skills, a team-oriented mindset, and a willingness to learn. Many organizations provide training programs to help new sales reps develop the knowledge and tools they need to thrive.

This starting point is widely recognized as the best path into tech sales, allowing you to learn the inner workings of the sales process, gain confidence in professional interactions, and position yourself for growth into more advanced roles like Account Executive or Sales Manager down the line.

3. The Right Mindset for breaking into Tech Sales

When you're getting started in tech sales and applying for positions, it's really important to have the right mindset. These roles are competitive, and finding the right position can take persistence, patience, and resilience. It's important to remember that rejection is just part of the process, and it doesn't reflect your potential or worth. Every application, interview, or outreach opportunity is another step closer to your goal and a chance to sharpen your skills.

A lot of sales pros will tell you that it can take over 100 applications to get that one perfect job. This number might seem overwhelming, but it's a sign to stay focused on the process and keep moving forward. Take each setback as a chance to learn, tweak your approach when needed, and keep showing potential employers your passion and value.

The most important thing is to stay positive and keep your eyes on the prize. That'll help you stay motivated and enthusiastic, which is key to success. Keep in mind that each 'no' you hear gets you one step closer to the 'yes' that will launch your tech sales career. If you're diligent, determined, and have the right attitude, you'll find the perfect fit. Keep going, you can do it!



4. Mastering Interview Questions in Tech Sales

Once you land your first interview, it'll be your chance to show a potential employer what you've got — your skills, experience, and passion. Preparation is key to making a strong impression and standing out as the ideal candidate for the role. This chapter will help you succeed by guiding you through the key areas to focus on and giving you some thoughtful questions to think about. If you go into your interview with confidence and do your homework, you'll be able to show them why you're a great fit and make a good impression on the people in charge. Let's get started on setting you up for interview success!

4.1. Behavioral Interview Questions for Tech Sales

Behavioral interview questions are designed to assess how you've handled situations in the past as an indicator of how you'll perform in the future. They're usually open-ended and ask about how you react, make decisions, and solve problems in real-life situations.

Here are some example questions:

- "Tell me about a time you solved a difficult problem."
- "Can you describe a moment when you had to deal with a challenging customer or colleague?"
- "Give me an example of how you achieved a significant goal under pressure."

In tech sales, these questions are especially important. Why? You'll be successful in this field if you're a good communicator, can adapt to change, and can work well with teams and customers. Even if you're new to tech sales, you can still bring experiences from other industries or roles that show you're a great fit for the field.

A Simple Framework to Answer Behavioral Questions

If you're not familiar with behavioral interview questions, the **STAR Method** is your best friend. **STAR** is an acronym for **Situation**, **Task**, **Action**, and **Result**. It's a proven structure that makes sure your responses are concise and impactful.

Here's how it works:

1. **Situation** = What was the context?
2. **Task** = What was your responsibility or objective?
3. **Action** = What did you do to address the task? (Be specific about what *you* did, not what the team or company did)
4. **Result** = What was the outcome? (Ideally measurable, e.g., increased sales by 25%, exceeded a target by \$10,000).

Example STAR Answer for Tech Sales

Question: "Tell me about a time you had to handle an objection or a skeptical customer."

- **Situation:** While working in retail, I often spoke with customers unsure about buying our higher-end products.
- **Task:** One customer came in looking for a blender but hesitated because ours cost more than the competition.
- **Action:** I asked about what mattered most to them - durability, warranty, features - and showed how our model outperformed others. I even offered an in-store demo so they could try it themselves.
- **Result:** They bought the blender and later left a glowing review. My manager praised the sale as a great example of value-based selling.

Even if you've never worked in tech sales, examples like this from other roles show dedication to *listening, solving problems, and closing a deal*, all characteristics of a successful sales rep.

Common Behavioral Interview Questions (and How to Answer Them)

1. "Tell me about a time you worked under pressure to meet a strict deadline."

Why it matters: Sales = deadlines, targets, pressure. Can you handle it?

How to answer: Pick a moment where you had to stay calm, solve problems, and deliver, even outside of sales.

Example Response:

"During a busy holiday weekend, I was the shift manager at a restaurant and two team members called in sick. I reassigned tasks, helped out where needed, and kept communication clear. Despite the pressure, we stayed on track and served all guests on time. At the end of the night, my manager thanked me for how I handled the situation."

2. "Describe a time you exceeded a goal or expectation."

Why it matters: In tech sales, hitting your target is the basic requirement. They're looking for signs of ambition and a drive to outperform.

How to answer: Think of a moment where you went beyond what was expected, whether that meant improving a process, driving more revenue, or taking initiative without being asked. Tangible impact beats generic praise.

Example Response:

"While working part-time as a barista, I noticed that our loyalty program had very little traction during slow hours. I suggested offering double points in the afternoons, created signs to promote it, and mentioned it to customers during checkout. Over the next 3 months, usage went up by 30%, and we saw noticeably more repeat customers in that time slot."

3. "Give me an example of a time you pivoted your strategy when something wasn't working."

Why it matters: In sales, things rarely go exactly as planned. They want to know if you can adjust your approach, without losing momentum.

How to answer: Choose a moment where your first idea didn't land. Show how you responded, with feedback, creativity, and a solution mindset. Bonus points if you can show that the result was even better in the end.

Example Response:

"During a freelance design project, my first logo drafts completely missed the mark. Instead of pushing my ideas, I asked the customer for detailed feedback and took time to understand their brand better. I reworked the designs from scratch and the final version ended up being their favorite. They even used it as the basis for their entire rebrand."

4. "Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult team member or customer."

Why it matters: In sales, relationships matter, with customers and with colleagues. They want to see if you can address issues without drama, and keep things moving forward.

How to answer: Pick a situation where expectations were misaligned or communication was tough. Show how you stayed calm, listened, and worked toward a solution, without letting it affect the bigger goal.

Example Response:

"During a university group project, one teammate kept missing deadlines, and the rest of the team was frustrated. I spoke with them privately to understand the issue and found out they were dealing with a personal situation at home. I suggested adjusting the task distribution to focus on their strengths and kept closer coordination for the rest of the project. As a result, they became more engaged, and we completed the project on time with a much better team dynamic."

Pro Tips for Tackling Behavioral Questions

1. Practice Your STAR Stories

Before the interview, think of 3–5 examples you can use, ideally showing different strengths like problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, or resilience. Write them out and practice saying them out loud.

2. Tie Everything Back to Tech Sales

Even if your examples aren't directly related, connect them to sales skills like communication, persuasion, goal-setting, and handling objections.

3. Be Honest About Your Experience

It's okay to admit you're new to tech sales, just focus on transferable skills and demonstrate a willingness to learn.

4. Ask something back

After answering, you can add: "Does that align with how your team approaches these kinds of situations?" It shows curiosity and a collaborative attitude.

4.2. Motivation and Resilience Questions

In tech sales, what drives you and how you handle tough days, matters more than a perfect CV.

- **Motivation** is about your internal engine. What keeps you showing up, even when things get hard?
- **Resilience** is about how you bounce back from setbacks and whether you stay focused when the pipeline is empty and the rejections pile up.

Tech sales can be a rollercoaster. Hiring managers want to know:

- What fuels you?
- How do you stay grounded when things don't go your way?
- Do you have the mindset to survive and grow in a target-driven environment?

These questions aren't about being perfect, they're about showing who you are when it's not easy.

Common Motivation and Resilience Interview Questions

These questions help interviewers understand what drives you and whether your mindset fits the sales world.

Motivation Questions

1. **"Why are you interested in tech sales?"**
 - 💡 *What they're looking for:* Genuine enthusiasm for Tech, problem-solving mindset, understanding of the industry.
 - **Strong answer:** "I love solving problems and working with people and tech sales combines both. It's fast-paced, goal-driven, and constantly evolving. I'm excited by the chance to learn new technologies while helping businesses grow."
2. **"What motivates you to succeed in sales?"**
 - 💡 *What they're looking for:* Personal drivers, financial, personal growth, competition, or impact.
 - **Strong answer:** "I'm motivated by tangible results, hitting targets, closing deals, and seeing the direct impact of my work. But more than that, I find it deeply rewarding to win client trust and deliver a solution that actually solves a real problem. In sales, every 'no' teaches you something. Every conversation sharpens your skills. That constant feedback loop is what keeps me energized and moving forward."
3. **"Where do you see yourself in five years?"**
 - 💡 *What they're looking for:* Ambition and long-term alignment with a sales career path.
 - **Strong answer:** "I want to become a top-performing AE and eventually move into a leadership role. I enjoy coaching others and would love to help newer reps ramp faster while continuing to grow revenue myself."

4. **"What excites you most about this company/product?"**
- 💡 *What they're looking for:* Knowledge about the company and enthusiasm for its mission or offerings.
 - **Strong answer:** "I really like how your product tackles [X pain point]. Helping companies solve that challenge at scale sounds incredibly rewarding and I'd be excited to be part of that mission."

Resilience Questions

Rejection, pressure, losing deals, it's part of the game. These questions show how you deal with setbacks and whether you keep going when things get tough.

1. **"Tell me about a time you failed and how you handled it."**
- 💡 *What they're looking for:* Self-awareness, accountability, growth mindset, emotional maturity.
 - **Strong answer:** "During my internship, I missed a deadline on a key project because I underestimated how long the research would take. I owned the mistake, stayed late to fix it, and adjusted how I planned future tasks. Since then, I've consistently delivered ahead of schedule and I'm better at flagging risks early."
2. **"How do you stay motivated after hearing a series of rejections?"**
- 💡 *What they're looking for:* Emotional resilience and mindset.
 - **Strong answer:** "Rejection is part of sales, I don't take it personally. I try to treat every 'no' as data. What didn't land? What can I do differently? I also celebrate small wins along the way, even getting a reply can be progress. That helps me stay positive and keep pushing."
3. **"Can you describe a situation where you had to push through a challenging goal?"**
- 💡 *What they're looking for:* Grit, ownership, and consistency under pressure.
 - **Strong answer:** "While studying full-time, I also worked part-time in retail and had to hit weekly sales targets. It was hard at first, but I built a routine, learned to prioritize, and started consistently beating my goals. That experience taught me how much structure helps when things get tough."
4. **"How do you handle criticism or feedback?"**
- 💡 *What they're looking for:* Coachability and maturity.
 - **Strong answer:** "I see feedback as a shortcut to growth. In a previous role, my manager told me I was talking too much during customer interactions. I reflected on it, adjusted my approach, and focused more on listening. It changed how I communicated and made my conversations more productive."

How to Prepare for Motivation and Resilience Questions

Here's how to show you've got what it takes, even if you haven't worked in sales yet:

1. Look for proof in your own story

Think back to a time when things didn't go your way, but you kept showing up. That's resilience. It could be from a job, school, or even your personal life.

2. Tailor your answers to the company

Know what the company does, what they care about, and what their customers need. Your answers should show that you're not just "motivated", you're motivated to succeed *with* them.

3. Use structure to stay sharp

Don't ramble. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to tell clear, focused stories that show how you think and act.

4. Be honest, but end on strength

Companies value emotional intelligence. Be honest about mistakes and setbacks you've faced, but always emphasize what you learned and how you grew.

4.3. Scenario-Based Problem-Solving Questions

Scenario-based interview questions ask you to solve a hypothetical, but realistic sales challenge. You're given a situation and asked how you'd respond — often with limited context.

Unlike behavioral questions (which focus on past experiences) or motivation questions (which explore your drive), these questions test:

- **Critical thinking:** Can you weigh options and make sound decisions?
- **Sales mindset:** Do you understand key concepts like qualification, objections, or deal stages?
- **Communication and persuasion skills:** Can you explain your thought process clearly and persuasively?

For aspiring tech sales professionals, these questions are important, they show whether you can think like a rep, even if you're not one yet.

How to Answer Scenario-Based Questions Like a Pro

You're given a challenge. It's hypothetical, but it needs a real answer. And no, you don't need to solve it perfectly.

What they're really testing:

- How structured you think
- How you deal with ambiguity
- Whether you sound like someone they'd trust in front of a customer

Here's how to approach it:

1. Take a breath and assess the situation

Before jumping into an answer, take a moment to clarify the scenario. What's the actual goal? What information is missing? Are there any constraints, like timeline, budget, or internal blockers?

This shows you're thoughtful and structured, not someone who just reacts.

2. Break down your approach step by step

Don't throw out random ideas. Instead, outline how you'd move through the situation:

- What would you do first, and why?
- What would you look for, ask, or try?
- How would you follow up if the first approach doesn't work?

Even if you've never been in that exact situation, this shows critical thinking and initiative.

3. Show confidence and curiosity

You're not expected to know everything. If there's a gap, say something like:

"I'd want to check with my manager or look into past deals to be sure, but based on what I know today, here's how I'd approach it..."

That kind of answer shows coachability and self-awareness, both highly valued in tech sales.

4. Familiarize yourself with common sales problems

The best prep is to think ahead about real challenges you might face:

- Budget objections
- Unresponsive stakeholders
- Long sales cycles
- Competitor comparisons

The more familiar you are with these, the more natural and confident your answers will sound in the interview.

Examples of Scenario-Based Problem-Solving Questions in Tech Sales

Here are some realistic examples you'll likely encounter, along with tips to help you answer them.

1. The Budget-Cautious Customer

Question: A potential customer shows interest in your product but says it's too expensive. What do you do?

What they're testing: Can you stay calm under pressure, uncover real needs, and reframe value, without getting defensive or immediately offering discounts?

How to answer it: Start by showing empathy, then shift the focus from cost to value.

Action Plan:

1. Acknowledge their concern: *"I completely understand that budget is a real consideration."*
2. Ask clarifying questions: *"Can I ask what your team is currently spending on [problem area]?" or "Which outcomes would justify the investment for you?"*
3. Reframe value: Highlight how your solution solves a costly problem, saves time, or reduces risk
4. If possible, offer flexible options such as different payment plans, scalable packages, or phased rollouts.

What to Demonstrate: Active listening, commercial empathy, and the ability to connect your product to business outcomes, not just features.

2. The Long Sales Cycle

Question: A prospect showed interest during your outreach, but since then, nothing. Their team is busy, and momentum is fading. What do you do?

What they're testing: Can you handle silence without becoming pushy? Can you stay relevant, build trust, and keep the deal alive?

How to Answer: Show that you understand timing and that you're playing the long game without disappearing.

Action Plan:

1. Thank them for their time so far and ask openly: *"When would be a good time to revisit this?"*
2. Stay top of mind by adding value: send them a relevant case study, an industry report, or a short video tailored to their use case.
3. Keep it light, human, and helpful, not spammy. Show that you're still thinking about their goals, even if they're not ready now

What to Demonstrate: Consistency, patience, and the ability to build a relationship over time, not just chase deals that are ready now.

3. The Competitive Bid

Question: A prospect is evaluating your product, but they're also looking at three others. How do you respond?

What they're testing: Can you stay consultative under pressure? Do you understand your differentiators? Can you sell without trash-talking?

How to Answer: Use a consultative approach to showcase why (and how) your product meets their unique needs better than competitors.

Action Plan:

1. Ask what criteria they'll use to decide: *"What's most important to your team - speed, support, flexibility, ROI?"*
2. Highlight your strengths where it matters most to them. Don't try to win on every point, win on the ones that count.
3. Share a story: *"Another company in a similar situation chose us because..."* Stories build confidence more than claims.

What to Demonstrate: Confidence, clarity, and the ability to tailor your pitch, not just recite a feature list.

4. The Reluctant Decision-Maker

Question: You've presented a strong pitch to a decision-maker, but they're hesitant to commit. What do you do?

What they're testing: Can you uncover what's *really* holding them back? Can you stay calm, curious, and constructive when the deal stalls?

How to Answer: Don't push. Diagnose. Often the hesitation isn't about the product, it's about something unspoken: risk, timing, internal politics.

Action Plan:

1. Ask directly (but respectfully): *"What's giving you pause at this point?"*
2. Listen carefully: is it budget? Timing? Internal buy-in?
3. Provide a tailored solution: a custom demo, a success story, or a short-term pilot.
4. Express a strong willingness to partner with them to ensure a smooth implementation.

What to Demonstrate: Emotional intelligence, objection-handling, and your ability to guide someone through uncertainty, without pressure.

Tips for Preparing for Scenario-Based Tech Sales Interviews

If you're coming in without direct sales experience, preparation is your biggest edge. Here's how to build real confidence before the interview:

- **Practice Out Loud:** Go beyond reading. Say your answers out loud, alone or with a friend. Focus on being clear, structured, and conversational. It's not just what you say, it's how you sound.
- **Understand Tech Sales Fundamentals:** Research sales strategies, SaaS product lifecycles, and customer pain points.
- **Role-Play Scenarios:** Ask someone to challenge you with questions from this guide. Practice thinking on your feet. The more you rehearse now, the calmer you'll be later.

These steps don't just prepare you for the interview, they'll give you a head start once you're in the role.

4.4. Sales Process & Strategy Questions

Sales drives revenue. And without a structured process, even the best reps lose deals. That's why interviewers ask about your understanding of how sales actually works.

What they're looking for:

- Do you understand the core stages of a sales process?
- Can you think strategically about how to move a deal forward?
- Do you know common frameworks (like MEDDIC), or at least show the mindset to learn them?

Even if you don't have hands-on experience yet, you can still show strong fundamentals.

Common Sales Process & Strategy Interview Questions

1. "Can you walk me through the typical stages of a sales process?"

💡 *Why they ask:* This is a foundational question, they want to know if you understand how a deal moves from lead to close.

How to answer it: If you haven't done it yet, show what you've learned through research, roleplays, or coursework. Be clear, be structured, and show that you know *why* each step matters.

Strong Sample Answer:

"From what I've learned, the sales process usually includes six core stages:

1. **Prospecting:** identifying potential customers and key decision-makers.
 2. **Qualification:** figuring out if the lead is a good fit and worth pursuing.
 3. **Discovery & Needs Analysis:** digging into the customer's current situation, pain, goals, and what success would look like.
 4. **Demonstrate Value:** using tailored demos, case studies, or business value calculations to connect their needs to your solution.
 5. **Propose & Negotiate:** sharing a customized offer, managing objections, and aligning on terms.
 6. **Finalize:** Finalizing the agreement and setting up the next steps for a smooth handoff.
-

2. "How would you prioritize leads in your sales pipeline?"

💡 *Why they ask:* Sales is about focus. They want to see if you can tell the difference between a warm lead and a waste of time and act accordingly.

How to answer it: Show that you don't treat all leads equally. Use structure, but sound human. Tie it to real decision factors such as timing, need, and fit.

Strong sample answer:

"I'd start by qualifying leads based on a few key factors: urgency, fit, and buying potential. If a prospect has a clear pain point, a short timeline, and decision-makers involved early, that's top priority.

I'd use frameworks like BANT or MEDDIC to organize my thinking, but I'd also look at signals from past deals: Who tends to convert fastest? What kind of intent data matters most?

On top of that, I'd align with marketing or CS to understand who's really engaged and where I might need to warm things up before investing more time."

3. "What metrics would you track during the sales process and why?"

💡 *Why they ask:* Great reps don't just work hard, they track what's working. This question checks if you understand how to spot patterns, fix drop-offs, and improve over time.

How to answer it:

Name 2–3 key metrics and explain *why* they matter. Focus on visibility and improvement: where deals get stuck, how long things take, and whether the effort matches the return.

If you're new to sales, show curiosity and a willingness to work data-driven.

Strong sample answer:

"I'd focus on a few core metrics:

- **Conversion rates between stages:** to spot where deals are stalling and improve my messaging or qualification.
- **Average sales cycle:** to see how long it takes to close and where I can speed things up.
- **Average deal size:** to make sure I'm targeting the right segments and not chasing low-impact opportunities.

I might not have sales experience yet, but I'm someone who always looks at the data. I'd want to use these insights not just for performance, but to run a smarter, more focused pipeline."

4. "How do you handle long sales cycles?"

💡 *Why they ask:* In tech sales, big deals take time. They want to know if you have the discipline and mindset to stay engaged without losing momentum, or the deal.

How to answer it:

Show that you're structured, patient, and proactive. Talk about how you'd manage touchpoints, keep value high, and avoid going cold. If you don't have direct experience, draw on longer-term projects or relationship-building elsewhere.

Strong sample answer:

"In a long sales cycle, staying relevant and consistent is everything. I'd use a CRM to plan meaningful follow-ups, not just check-ins, but touchpoints that add value. That could be a case study, a product update, or a trend they care about.

I'd also keep detailed notes so I don't have to re-learn the context every time. And if the deal stalls, I'd step back and reassess: What's the blocker? Who needs to be involved?

While I haven't worked a sales cycle over multiple months yet, I've managed long projects in other roles, and I know how important it is to stay organized, curious, and respectful of the buyer's pace."

5. "How would you handle an unresponsive prospect?"

💡 *Why they ask:* In sales, ghosting happens. What matters is how you respond, with tact, not spam. They want to see if you can stay persistent *and* relevant.

How to answer it:

Talk about channel-switching, message personalization, and your strategy for re-engagement. Avoid "just checking in" energy, show intent and value.

Strong sample answer:

"If a prospect goes dark, I'd first try a different channel, maybe LinkedIn or a short voicemail if email isn't landing. Then I'd revisit my last touch: did I focus on *their* priorities?"

I'd reframe my next message around something specific: a recent case study in their industry, a new feature that solves a pain point they mentioned, or a shift in market trends they might care about.

If I still don't hear back, I'd space out my follow-ups but stay visible, maybe through LinkedIn content or light check-ins later. Sometimes timing is the issue, not interest"

How to Stand Out - Even Without Experience

Breaking into tech sales without direct experience can feel like a stretch. But here's the truth: **no one's born a rep** and what matters most is how you show up.

Here's how to stand out:

- **Do Your Research:** Familiarize yourself with common sales frameworks like MEDDIC, SPIN, or Challenger. You don't need to be an expert, just show that you've taken the time to understand how top reps think.
- **Practice Mock Answers:** Use the STAR method to structure your answers, but don't sound robotic. Rehearse them like real conversations. Clarity beats perfection.
- **Leverage Transferable Wins:** Think customer service, group projects, side hustles, data work - anything where you've solved problems, built trust, or delivered under pressure. That's already sales.
- **Ask smart Questions:** Close the interview strong: ask how their sales team operates, what tools they use, how deals typically move. Curiosity is a signal. Use it.



5. Asking the Right Interview Questions as a Candidate

Asking smart questions in an interview isn't just a "nice-to-have", it's essential.

Yes, it shows that you've done your homework. Yes, it makes you look sharp. But more importantly: **it protects you.**

Not every company deserves your time. Some teams run on chaos. Some leaders treat reps like replaceable cogs. Some roles have no clear territory, support, or growth path.

This is your chance to qualify *them*.

You're not just trying to land a job, you're trying to build a career. So your questions should help you figure out:

- How is success defined here?
- Will I be supported, or left alone to figure it out?
- Is this a place where I can grow, or just grind?

If you ask the right things, you won't just impress them. You'll avoid walking into the wrong room.

Let's look at what to ask, and what the answers really tell you.

Essential Questions Every Tech Sales Candidate Should Ask

1. How many sales reps on your team consistently hit their quota?

Why this matters:

This question gives you real insight into the company's sales environment. If **50–60% of reps hit quota**, that's a **good sign**: goals are realistic, the team is well-managed, and reps have the tools to succeed.

If fewer than 30% make quota, it could point to deeper issues, broken processes, unrealistic targets, or lack of support.

Follow-up question:

- "What percentage of your reps hit at least 80% of their quota?" (A figure around 80% suggests a healthy, performance-driven culture, without being cutthroat)

What this tells you:

- How realistic the company's goals are.
- Whether the team operates in a supportive or overly pressured environment.

Pro tip: You can often find independent data on this via RepVue, it's like Glassdoor, but specifically for sales teams.

2. How do sales reps typically grow in this role?

Why this matters:

Career development matters, especially if this is your first step into tech sales. Asking about growth shows you're thinking long-term and want to invest in your development.

Follow-up questions:

- "Can you share examples of reps who've been promoted from this team?"
- "Do you offer mentorship or access to training for skill development?"

What this tells you:

- Whether the company invests in its people, or expects reps to figure it out alone
- How clear and structured the internal growth paths are
- Whether you'll have opportunities to move up or eventually move on

Pro tip: Check the LinkedIn profiles of current and former reps. If you see frequent promotions within 12-24 months, that's a good sign. If most leave after a year, that's a data point too.

3. Can you describe the traits that make your top-performing sales reps successful?

Why this matters:

This gives you insight into what really drives performance on the team, beyond quotas and dashboards. It helps you spot what the company *actually* values: process? hustle? curiosity? coachability?

Follow-up questions:

- "Are these traits qualities the team looks for during the hiring process, or are they developed over time?"
- "What kind of support do top-performing reps receive from leadership?"

What this tells you:

- What success really looks like on the team
- Whether your strengths align with their expectations
- If the culture rewards growth and coaching, or just output

4. What tools and resources does the sales team use to support daily operations?

Why this matters:

Sales success isn't just about effort, it's about enablement. This question shows you care about working smart, not just hard. It also gives you a sense of how modern and supported the sales org really is.

What to listen for:

- CRM systems like Salesforce or HubSpot
- Outreach tools like Outreach, Salesloft, or Apollo
- Call recording/analysis tools like Gong or Chorus
- Internal tools: if they use proprietary systems, ask how onboarding and training are handled

What this tells you:

- Whether the company invests in modern sales infrastructure
- How efficiently you'll be able to work
- If they expect results without giving reps the right tools

5. What does onboarding look like for new sales reps?

Why this matters:

Every sales org runs differently and a solid onboarding process is one of the best indicators of long-term success. This question shows you're thinking ahead: How will I ramp? How will I learn the product? How fast do they expect me to contribute?

Follow-up questions:

- "What KPIs will I be expected to meet during my first 90 days?"
- "Is there shadowing or mentoring built into the onboarding phase?"

What this tells you:

- Whether the company sets new reps up for success, or throws them in the deep end
- How structured and realistic the early ramp expectations are
- If there's support in place to help you learn, not just perform

6. What challenges does your team face, and how are you working to address them?

Why this matters:

No sales org is perfect. This question shows you're realistic and focused on solving problems, not just closing deals. It also gives you insight into how transparent leadership is and how the team handles adversity.

Follow-up question:

- "What role do new hires typically play in improving processes?"

What this tells you:

- Whether the company is honest about what's not working
- How open they are to feedback and iteration
- If you'll have a voice, or just be expected to execute

7. Where do you see the company's tech sales team in three years?

Why this matters:

Tech evolves fast and so should a sales team. This question shows you're not just looking for a job, but for a role that grows with the company. It also gives you a sense of their strategic clarity (or missing direction).

Follow-up question:

- "How does the sales team contribute to achieving these goals?"

What this tells you:

- Whether the company has a long-term vision for revenue and sales
 - If they see sales as a core driver, or just an afterthought
 - Where you could fit in as the team (and product) scale
-

A Few Final Interview Tips

- **Do your homework:** Tailor your questions to the company and role. Dig into the job description, the website, LinkedIn updates, anything that helps you go beyond the obvious.
- **Pick your priorities:** You won't have time to ask everything. Choose the 2–3 questions that matter most to *you*, the ones that help you decide if this is the right fit.
- **Listen closely:** Some of the best questions come from the conversation itself. Stay sharp, adapt, and show that you're not reading from a script.

Asking smart questions isn't just about impressing the interviewer.

It's how you protect your time, your energy, and your future.

Success in tech sales starts with choosing the right team and that starts with asking the right things.



6. Interview Role Play Scenarios

Knowing the product is one thing. But in a tech sales interview, it's not enough. You have to **prove** you can sell, live, under pressure, in front of someone who's judging every word.

That's where role play comes in.

These exercises are designed to simulate real customer interactions. You might be asked to cold call the interviewer, pitch a product, or handle objections on the fly. It's not about perfection. It's about presence, thinking on your feet, and showing you know how to create trust and move a conversation forward.

And yes, role plays can be intimidating. Even top reps mess them up. But the good news?

You can prepare. Sharply. Strategically. Intelligently.

This section will show you:

- What kinds of role plays you might face
- What interviewers are *really* looking for
- How to structure your approach
- And how to stand out — even if you're new to sales

Let's get you ready.

6.1. Mastering the Art of Handling an Inbound Call in a Tech Sales Interview

Handling an inbound sales call successfully is one of the foundational skills a tech sales professional needs to master. It's not only about qualifying leads but also demonstrating your ability to connect, build trust, and set the stage for the next steps - something every hiring manager in a tech sales interview will look for.

If you're stepping into a tech sales interview and feeling unsure about how to approach this scenario, don't worry. This guide will walk you through the essential strategies that can help you shine.

Why Handling an Inbound Call Matters

Inbound calls are gold: someone's already interested, your job is to qualify, guide, and move the deal forward.

When this shows up in a role play, the interviewer wants to see if you can:

- Ask smart, natural questions
- Think strategically while keeping the conversation fluid
- Handle objections with confidence
- Secure a clear next step

It's one of the clearest windows into how you'll perform in real-world sales. Let's break it down.

Use BANT to Qualify (Without Sounding Like a Robot)

One of the most effective ways to qualify a lead on an inbound call is by using the **BANT methodology**. BANT stands for **Budget, Authority, Need, and Timeline**, and it helps you determine the readiness of a potential customer to move forward. Here's how you can apply it:

1. Budget

Ask questions to understand whether the lead has the resources to invest. Keep your tone curious, not confrontational, to avoid making it sound like a barrier:

- "What budget have you set aside to solve this issue?"
- "Is your team open to exploring premium solutions if they align well with your needs?"

Avoid directly asking, "Do you have enough money for this?" It can sound off-putting and derail the conversation early on.

2. Authority

Determine whether the person you're speaking to has decision-making power or, at the very least, influence:

- "Who else is involved in the decision-making process for solutions like this?"
- "Do you typically approve purchases of this nature, or is there someone else we should bring into the conversation?"

This ensures you direct your efforts effectively and don't end up chasing someone who can't take the deal forward.

3. Need

Identify the problem they're seeking to solve and how urgent it is:

- "Can you tell me what prompted you to explore solutions like ours?"
- "What's the biggest challenge you're hoping to address with our product?"

Ask open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses, helping you better understand their requirements and pain points.

4. Timeline

Establish whether there's urgency to move forward or if this is a long-term consideration:

- "When are you hoping to implement a solution?"
- "Do you have any upcoming deadlines we should align with?"

These questions help determine how soon this lead could convert into a paying customer.

Keep the Conversation Engaging, Not an Interrogation

While the BANT framework is invaluable, it's equally important to ensure the conversation feels natural and engaging. The key is to **ask open-ended questions** and **listen actively**. Here are a few tips to master this balance:

- **Start with a friendly tone.** Build rapport quickly by showing genuine interest in their goals or challenges. For example, "I appreciate you taking the time today! I'd love to hear more about what brought you to us."
- **Follow up on their responses.** Active listening is critical. If they mention a specific challenge, dig a little deeper with follow-up questions like, "That sounds frustrating. How has that been impacting your team's productivity?"
- **Avoid rapid-fire questioning.** Space out your questions and weave in conversational statements to keep things flowing. For example, "That makes sense. A lot of companies I've worked with have faced similar challenges, they often find that [solution benefit] works well for them."

Remember, the goal isn't to check all the BANT boxes as quickly as possible. It's to have a meaningful conversation that provides insight into their needs and builds trust.

Handle Objections with Confidence

A good sales professional anticipates objections and every sales interview will test your ability to handle them gracefully. Here's how to address two common challenges you might face on the call:

1. The "Just Send Me Information" Objection

Sometimes, the person on the other end may push you to simply send over materials or a PDF instead of agreeing to a follow-up meeting. Here's how to respond effectively:

- Acknowledge their request politely, then highlight the value of a conversation. For example: "I'd be happy to send over some information! At the same time, I'd love to understand your specific needs a bit better so I can tailor the recommendations. Maybe we could set aside just 15 minutes to chat, how does Thursday morning look for you?"
- Offer to send preliminary materials to build trust and keep the door open for further discussion.

2. Handling Unqualified Leads

If it becomes clear that the lead doesn't meet qualification criteria (e.g., their budget is too low), don't shy away from addressing it tactfully. For example:

- "It seems like our solution might not match the budget range you're considering right now. Is that something you anticipate changing later on, or should we revisit this in a few months?"

This ensures you're not wasting time on leads that won't convert while maintaining professionalism and respect for the other party.

Always End with Clear Next Steps

The most critical part of handling an inbound call, whether in real life or a sales interview, is to establish clear next steps before ending the conversation. Leaving a call open-ended can make it feel unproductive.

Here's how to wrap up effectively:

- Summarize what you've learned during the call. For example, "To recap, you're looking to address [key challenge] and are hoping to implement a solution by [timeline]. Is that correct?"
- Propose the next step based on their engagement level. Ideally, this will be scheduling a follow-up meeting:

"I'd love to dive deeper into this with you and share how our solution can help. How does a 30 minute call next week sound?"

Bringing It All Together

Handling an inbound call in a sales interview is a golden opportunity to showcase your potential as a tech sales professional. By mastering the BANT methodology, keeping the conversation engaging, addressing objections confidently, and securing the next steps, you can demonstrate that you're ready to tackle real-world challenges.

Remember, interviews are as much about mindset as they are about skills. Approach the call with curiosity and confidence, and even if it doesn't go perfectly, view it as a valuable learning experience.

6.2. Mastering the Art of the Outbound Cold Call in a Sales Interview

For newcomers, the thought of handling an outbound cold call during a sales interview can feel intimidating. Why? Because it's a task that tests not just your communication skills but also your ability to handle objections, build rapport, and take control of conversations on the fly.

The good news? With the right preparation and a structured approach, you can confidently ace this key part of your tech sales interview. This section will walk you through how to prepare, use a flexible call script, and engage effectively during an outbound cold call.

Understanding the Objective of the Outbound Cold Call

When asked to handle an outbound cold call in an interview, your interviewer isn't necessarily looking for a perfect performance. What they *are* evaluating is:

- Your ability to structure a conversation.
- How well you adapt to challenges or objections.
- Whether you can communicate value clearly and confidently.
- Your approach to closing next steps, like a follow-up.

Keep in mind that breaking into tech sales doesn't require extensive outbound experience. It's about showing potential, not perfection, and demonstrating a willingness to learn and improve.

The Importance of a Call Script

To succeed during an outbound cold call interview, preparation is key. Walking into the conversation without a plan will only create unnecessary stress. This is where having a flexible **call script** can make all the difference.

A call script isn't about memorizing word-for-word dialogue (you don't want to sound robotic). Instead, think of it as a toolkit. Each part of your script provides you with a framework to guide the conversation, helping you stay focused and hit all the important points.

A great script includes:

1. **A strong introduction.**
2. **A value-driven middle section**, supported by references to customer success stories or the company's product offerings.
3. **A concise closing statement**, focused on setting up the next step with confidence.

Below, we'll break these key pieces down and provide examples you can use as inspiration.

How to Handle an Outbound Cold Call (Step by Step)

Step 1: Prepare Thoroughly

Before you even pick up the phone, or practice for your interview, take time to prepare. Here's how:

- **Research the product/service** the company sells. Familiarize yourself with its value proposition so you can articulate it clearly during the call.
- **Understand your target audience.** If you're tasked with calling a specific persona, such as a business owner or an IT manager, learn about their challenges or pain points.
- **Study the company's success stories.** Great cold callers leverage examples of similar customers who've benefited from the product or service.

This preparation shows the interviewer that you're thoughtful and diligent, which are key traits for any tech sales role.

Step 2: Craft a Compelling Introduction

The first moments of a cold call can set the tone for the entire conversation. A strong introduction grabs attention and positions the call as relevant. Keep it concise and engaging.

Example Introduction Script:

"Hi [Prospect's Name], this is [Your Name] calling from [Company]. I'm reaching out because we helped companies like [Prospect's Industry/Type] solve [Industry Challenge your product solves]. I noticed [specific observation about their business] and thought our solution could also be beneficial to you. I'd love to share how we've specifically can help to solve [Industry Challenge your product solves]."

Why It Works:

- You introduce yourself politely to demonstrate respect for their time.
- You tailor the script to the prospect's industry, showing you've done your homework.
- You open with a hint of value, which keeps them listening.

Step 3: Build Value Through Success Stories

Once you've secured the prospect's attention, shift the conversation toward value. A great way to do this is by sharing relatable customer success stories. This ensures the conversation is less about "selling" and more about solving the prospect's challenges.

Example Success Story Script:

"We recently worked with [Public reference Customer], a company similar to yours in [industry/field]. They were struggling with [pain point], and by using our [solution], they were able to [specific outcome, like increasing efficiency or cutting costs]. I'd love to explore whether we could create similar success for your business."

Why It Works:

- Highlighting real success stories creates credibility and trust.
- It positions the product/service as a practical solution to a pain point.
- You subtly transition into a collaborative conversation rather than a pushy sales pitch.

Step 4: Handle Objections Gracefully

Expect objections. Whether it's skepticism, budget concerns, or lack of time, objections are part of any cold call. Treat them as opportunities to engage further, rather than obstacles.

Example Objection-Handling Framework:

1. Acknowledge their concern.
2. Show understanding.
3. Provide a solution or redirect the focus.

Example Response to "We don't have the budget right now":

"I completely understand. That said, would it be helpful to have an open conversation to explore your goals and challenges? We could focus on how we bring value, so when the timing is right, you'll already have a clear idea of how we can help."

Why It Works:

- It fosters an open dialogue, emphasizing collaboration and value.
- You build a relationship now, making future engagement more natural when the timing aligns.

Step 5: Close with a Clear Next Step

Never end a cold call without clearly defining the next steps. Whether it's scheduling another call, sending over resources, or booking a product demo, make sure you secure a commitment before wrapping up.

Example Closing Script:

"Thanks for your time today, [Prospect's Name]. I'd love to set up a follow-up meeting to explore this further and discuss how [company/product] could support [their business goal]. How does that sound to you?"

Why It Works:

- It positions the follow-up as a natural progression, not an imposition.

Bonus Tip: Stay Positive and Energetic

Cold calls are inherently challenging, which can make them nerve-racking for newcomers. But remember, confidence and energy are contagious. When you stay positive, prospects are more likely to reciprocate and engage with you.

Even if the interview call doesn't go as planned, end with enthusiasm and gratitude. This will leave a lasting impression on the interviewer.

Why this Process Matters for Sales Interviews

Handling a successful outbound cold call during a sales interview showcases your potential to thrive in tech sales. A well-thought-out script, combined with preparation and adaptability, will help you stand out to interviewers and show that you're ready for the challenge of working in a high-energy sales environment.

Ultimately, this skill is foundational to long-term success in tech sales. Not only will it impress interviewers, it will also set the stage for securing real-world deals, building customer relationships, and growing your career in the field.

6.3. Mastering the Discovery Call in a Sales Interview

A Discovery Call is the first real conversation between a sales professional and a potential customer (or "prospect"). This is where you uncover the prospect's **pain points**, learn about their goals, and gather insight into their buying process. It's not about pitching your product, it's about *listening* and collecting information.

For an interview, a Discovery Call is designed to evaluate your ability to ask thoughtful, open-ended questions and engage in a natural, conversational way. It's critical to demonstrate that you understand the goal of the call and can guide the discussion without turning it into an interrogation.

Will I Be Asked to Do a Discovery Call in My Interview?

If you're applying for entry-level roles like Sales Development Representative (SDR) or Business Development Representative (BDR), you might not be asked to conduct a formal Discovery Call. Instead, the focus will likely be on your ability to prospect, email, or cold call leads.

However, if you're targeting positions like Account Executive (AE) or Associate Account Executive (AAE), roles typically associated with closing sales, showcasing

your Discovery Call skills could be essential. Hiring managers will want to see how you approach conversations with prospects and whether you can identify their needs.

The Core Goals of a Discovery Call

Before we get practical, it's crucial to remember the objectives of a great Discovery Call during a sales interview. Here's what you should aim to achieve:

- **Identify Pain Points:** What problems is the prospect facing? What's holding them back from achieving their goals?
- **Understand Their Timeline:** When does the prospect want to solve their issues or achieve their goals? Are they ready to move now, or is this a down-the-road project?
- **Map the Decision-Making Process:** Who has decision-making power? Is there a team you'll need to win over?

These insights will guide how you tailor your solution and in the context of an interview, they'll demonstrate that you can think strategically and empathetically.

How to Conduct an Effective Discovery Call in an Interview

Now, let's get into the practical steps you can follow to nail a Discovery Call during your sales interview.

1. Do Your Homework

Before the call, read up on the hypothetical company or prospect scenario the interviewers have provided. If no scenario is given, ask for context about the mock prospect, such as their industry, common challenges, and potential goals. Use this information to brainstorm relevant questions and anticipate the prospect's possible pain points.

2. Set the Right Tone

Start the call in a friendly and professional way. Here's an example of how you can open the conversation during an interview Discovery Call role-play:

"Hi [Prospect Name], it's great to meet you! I appreciate you taking the time for our exchange today. My suggestion is that we start with a short round of introductions and you tell me what is most important to you today, so that when you leave the meeting, you can say your time was well spent."

This sets the tone for a collaborative, open discussion rather than a rigid Q&A session.

3. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Instead of questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," focus on open-ended questions that encourage prospects to elaborate. For example:

- "Can you tell me about the biggest challenges your team is currently facing?"
- "What does success look like for you in the next 6–12 months?"
- "What are your team's top priorities right now?"
- "Are there any processes you're looking to improve or streamline?"
- "What's the biggest obstacle keeping you from reaching your goals?"

These kinds of questions invite more in-depth responses and reveal the prospect's underlying needs and decision-making process.

4. Practice Active Listening

One of the most crucial parts of a Discovery Call is showing that you're genuinely listening. Nod, acknowledge what the prospect has said, and ask follow-up questions when appropriate. For instance, if they mention struggling with efficiency, you might ask, **"What impact has that inefficiency had on your day-to-day work?"**

This demonstrates that you're engaged and eager to understand their challenges on a deeper level.

5. Summarize and Clarify

Periodically summarize what the prospect has shared to ensure you're both aligned. For example, you might say:

"Just to make sure I've understood correctly, it sounds like your team is dealing with [Challenge A] and [Challenge B], and you're hoping to achieve [Goal]. Is that right?"

This technique also gives the prospect a chance to expand or correct your understanding.

6. Avoid Sounding Like an Interrogator

While asking questions is essential, make sure the call feels conversational rather than robotic or scripted. Here's how to strike the right balance:

- Space out your questions naturally, allowing the prospect to speak without interruptions.
- Make your tone and delivery friendly and engaging.
- Share small bits of context or empathy between questions. For example, **"I hear that a lot from other companies in your space, it can be so challenging!"**

7. Wrap It Up Gracefully

End the call by thanking the prospect for their time and summarizing the key points you've learned. For example, you could say:

"Thanks so much for sharing all of this, [Prospect Name]. It sounds like you're aiming to [Goal], but you're currently facing challenges like [Pain Point]. We'd love to explore how our [Product/Service] might help you achieve that."

For an interview, be sure to also state how you'd plan to proceed with the account (if applicable). This demonstrates that you understand the next steps in a real-world sales process.

Key Takeaways

A Discovery Call is your opportunity to show that you're not just a good talker, but a skilled listener and a thoughtful problem solver. Even if you're new to tech sales, following a clear structure and practicing ahead of your interview will help build your confidence.

Remember to approach the conversation with curiosity and empathy — it's about collaborating with the prospect, not pressing them for answers. If you can prove you understand how to spot the right opportunities and build rapport, you'll be one step closer to landing your dream role in tech sales.

6.4. Mastering Negotiation Role Plays in a Tech Sales Interview

Imagine sitting in a sales interview for an Account Executive (AE) or Associate Account Executive (AAE) role. The hiring manager turns to you and says, "Let's do a quick role play. Pretend I'm a potential customer, and you're pitching me our solution (let's assume it's a cybersecurity product). Then, when I start negotiating the price, show me how you'd respond."

For many aspiring tech sales professionals, these role plays can feel daunting, especially when negotiation comes into play. But don't worry, while challenging, nailing a negotiation role play is an opportunity to showcase your potential employer exactly what you're made of.

This section breaks down the key strategies to help you ace negotiation simulations in your sales interviews, even if you're new to the tech world.

Why Negotiation Role Plays Are Common for Tech Sales Roles

Negotiation is one of the most critical skills in tech sales, particularly for Account Executives (AEs) or Associate Account Executives (AAEs). These roles involve closing deals, managing objections, and advocating for the business value of complex products.

If you're applying for entry-level roles like Sales Development Representative (SDR) or Business Development Representative (BDR), you're less likely to face a negotiation simulation in your interview since your focus will be on prospecting and lead generation. However, if you're stepping directly into an AE or AAE position, expect this skill to be scrutinized.

When facing a role play, remember this key principle of negotiation in sales interviews: **it's all about showcasing how well you can create and communicate business value.**

How to Approach Negotiation in a Sales Interview

1. Understand the Question Behind the Negotiation

Negotiation requests often fit within a few patterns:

- **Price Objections:** The interviewer (or “customer” in the role play) might say, “The price is too high” or “We have a limited budget.”
- **Request for Extras:** They might ask for added value, like extended payment terms, more features, or higher service levels.

Before answering, think about **why** they are making the objection. Are they unsure of your ability to advocate for your product’s value? Are they testing whether you’d concede too much? These scenarios test your ability to stand your ground professionally while finding mutually beneficial solutions.

2. Focus on Business Value, Not Discounts

When faced with a price objection in the role play, steer the conversation away from pricing reductions and toward the **value your product delivers**. This is a critical principle for sales success, particularly in tech sales. Here’s how to do it effectively:

- **Quantify the Value of Your Product:** Prepare to back up your claims with numbers. For instance, if you’re “selling” a cybersecurity solution during the role play, contextualize its value. Highlight how it prevents risks, potentially saving the “customer” millions of dollars in breach recovery costs or reputational damage.
 - **Example Response:** “I understand that managing costs is a priority. However, consider the potential fallout from a security breach, which often costs companies an average of \$4 million. Our solution minimizes that risk by up to 90%, offering a significant return on investment.”
 - **Leverage Customer References:** When numbers aren’t on hand, cite examples of how other companies have benefited from similar solutions.
 - **Example Response:** “Another tech company like yours recently saw a 85% reduction in their vulnerability risk within the first year of implementing our solution.”

3. Practice “Give and Get” Negotiation

If you must make a concession to close the deal, demonstrate how to trade concessions effectively in your role play. The foundation of strong negotiation is reciprocity, if you give something up, always ask for something in return.

- **What You Can Offer:** Small concessions like a limited introductory discount, extended trial periods, or special onboarding.
- **What to Request in Return:** Faster deal closure, multi-year contracts, or a commitment to roll out your solution across other departments or regions.
- **Example Response:** “To help reach an agreement, I can offer a discount on Year 1 for a three-year partnership commitment. Would that work for you?”

This approach shows the hiring manager that you negotiate with the bigger picture in mind, which is especially critical in tech sales where strategic partnerships drive long-term revenue.

4. Maintain Confidence and Control the Discussion

A negotiation role play isn’t just about the specifics of the deal, it’s a test of your ability to maintain composure and assertiveness under pressure. Here’s how to handle the situation with confidence:

- **Stay Professional, Don’t Fold Too Quickly:** Recognize that objections and requests for discounts are normal, but avoid agreeing to concessions immediately. Instead, ask questions to clarify their concerns.
- **Example Response:** “I’d love to understand more about your budget constraints. Could you share a bit more detail so we can see what’s possible?”
- **Use Silence Strategically:** After making a point, take a pause. Silence can encourage the other party to share more information while making you appear calm and in control.

5. Showcase Active Listening Skills

The ability to listen and adapt during a negotiation role play is a top quality hiring managers look for. Demonstrating this skill can set you apart from other candidates.

- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Use queries that dig into the “customer’s” true needs or priorities.
- **Example Question:** “What specific outcomes are you hoping to achieve with this solution?”

- **Paraphrase and Confirm Understanding:** Reflect their concerns back to them to show that you're listening attentively.
- **Example:** "It sounds like you're looking for a solution that aligns with both your risk management priorities and budget constraints. Is that correct?"

6. Prepare, Practice, and Adjust

Walk into your interview role play ready to impress:

- **Do Your Homework:** Research the company, products, and challenges customers in their industry might face. For example, if it's a SaaS company with a cloud-based CRM solution, think about common CRM objections, like complex implementation or insufficient ROI.
- **Practice with a Peer:** Rehearse potential role play scenarios with a friend or mentor. The more you practice negotiating out loud, the more natural and confident you'll appear.
- **Adapt on the Fly:** Respond dynamically during the role play. If the interviewer throws an unexpected curveball, take a moment to process and adjust rather than panicking. This resilience is what sales roles demand in real life.

Key Takeaways

Negotiation role plays are not about being perfect; they're about showing how you approach challenges, focus on business value, and create win-win outcomes. For tech sales roles, these simulations are your chance to highlight core skills like strategic problem-solving, active listening, and confidence under pressure.

By practicing the strategies above, you'll walk into your interview ready to showcase exactly why you're the right fit for that Account Executive position. Remember, the goal isn't just to "win" the negotiation, it's to prove that you're ready to help the company achieve real, measurable success.

And one more thing, don't forget a big smile and a handshake at the end of that role play. Confidence is contagious, and your interviewer will remember it.



7. Crafting a Winning Tech Sales CV

Your CV is your first big opportunity to “sell” yourself to potential employers. And here’s a little insider tip: sales managers look for more than just experience. They value transferable skills, a results-driven mindset, and, yes, your ability to creatively pitch yourself.

A strong Tech Sales CV addresses the following questions:

- Can you demonstrate excellent communication and relationship-building skills?
- Do you have the work ethic and adaptability to meet ambitious targets?
- Can you solve problems and create value for both the company and the client?

Even if you’ve never had a formal tech sales role, tailoring your CV to highlight relevant skills and achievements can make you stand out.

7 Steps to Crafting a Winning Tech Sales CV

Step 1: Start with a Powerful Summary

Your CV summary is the first opportunity to catch a recruiter’s attention. Think of it as your 60-second elevator pitch. Be concise, enthusiastic, and clear about your goals. Highlight any relevant skills or achievements upfront—even if they stem from experience outside the tech world.

Example

“Results-oriented professional with a strong background in client relationship management and a passion for technology-driven solutions. Skilled in building trust, exceeding targets, and delivering value in competitive environments. Eager to bring exceptional communication and problem-solving skills to a dynamic tech sales team.”

Step 2: Highlight Transferable Skills

Don’t have formal tech sales experience? That’s okay! Employers in tech sales value skills like:

- **Customer relationship management:** Demonstrated success in dealing with clients or customers in retail, hospitality, or service industries.
- **Problem-solving:** Proven ability to identify pain points and offer actionable solutions.
- **Presentation skills:** Experience presenting ideas, solutions, or projects.
- **Team leadership or collaboration:** Examples of mentoring others, leading a team, or contributing to group success.
- **Time management and adaptability:** Proven ability to multitask and stay flexible in fast-paced environments.

Use bullet points to list these skills clearly and provide one or two lines explaining how you applied them successfully.

Step 3: Tailor Your Work Experience

If you don't have direct tech sales experience, don't just list your previous jobs, explain the outcomes and achievements that align with the skills necessary for tech sales. Hiring managers care about quantifiable results, so focus on metrics whenever possible.

For example, if you worked in customer service, you could write:

- "Led a team to successfully onboard 100+ customers, improving retention rates by 25% and streamlining the onboarding process to enhance overall customer experience."

Or, if you worked in retail:

- "Identified customer preferences and recommended tailored solutions, consistently exceeding daily sales targets by 15%."

Step 4: Showcase Results with Metrics

Tech sales is result-driven, so your CV should showcase the measurable impact you've made in previous roles. Wherever possible, use numbers to illustrate your achievements. This could include:

- Percentages (e.g., "Increased team productivity by 25% through streamlined processes").
- Dollar amounts (e.g., "Generated \$50,000 in new revenue through upselling strategies").
- Targets (e.g., "Consistently exceeded sales targets by 10-20% every quarter").

By including numbers, you're demonstrating accountability and a proven ability to deliver—both key traits any hiring manager will appreciate.

Step 5: Integrate Technology

To break into tech sales, you need to show that you're tech-savvy. Include any tools or platforms you've worked with, even if they're not specifically sales-related.

Examples:

- CRM Platforms (e.g., Salesforce, HubSpot)
- Productivity Tools (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Slack, Asana, Monday.com, Trello)
- Basic Data Analysis (e.g., Excel, Google Analytics)

Even self-taught proficiencies or certifications (like a HubSpot sales certification) can make a difference. It shows initiative and a willingness to learn.

Step 6: Don't Forget Soft Skills

While technical skills are important, soft skills like communication, empathy, and negotiation are often the deciding factor in sales success. Often overlooked, soft skills have their place in your CV — just be sure to weave them into your achievements rather than listing them separately.

For example:

- "Built a strong rapport with hesitant clients, converting 60% into repeat customers."
- "Negotiated pricing agreements that increased customer retention rates by 30%."

Step 7: Education and Continuous Learning

Formal education is essential, but hiring managers in tech sales are equally impressed by continuous learning. Include any certifications, courses, or workshops that demonstrate your commitment to growth in the field of tech or sales.

Examples:

- "Google Analytics Certification – January 2023"
- "Intro to Software Sales, Coursera – May 2023"

Education sections may be brief, but additional training or certifications can be a game-changer, especially if you're transitioning into tech sales without direct prior experience.

Bonus Tips to Ensure Your CV Stands Out

- **Keep Design Professional:** Use a clean layout with clear headings. Avoid overly fancy fonts.
- **Tailor for Each Role:** Use the job description to identify keywords and tailor your CV to match. **Pro tip:** I've had great results by sending the Job Description to ChatGPT and asking it to tailor my CV for that role. The output isn't perfect, but it gives you a sharp draft to refine.
- **Proofread Twice:** Sales demand attention to detail, so your CV should be typo-free.



8. Understanding Key SaaS/Tech Sales KPIs

If you're looking to make your mark in SaaS sales, understanding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is crucial. KPIs are the backbone of a sales team's strategy, they measure performance, identify successes, and highlight areas for improvement. For aspiring tech sales professionals, knowing these metrics is an excellent way to stand out during interviews and hit the ground running in a new role.

By the end of this section, you'll have a clear grasp of essential SaaS sales KPIs, such as **ARR**, **ACV**, **TCV**, **Retention Rate**, and **Conversion Rate**, and understand how they fit into a tech sales strategy. We've broken these terms down to ensure you gain a practical understanding, even if this is your first foray into tech sales.

What Are SaaS Sales KPIs, and Why Do They Matter?

KPIs for SaaS sales track critical aspects of the customer lifecycle, sales performance, and overall company health. They give sales organizations a quantifiable way to measure results against goals. Why should you care? Because as a tech sales rep, your performance will be evaluated against these KPIs. It's the language spoken by your future managers, teams, and clients. Mastering this language early will give you a leg up in your career and showcase you as a proactive problem-solver.

Some KPIs focus on revenue, while others track customer satisfaction or the efficiency of your sales funnel. Every SaaS company has slightly different priorities, but the following KPIs are universally significant in tech sales.

Key SaaS Sales KPIs Explained

1. ARR (Annual Recurring Revenue)

What is it?

ARR measures the value of recurring revenue from subscriptions over a one-year period. It's a crucial metric for any SaaS business built on recurring subscription models.

Why does it matter?

ARR provides a clear picture of a company's predictable, recurring revenue, helping sales teams and organizations forecast growth. Selling contracts that increase ARR will likely be central to your role.

Example scenario:

If you close a deal for a yearly subscription worth \$5,000, that \$5,000 becomes part of the company's ARR. If an existing customer expands their subscription to pay \$7,000 annually, your efforts have contributed an additional \$2,000 to ARR.

Pro tip for beginners:

When discussing ARR during interviews, emphasize your focus on landing high-quality accounts that have long-term value potential.

2. ACV (Annual Contract Value)

What is it?

ACV measures the revenue generated from a single customer contract over the span of a year, standardizing contract values to an annual basis. It excludes one-time fees and focuses solely on recurring revenue.

Why does it matter?

ACV provides insights into the annual revenue contribution of each customer, helping businesses forecast income and assess the long-term value of their deals. It's also useful for comparing customer contracts and prioritizing high-value opportunities.

Example scenario:

Say you close a deal worth \$30,000 over a 3-year contract. To calculate the ACV, divide the total contract value (\$30,000) by the number of years (3). The ACV for this deal would be \$10,000 per year.

Pro tip for beginners:

When discussing ACV, highlight your ability to focus on deals with high annual returns and sustainability. Show how you'd balance pursuing valuable contracts while maintaining a manageable sales cycle.

3. TCV (Total Contract Value)

What is it?

TCV represents the total revenue a customer contract is expected to generate throughout its term. This includes recurring payments and any one-time fees.

Why does it matter?

TCV helps sales managers measure the overall value of a deal. It's also useful for understanding how long-term relationships financially benefit the business.

Example scenario:

Let's say you close a 3-year subscription deal where the customer pays \$10,000 annually, with an additional \$2,000 onboarding fee. The TCV for this deal would be $\$10,000 \times 3 \text{ (years)} + \$2,000 = \$32,000$.

Pro tip for beginners:

When discussing TCV, highlight how you would encourage customers to commit to longer contracts, demonstrating your understanding of the value this brings to the company.

4. Retention Rate

What is it?

Retention Rate measures the percentage of customers who continue renewing their subscriptions over a given period.

Why does it matter?

For SaaS businesses, retaining customers is often more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. A high retention rate indicates that customers are satisfied with the product and willing to continue paying for it.

Example scenario:

Imagine your company starts the year with 100 customers. Over the year, 90 customers renew their subscriptions. Your retention rate would be calculated as $(90 \div 100) \times 100 = 90\%$.

Pro tip for beginners:

Retention rate highlights how well a product meets customer needs. Show your understanding by discussing how building trust and maintaining long-term relationships can positively impact retention.

5. Conversion Rate

What is it?

Conversion Rate tracks the percentage of prospects who take a desired action, such as booking a product demo or signing a purchase contract.

Why does it matter?

It's one of the clearest metrics for gauging the effectiveness of a sales funnel. A high conversion rate indicates that the sales team is successfully moving leads through the funnel.

Example scenario:

If 50 out of 200 leads you engage with convert into paying customers, your conversion rate would be $(50 \div 200) \times 100 = 25\%$.

Pro tip for beginners:

Familiarize yourself with strategies to boost conversion rates, such as addressing objections early and emphasizing how the product solves specific pain points for customers.

How These KPIs Work Together

Individually, each KPI provides valuable insight. Taken together, they offer a fuller picture of a company's overall health and sales success. For instance, a high ARR paired with strong retention indicates a business with a steady income stream and satisfied customers. On the other hand, a low retention rate or poor conversion rate may highlight weak points in the product or sales strategy.

When starting your career in tech sales, understanding how these KPIs interconnect positions you as a valuable asset to any organization.

The Practical Side of SaaS Sales KPIs for Beginners

Here are a few actionable tips for putting these KPIs into practice as an aspiring tech sales professional:

- **Do Your Research:** Familiarize yourself with how the company you're interviewing for measures success. If ARR or retention is their priority, tailor your talking points to reflect those goals.
- **Speak the Language:** During interviews, demonstrate fluency in these KPIs. A simple sentence like "I understand how critical ARR growth is for a subscription-based SaaS model" can leave a strong impression.
- **Ask Questions:** Show curiosity by asking how the sales team approaches improving KPIs like TCV or conversion rate. This highlights that you're thinking like a team player.

Next Steps to Elevate Your SaaS Sales Knowledge

Understanding these SaaS sales KPIs is your first step into the tech sales world, but continued education is key to staying competitive. Whether you're amplifying ARR growth or boosting your retention strategy, mastering these terms puts you on the path to success.

To explore more strategies, tips, and resources to break into tech sales, visit [Tech Sales Temple Dictionary](#), your go-to hub for everything tech sales-related.



9. Other Strategies how to break into Tech Sales Without Simply Applying to Job Posts

Tech sales is one of the hottest career paths right now, offering lucrative earning potential, growth opportunities, and a high-energy environment. If you're looking to transition into tech sales, simply scouring job boards and clicking "apply" can only get you so far. Competition is fierce, and the most effective strategies often go beyond traditional applications.

This section explores creative and proactive strategies to break into tech sales. If you're a career changer or a job seeker ready to stand out, these methods will guide you toward your dream role.

1. Reach Out Directly to Hiring Managers on LinkedIn

One of the most effective ways to bypass a flooded application pool is to message hiring managers directly on LinkedIn. Companies like Gartner report that over 80% of modern hiring is influenced by networking rather than just applications.

How to Do It Successfully:

- **Create a Strong LinkedIn Profile:** Before reaching out, make sure your LinkedIn profile is polished. Highlight transferable skills, relevant achievements, and a professional photo.
- **Personalized Messaging:** Send a concise pitch that communicates who you are, why you're interested in tech sales, and what you bring to the table. Keep it professional but approachable. For example:

> "Hi [Hiring Manager's Name], I'm [Your Name], and I've been following [Company Name]'s growth in [specific area]. With my background in [relevant field], I'm eager to transition into tech sales and believe my skills in [specific skill] can bring immediate value to your team. I'd love to discuss any openings or learn how I can contribute."

Direct outreach not only helps you stand out but also shows initiative, an invaluable quality in sales.

2. Connect with Sales Reps for Coffee Chats

Sales reps at your target company are your gateway to better understanding its culture, tools, and team dynamics. Building a network of current employees can give you insider knowledge and increase your visibility as a candidate.

How to Start Coffee Chats:

- **Search for Reps on LinkedIn:** Use filters like location, title (e.g., Account Executive, SDR, BDR), or "People" under specific company pages.
- **Send a Request with a Message:** Instead of just sending a blank connection request, include a friendly note, such as:

> "Hi [Name], I noticed your work as [their position] at [Company Name]. I'm planning to transition into tech sales and am really inspired by [specific detail about their work or company]. Would you be open to a 15-minute coffee chat to share your experience?"

- **Be Respectful of Their Time:** Keep your coffee chat focused and brief. Prepare questions like:
- What's your daily experience as a [job title] at [Company]?
- What skills or traits does your team value most?
- What advice would you give to someone looking to start their career at [Company]?

This approach not only builds relationships but could also lead to referrals.

3. Attend Tech Sales Networking Events and Meetups

Networking events are a treasure trove for aspiring tech sales professionals. These gatherings are often filled with hiring managers, recruiters, and current sales reps, all in search of driven individuals.

Pro Tips for Getting the Most Out of Meetups:

- **Find Local Meetups:** Look for tech sales-focused events on Meetup, Eventbrite, or LinkedIn Events. Industry expos and trade shows are also great options.
- **Prepare Your Elevator Pitch:** Be ready to introduce yourself, who you are, what your background is, and your intent to break into tech sales. For example:

> "Hi, I'm [Your Name]. I currently have experience in [relevant skill/role], and I'm pivoting into tech sales. I'm especially skilled in [specific skill] and eager to bring that to the [specific type of sales] space."

- **Follow Up:** After meeting someone, send a "thank you" LinkedIn message and reference your conversation to reinforce the connection.

Building these face-to-face relationships can make you more memorable and enhance your job search.

4. Join Tech Communities Online

Building relationships with a community of like-minded professionals is invaluable. Many online groups, Slack channels, and forums cater specifically to tech sales enthusiasts and professionals.

Make sure to check out our community: The **Tech Sales Temple Forum**.

Be active in these communities, share insights, ask for advice, and contribute to discussions. Engaged participation puts your name on the radar of helpful professionals.

5. Leverage Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are an underutilized strategy for career changers. Unlike job interviews, these are exploratory conversations where you can understand a potential career path or role directly from an insider.

How to Get Started:

- **Reach Out to Mentors:** Previous managers, colleagues, or even professors might have valuable connections. Ask if they can introduce you to someone in tech sales for an interview.
- **Approach with Humility:** When reaching out, explain that you're eager to learn about their profession and value their time.
- **Prepare Thoughtful Questions:** Some examples include:
 - What does success look like in your role?
 - What's the biggest challenge facing tech sales professionals right now?
 - How do you see this industry evolving over the next five years?

Informational interviews help you gain insights while discreetly building connections that might turn into job opportunities later.

6. Consider Sales Bootcamps or Tech Sales Training Programs

Sometimes the best investment you can make is in yourself. Bootcamps and sales training programs are specifically designed to provide marketable skills and insights into the tech sales space.

Companies often prioritize graduates of these programs, knowing they've gained specialized skills in prospecting, CRM tools, and closing techniques.



10. Getting the Company-Job Fit Right in Tech Sales

When you're breaking into tech sales, finding that first opportunity can feel like the ultimate goal. But, here's the thing, it's not just about landing *any* job; it's about landing the *right* job at the *right* company. The truth is, no two tech sales organizations are alike, and where you work has a huge impact on your success, growth, and overall happiness.

This chapter will help you evaluate potential employers to ensure you find a company that aligns with your values, supports its employees, and creates an environment for you to thrive. Let's explore some practical ways to get the "company-job fit" just right in tech sales.

Why the Company-Job Fit Matters in Tech Sales

Tech sales is fast-paced, competitive, and constantly evolving. It's a career with tremendous growth potential, but it also comes with its fair share of challenges. The wrong company can make or break your experience, leaving you feeling undervalued, overworked, or unfulfilled. On the flip side, the *right* organization will provide the support, culture, and leadership you need to excel.

When assessing company-job fit, you're looking for factors like:

- **Quota Expectations and Attainment Rates:** Can you realistically meet (and exceed) their sales goals?
- **Company Culture:** Does the organization foster collaboration and balance, or is it a high-pressure, cutthroat environment?
- **Management Style:** Will your boss support and guide you, or micromanage you?

Finding a tech sales job that aligns with your goals, aspirations, and working style is critical for long-term success and satisfaction. Here's how to do it.

Tips for Getting the Company-Job Fit Right

1. Leverage Review Platforms Like RepVue and Glassdoor

One of the easiest ways to get a clearer picture of how a company operates is by reading anonymous employee reviews. Platforms like **Glassdoor** and **RepVue** allow employees (and former employees) to share their experiences with the company, from culture to compensation.

Why Glassdoor?

Glassdoor provides a comprehensive overview of a company, including employee ratings, CEO approval scores, and insights into the company's work environment. Look for comments on work-life balance, leadership, career development opportunities, and diversity.

Why RepVue?

RepVue focuses specifically on sales organizations, ranking them based on factors like compensation, quota attainment, and growth opportunities. Checking quota attainment rates is essential because they reveal how achievable sales goals are. If most reps are missing their quotas, it could be a red flag indicating unrealistic expectations or poor product-market fit.

Pro Tip

Don't just focus on the overall company rating—dig into specific trends and feedback. For example, are sales reps complaining about unachievable quotas? Is the leadership team transparent and supportive?

2. Connect with Current or Former Employees

First-hand accounts from people who've worked at the company can give you an invaluable perspective. Reach out on LinkedIn and ask to have a quick, informal chat about their experiences.

Here's how to approach it:

- **Be Professional and Polite:** Start by introducing yourself and sharing why you'd like to connect (e.g., "I'm exploring opportunities in tech sales and would love to hear about your experience at [Company Name]!").
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** For example:
 - "What's the team culture like?"
 - "How would you describe the management style?"
 - "What's the onboarding process like for new sales reps?"
- **Understand Regional Differences:** Management styles can vary significantly based on location. If you're applying to a regional office, ask specifically about the leadership team there.

These conversations often reveal insights that you won't find in public reviews or on the company's website.

3. Research News and Public Updates

Public information about a company can be incredibly telling, especially when it comes to how they treat their employees in good times and bad. For instance:

- Have they laid off employees recently? If so, how did they handle it? Were they transparent and supportive, or overly secretive?
- Have they been recognized for workplace awards, such as "Best Places to Work"?
- Do they invest in training and development for their team?

A quick Google deep-dive can bring up press releases, news articles, or social media updates that offer insights into the company's priorities and values.

4. Evaluate Their Sales Training and Onboarding Process

A company's investment in employee development can say a lot about its culture. During the interview process, ask questions like:

- "What does the onboarding process for new sales reps look like?"
- "Do you provide ongoing sales training or certifications?"
- "What tools and resources are available to help reps succeed?"

A robust onboarding program is a great sign that the company values long-term growth and prioritizes setting employees up for success.

5. Consider Your Personal Values and Long-Term Goals

This step is just as important as researching the company. Ask yourself:

- Do I value work-life balance above all else, or am I willing to put in long hours for higher earnings?
- Am I looking for a company that promotes from within?
- Do their products/services inspire me and align with my interests?

Identifying your priorities will help you avoid taking a job that's not aligned with your personal and professional goals.

6. Trust Your Gut During the Interview Process

Remember, interviews are not just about a company evaluating *you* — you're also evaluating *them*. Pay attention to red flags, like:

- Disorganized communication or scheduling.
- Vague answers to questions about training, quotas, or company culture.
- A lack of transparency about sales performance metrics.

If something feels off during the interview process, don't ignore it. Trust your instincts and keep looking for the right fit.

Wrap-Up and Final Thoughts

Breaking into tech sales is an exciting challenge, but success doesn't just depend on landing a job — it depends on landing the *right* job at the *right* company. By taking the time to research prospective employers, reach out to current team members, and evaluate your own goals, you'll set yourself up for a thriving, fulfilling career in tech sales.

If you still have specific questions about identifying the best companies to work for — or need advice tailored to your situation — check out the [**Tech Sales Temple Community Forum**](#). Engage with like-minded professionals, explore expert advice, and tap into a supportive community that's here to help you succeed.

Breaking into tech sales isn't easy. But you don't need to be perfect, you just need to be prepared. And now you are.