



HOW TO AVOID LOSING A CANDIDATE TO A COUNTEROFFER

(and what to do if it happens)





You've done it! You've found THE one. That new salesperson who you truly believe will not only make a great team member, but has the potential to propel your results skyward.

But something is amiss. They're taking an inordinate amount of time to come back with their reply to your job offer. When they finally do, it's not the news you want to hear. They've received a counteroffer from their current employer.

If you find yourself in this boat – or want to avoid being in it altogether – here are some important steps you can take to ensure that your candidate says yes.

YOUR PREEMPTIVE TACTICS

Finding yourself in a counteroffer situation isn't ideal, so why not take steps to avoid it in the first place. You can do so by focusing your efforts on the following:

1. Create a culture people can't resist

Having a work culture that people love is the best selling point you'll ever have. So many companies fail spectacularly in this area, so if you can get it right, you'll definitely stand out and be hard to resist - no matter how tempting a counteroffer may be.

There are many things you can do to ensure your employees love working with you. This has the added bonus of getting potential hires excited to come on board. The key is to seek input from your current sales staff. This person should also be someone who is a master at nurturing, letting potential hires know exactly what to expect from your interview process – who will attend, where and approximate timelines for each stage (interviews and follow-ups).

Your staff are the best people to go to for advice about what's working, and what's not. It might be to do with your management style, on-the-job expectations, your compensation or training package, or simply a desire for some tweaks to the work-life balance in your business.

Listen carefully and implement suggestions to bring about real change. It will not only help your current employees, but be enticing to new hires too.



2. Create a recruitment candidate experience that is second to none

To have the best chance of securing an outstanding sales hire, you need to treat your recruitment process as you would a new prospect. It's all about nurturing

If you've followed step one, you should have an on-point company culture; or at least be well on your way to it. Now, it's time to showcase the good stuff in your recruitment materials (position description and job advertisement) and during interviews. If you're successful in doing this, no counteroffer should stand a chance!

A great position description should be an accurate reflection of the job and who you are as a company. Showcase what you have to offer, alongside focusing on what you want in the candidate.

A great sales job ad can be likened to a highlights reel of your job description. One or two lines about your company mission/values, team/sales leader attributes, work environment, perks/ benefits and salary. You can also flesh it out with some key team LinkedIn profiles.

As for interviews, this is the stage so many sales leaders get wrong. We've created an important resource that takes you step-by-step through the interview process to ensure yours hits the mark.

One area to take particular note of is when asking candidates why they're leaving their current employer. Keep this information at the forefront of your mind, along with how you differ in that area. It's the perfect form of ammunition if you need to talk to them about their employer counteroffer.

It's also important to be upfront with potential hires during interviews if there are things you're working on to improve your company culture. It's quite impressive to potential hires that you are humble enough to recognise and fix problems. It shows you are willing to change for the betterment of your employees.

3. Perfect your offer so they find it hard to refuse

Creating the ideal offer is all about personalisation. During your interviews, you would have gained vital intel about your candidate's needs, wants and pain points. Your offer must speak to these, spruiking how you can meet those needs/wants, and alleviate the pain points. For example, perhaps the candidate is looking for a better work/life balance. In this case, your offer should highlight your great 'work from home' option.



When personalising, pay close attention to the following sections:

The compensation package

Highlight the competitive salary and commission, as well as detailing overtime pay, superannuation, [commissions and bonuses](#) and/or share schemes.

The opportunities

The calibre of salesperson you're after will be very interested in working on their professional development. Showcase what you have when it comes to training (courses, mentoring etc.) and progression (lateral moves, job shadowing etc.).

The perks and benefits

Clearly show off the best you can offer here - flexible work hours, work-life balance, health benefits, extra paid time off, team building activities, insurance plans and so on.

It's a good idea to ensure your offer has a degree of flexibility to allow the salesperson to negotiate a little further (salary, start date, extra perks and benefits, etc.). Adding a timeframe to acceptance, say 48 hours, is also a good way to encourage them to say yes before there's time for a counteroffer to be prepared.

If the candidate does receive a counteroffer, your personalised offering should still be strong enough to sway the candidate your way.

4. Present your offer in a way that leaves little room for a 'no'

You know this salesperson is the one you want, so remember to show them how excited you are for them to join you!

Be enthusiastic when presenting your offer and let them see why you chose them over the plethora of other candidates. Be specific here – “We thought you outshone all the others in your ability to clearly convey how you nurture leads and prospects”. It's very flattering, plus, a little appeal to the ego never did any harm!

You can take things a step further by actually inviting your potential hire into the office to present the offer to them in person. Add on a casual 'drinks and nibbles' meeting afterwards with their team as it's just another opportunity for the candidate to get a further feel for your organisation and envision their place within it.



YOUR REACTIVE TACTICS

So, you've done everything you can to provide the candidate a great offer but unfortunately, your new hire still received a counteroffer from their employer. Here are a few ways you can handle this situation:

1. Listen first and be empathetic

Encourage the salesperson to fully explain their counteroffer and the reasons why they are considering it.

It's often the case the current employer counteroffer matches yours. However, the employee may be reluctant to leave the 'known' and jump into the unknown. Or perhaps they feel bad about leaving their team in the lurch, especially if they've been there a long time.

If this is the case, take the time to explain that you understand their reluctance to leave, and praise them for their loyalty. But also gently remind them of reasons they wanted to go in the first place (they would have told you these in their interview), and what your organisation and role can offer them and their career.

2. Match the offer

If this person is really the ONE, can you match or exceed the counteroffer? It might not necessarily be in terms of salary, but might be throwing in some extra perks or a bigger training budget. Remember back to what got them excited in their interview and hone in on that, giving them a benefit to match.

3. If you have presented your best offer, let the candidate know

If this offer really was the best you can offer and there's a better one on the table, unfortunately, there isn't much room to move. After deploying all of your pre-emptive strikes - having a company culture people love, giving them a great recruitment experience and a highly personalised offer that addresses their pain points - you've done everything in your power to avoid the counteroffer.

Remember, the recruitment process is a two-way street and as much as you're looking to attract the best candidate for the job, so should your potential new employee be enthusiastic at the prospect of joining your organisation. Make your first offer your best one; sell the benefits of the role and your company culture throughout the process and let it be the opportunity that attracts the right talent – not the extra cash added to a salary at the last minute.



IN CONCLUSION

The above are a few key tactics to employ during the recruitment process to prevent having to handle a counteroffer.

In the case of a candidate being presented with a counteroffer, you are now also equipped with the essential resources to be able to deal with this in the best possible way.

At bta Sales, we've witnessed many tricky sales offer negotiations in our over 25 years in recruitment. We would be happy to provide you with some further advice should you need it. Get in touch with bta Sales [here](#) or call 1300 BTA SALES.

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are positioned centrally, with the left hand wearing a gold ring. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with greenery.

ABOUT **bta Sales**

bta Sales is a specialised recruitment agency with national reach and a strong network of candidates and clients. We work with businesses and individuals as a consultant to find the perfect match for both parties.

Our sales specialisation is largely unrivalled within the industry and takes in many disciplines and levels ranging from junior sales level to senior management appointments across all market sectors.

bta is sales recruitment. It's our passion. It's what we live and breathe. In fact, it's all we do. So our interest and focus equal yours.

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