

Years ago at NRS Media, I hired a guy who interviewed better than almost anyone I've ever met.

Confident. Sharp answers. Great eye contact. If interviewing were the job, he'd have been my best rep by a mile.

Six weeks later, he hadn't booked a single meeting.

He was wired to talk about selling. Not to do it. And the interview never showed me that, because I was asking the wrong questions.

That mistake cost me a seat, a salary, and months of coaching someone who was never going to close.

The Problem

Most sales leaders hire off the interview. That's the whole problem.

An interview rewards people who are good at interviews. Confident talkers. Smooth answers. People who know what you want to hear and say it back to you.

None of that tells you if someone can actually sell.

I've sat across the table from hundreds of candidates over 30 years. The best talkers in the room are not always the best closers in the field.

Sometimes they're the opposite. The quiet one who fumbles the small talk turns out to be the one who won't quit on a deal. The smooth one who nails every answer turns out to fold the second a prospect says no.

You can't see that in a normal interview. You need different questions.

The Insight

Here's the thing most sales leaders get wrong.

They think a bad hire is a training problem. Give them a script, a process, some coaching, and they'll come around.

Most of the time, that's not it.

Most sales problems aren't training problems. They're hiring and wiring problems. If the wiring isn't there, training won't fix it.

Some people are wired to prospect. They can pick up the phone a hundred times and not flinch at rejection. Some people are wired to close. They can read a room, sense hesitation, and ask for the deal without blinking. Some people are wired for neither, and no amount of coaching will change that.

The job isn't to fix the wiring. It's to see it before you hire.

The Framework

I call this the Sales Ladder. Three rungs.

Survival comes from prospecting. If someone can't generate activity, they can't survive in a sales role, no matter how good they are once they get in front of someone.

Success comes from prospecting and closing. Now they can generate the opportunity and bring it home.

Excellence comes from prospecting, closing, and role fit. This is the rare one. The person who's not just good at the mechanics, but wired for the specific role you're hiring for.

Only a small percentage of salespeople ever reach that third rung. Most sales teams are stacked with people stuck on rung one or two, and leaders keep trying to train their way to rung three.

You can't train wiring. You can only hire for it, or coach around it once you know what you're working with.

The Application

So how do you actually see the wiring before you make the hire?

You stop asking questions that reward good talkers, and start asking questions that expose how someone actually handles pressure, rejection, and truth-telling.

I put together the 7 questions I use now, the ones I wish I'd had before that hire at NRS Media. They don't ask what a candidate thinks about selling. They show you what happens when the easy answers run out.

[Download: 7 Killer Interview Questions That Reveal Whether a Rep Can Actually Sell]

And if you already have a team in place and you're not sure how they're wired, that's a different question.

That's what the Sales DNA Report is for. In 20 minutes, you'll know who's built to prospect, who's built to close, and who's sitting in the wrong seat right now.

The interview lies. The wiring doesn't.

Mike (Rejection) Brunel

P.S. Get started with The [7 Killer Questions to Ask](#) your latest applicant.