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## Timberseed's Experience of Sales Roles

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At Timberseed we work on a variety of consultative sales, business development and account management roles. These are positions which require confident, ambitious and articulate candidates.

We work with a large range of clients such as high growth tech start-ups, FTSE 250 corporations and international business intelligence firms. Our clients look for candidates with a range of experience from graduate to 5+ years' experience.

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## What is Consultative Sales?

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- Consultative sales is a form of selling used in a variety of professions. Whether you are a Business Development Manager, B2B Account Manager or Recruitment Consultant, being consultative in your sales is key to success. Many companies implement specific consultative sales methodologies, such as SPIN or Miller Heiman.
- The focus of consultative sales is to match one party's wants/needs to another. The first step is identifying a problem or need of a client. This can be anything from a company needing a more efficient CRM to improve their sales cycle or a firm needing detailed industry reports in order break into a new market.
- This identification stage is where consultative sales is different to traditional sales. Consulting/working with the client on a problem will lead to a solution being found. This solution is the "sale" that takes place. To use the examples above, the solution can be a more efficient CRM software or detailed industry publications.
- This process can be used whether you are looking to sell a piece of software, a product or a service. Acting in a consultative manner to identify and understand a client's needs and then fulfilling this need will lead to a successful consultative sale.

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## 360 Sales/Full Sales Cycle Position

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*"Working on the full sales cycle" and "360 sales"* are common phrases found on a job spec. These terms mean working on a sale from initial lead generation to closing a deal. Not all salespeople will work on a sale from lead gen to close; it will be dependent on the role the company requires of them.

The typical stages of a sales cycle are as follows:

**LEAD GENERATION/PROSPECTING:** The first stage of a sales cycle is to identify clients to sell to. The goal is to develop a list of key decision makers in a business ('prospects') who would be appropriate to sell to. The ideal client is one who has a need for product/service that you are selling.

**COLD APPROACH:** Having identified prospective clients, the next step is to reach out to them. There are a number of ways to reach out to these clients but the most popular are LinkedIn, cold emails and cold calls. The purpose of this approach is to confirm your initial suspicions that the client has a need you can fulfil.

**QUALIFICATION AND MEETING BOOKING:** Once a potential client has been found, the next step is qualification. At this stage, it is important to find out more about the client's need, whether it is a need that is easily fulfilled and the time frame they are working to. This process is all about asking relevant questions, and fully understanding what problems a client currently has, and the implications those problems has on their business.

**MEETING AND PITCHING:** Depending on a salesperson's level of experience, at this stage a meeting with the client will occur. Traditionally this

is done face to face, but plenty of companies now use online meeting tools, such as web-ex or Google hangouts. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce the product/service and identify whether this is indeed a viable solution to their need.

For large accounts and multi-stakeholder deals, several meetings will likely take place with a variety of senior level executives. This could take days, weeks or months.

**CLOSING AND NEGOTIATING:** If the pitch was successful and you have identified a 'need for pay off' (i.e. that they should invest in what you're pitching), then the final part of the sales process is closing the deal. Closing itself is a skill that can be mastered over time in order to successfully sign off on a sale which is as beneficial as possible to yourself/your company. Whilst a client may want a product, there are often many barriers that can get in the way (e.g.) price, legal clauses, timelines.

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## Variations of Consultative Sales Job Titles

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There a huge range of titles companies can use for sales people and often there can be overlaps between titles. However, the three main job titles are the following:

### **SALES DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE (SDR), OR INSIDE SALES:**

- An SDR is usually an entry level sales position held by graduates or candidates new to the industry.
- The role does not involve working on the full sales cycle but rather they will be completing the first three steps, namely Lead Generation, Cold Approach and Meeting Booking.
- The purpose of the role is both to take pressure off those working in Business Development and to get to grips with the company/product. The role will more often than not lead into a Business Development position.

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:**

- Business Development roles are focussed on the full 360 sales cycle or on only the meeting and closing stages.
- A Business Development Executive will most likely be generating their own leads, conducting the cold approach and then book meeting for themselves. In these meetings the aim will be to sell the product/service and then to close the deal.
- As a Business Development professional becomes more senior their time may be better spent focussed on the last two stages of the sales cycle. A SDR will book the meeting because the Business Development Professional will add more value solely focussing on the pitching and closing.
- There may be overlap between Business Development and Account Management where the responsibilities from both positions will be undertaken.

**ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT/CLIENT RELATIONSHIP/CUSTOMER SUCCESS:**

- Once a deal is closed, the client/account will be passed on to an Account Manager or Client Relationship Manager to work on.
- The three key tasks for an Account Manager are Upselling, Retention and Client Satisfaction.
  - Upselling involves attempting to convince a client to use more or different aspects of the service/product on offer. This may involve increasing a client's yearly purchase of a product or persuading them to use a different product that the company has on offer.
  - Retention is key to any Account Management position. Here an Account Manager must keep a client on board year on year. If an account is lost that equates to money lost for the business so it is key that account managers retain their clients.
  - Client Satisfaction is ensured through the two tasks above as well as maintaining the client is content. This can involve complaint handling as well as assistance of how to use the product/service.

- Despite seeming less "salesy", Account Managers must be comfortable with consultative sales techniques in order to identify current client's needs and then to fulfil them.

**JARGON:**

**SAAS SALES:** SaaS stands for "Software as a Service." Selling SaaS involves selling a piece of software or application on a subscription basis. Examples would include selling Google Ads or Salesforce.

**LEAD GENERATION:** Developing a list of potential clients to sell a product with or to work with. It is research conducted to identify a company who have a need for the service which you are selling.  
**360 Sales:** Working on the full sales cycle from lead generation to closing deals.

**OTE:** Stands for On Target Earning and is what a salesperson will earn when adding base salary, commission and bonuses.

**B2B/B2C SALES:** Business to Business and Business to Consumer. A sales role may involve selling to either another business or consumer depending on the product/service.

**C-LEVEL:** Board members of a company e.g. CEO or CFO.