

Hire Sales Winners #2

Adaptive Selling

the No.1 Predictor of Sales Success

Adaptive Selling Definition



The **altering** of selling **behaviors** during a customer interaction or across customer **interactions** based on **perceived information** about the nature of the selling situation

Component #1 – Customer Cue Recognition

- ✓ Ability to read verbal and non-verbal signals
- ✓ Understanding customer's communication style
- ✓ Recognizing buying signals and resistance signals
- ✓ Identifying customer's decision-making style

Interview Questions for Customer Cue Recognition



Role play:

The candidate is the seller, selling the company's core product (provide them with prep materials prior to the interview – about the prospect, company, basic info about their need).

Verbal and Non-Verbal Signals:



You, the interviewer, is the client – start fully engaged



After few minutes, show time pressure (check watch, mention another meeting)



Look for:

- Do they notice and adjust pace?
- Do they move to wrap up efficiently?

Communication Style Signals:



Let candidate start their pitch



Then deliberately go opposite direction:

- If they're high-level → Ask specific technical questions
- If they're technical → Ask strategic business questions



Look for: Do they recognize and smoothly shift their level of detail?

Decision Making Signals:



Drop hints about needing to "check with others"



Look for: Do they adapt their closing approach?

Watch for these three things:

1. Speed of recognition: How quickly do they pick up on signals?
2. Quality of adaptation: How appropriate are their adjustments?
3. Smoothness of transition: How natural are their shifts?

Red flags:

1. They completely miss obvious signals
2. They acknowledge but don't adapt
3. They make abrupt, unnatural shifts



Simulation Alternatives:

Option 1:

- Pitch our product to persona A (a middle aged woman)
- Now pitch our product to persona B (a teengaer)

Option 2:

- **At the end of the interview, ask:** Based on the questions I asked you during the interview, how would you define my decision making style? If you had to sell me our product, what approach would you take?

Component #2 – Strategy Modification



Adjusting presentation style to match customer preferences



Switching between different selling approaches



Changing communication pace and style



Modifying questioning techniques based on customer responses

Interview Questions for Strategy Modification



Role play part 2:

The candidate is now meeting with an additional stakeholder from the same organization.

Communication Style Shift:



Option A: Talkative, Detailed Stakeholder

- Provides long, winding responses
- Shares lots of contextual information
- Goes off on tangents



Look for: Do they recognize and smoothly shift their level of detail?



Option B: Ultra-Concise Stakeholder

- Gives minimal responses
- Uses very few words
- Leaves gaps in information



Look for: Can they ask effective follow-up questions to draw out necessary information?

Overcoming Subtle Resistance:



Say things like:

- "Hmm, I don't know..."
- "I suppose it could be helpful, but..."



Your body language showing uncertainty/lack of conviction



Provide vague responses to next step suggestions

Look for:

- Do they recognize these uncertainty signals as resistance?
- Can they address the underlying lack of confidence without being pushy?
- Do they ask good discovery questions to uncover the real concerns?

Adjusting According to New Information:

 Drop hints about different priorities/pain points than first stakeholder

 Reveal new technical requirements

 **Look for:** Do they effectively modify their value proposition based on new information?

Simulation Alternatives:

Option 1:

- Tell me about two prospects within the same company who had very different personalities, priorities, communication styles – what were the core differences and how did you navigate them?

Option 2:

- Tell me about a subtle/unstated resistance you identified, what did you do about it? what was the result?
- Tell me about a resistance you failed to identify. What would you do differently today?

Option 3:




- Tell me about a time when you discovered new information in the later stages of a deal that completely changed the situation. What did you do, and what was the result?

Component #3 - Information Integration

- ✓ Collecting and processing customer information in real-time
- ✓ Using past experience to inform current interactions

Collecting and processing customer information in real-time

Based on previous interactions, assess this:

-  Does the candidate integrate and properly respond to new information shared during the conversation, or do they stick to their initial pitch?
-  Watch specifically for moments when they connect pieces of information that weren't explicitly connected for them.
-  **Look for:** Do they track and reference multiple data points shared throughout the conversation?




Simulation Alternatives:

- Ask at the end of the interview – based on this interview, what do you now understand about the position that you didn't before?

Using past experience to inform current interactions

-  Does the candidate incorporate learnings from the 1st call to the 2nd call?

 **Look for:** Significant lessons that led to tangible changes in methodology, tactics, approach or strategy (not just surface-level adjustments)

 **Red flag:** Generic lessons without specific application examples



Simulation Alternatives:

- You can directly ask: "Tell me about 2-3 meaningful lessons you've learned through sales calls and how you apply them today"

Component #4 – Solution Customization

 Tailoring product/service presentations to specific needs and context

 Adjusting value propositions based on customer priorities



Did they adjust their approach in the 2nd call according to the needs and priorities of the 2nd stakeholder?



How well did they prepare for the 1st call in terms of customized messaging for the specific prospect and company?



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