



Attracting & Retaining Sales Talent in the SaaS Industry



Message from our **Founder**

Over the last 15 years, I have dedicated my career to assisting early-stage and scale-up tech businesses in realising their growth ambitions. My primary focus has centred around the critical task of identifying, attracting, and securing mid to senior-level Sales and Go-to-Market (GTM) talent across various markets, including the UK, EMEA, and the US.

In the ever-evolving realm of technology, the ability to recruit top-tier sales professionals frequently serves as the key differentiator between success and stagnation. Through my extensive experience, I have honed the skills and strategies required to precisely identify the right talent for each unique business, aligning their capabilities with the specific requirements of the organisation.

However, my commitment extends beyond recruitment alone. Recognising that hiring represents just one piece of the puzzle, I also offer invaluable advice and guidance to companies looking to optimise their sales hiring processes. Together, we collaborate on crafting the ideal candidate profile, ensuring that every potential hire aligns seamlessly with your vision and culture.

I appreciate the crucial role that effective onboarding plays in a new hire's success. My guidance extends to this pivotal phase, providing insights into how to integrate new talent into your team seamlessly and set them on the path to achieving outstanding sales performance.

In essence, my mission is to empower tech companies with the knowledge, expertise, and talent they require to thrive in competitive markets. Whether you're a burgeoning startup or a scaling enterprise, my experience can be a valuable asset in shaping your sales and GTM strategies.

Jon Eyers

Jon Eyers - Founder, Harvey Thomas

What challenges are we facing?

Are you facing the daunting challenge of attracting and retaining top sales talent in the rapidly evolving SaaS market? In an industry marked by intense competition and shifting dynamics, finding individuals who can not only survive but thrive is more critical than ever. With sales processes lengthening, budgets tightening, and leads becoming scarce, the quest for the right talent has become a strategic imperative.

From understanding the nuanced candidate journey to implementing data-driven recruitment practices, we'll explore how to create a compelling proposition for top-tier talent and why partnering with experts like us is essential in this journey. Get ready to transform your recruitment approach and secure the sales powerhouses your SaaS business needs to excel.

Navigating a Challenging Market



The SaaS market in the UK is currently navigating through a period of significant change and challenge. Despite a growth of **6.7% in Q1 2023 from Q4 2022**, as reported by Cledara1, SaaS vendors are facing longer sales processes, tighter budgets, and a reduction in leads. This environment demands a strategic approach to hiring, focusing on attracting individuals who can not only adapt but also thrive in these tough market conditions.

The unique demands on sales professionals in the SaaS sector are distinct from those on other employees within an organisation. With over 2,100 dedicated SaaS businesses in the UK - a number projected to grow by 9.08% (2024-2028) resulting in a market volume of £15.27bn in 2028¹. The best in SaaS sales are often passive candidates, requiring compelling reasons beyond competitive compensation to consider a move, including a strong employer brand and clear career development opportunities.

In the US, the SaaS market mirrors similar trends of growth and challenge as seen in the UK. With a projected annual growth rate of 18.3% in the SaaS market by 2025, according to MarketWatch, companies are facing increased competition and evolving customer demands. Similarly, in Europe, the SaaS market is experiencing rapid expansion, with countries like Germany, France, and the Nordics emerging as key players. As companies navigate these dynamic landscapes, the need for strategic hiring practices becomes paramount to securing top sales talent capable of driving success in diverse markets and navigating complex sales processes.

Harvey Thomas stands out in this landscape, offering deep insights and tailored solutions to navigate these challenges effectively. Our expertise in the SaaS sales market enables us to identify and attract the right talent, understanding the intricacies that drive success in this sector. In a market characterised by longer sales processes and scarcer leads, having the right sales team is not just beneficial—it's critical for success.

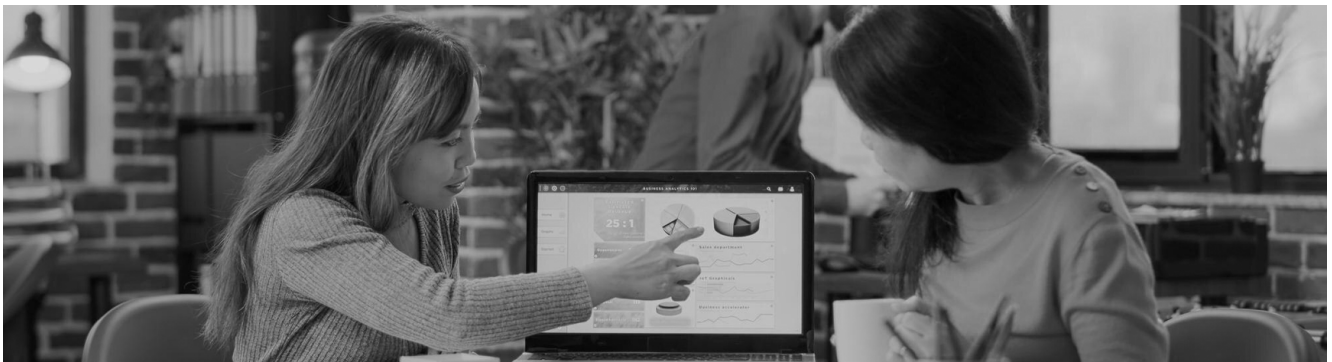
How to Attract

Candidate Journey

In the competitive SaaS market, understanding the unique motivations and aspirations of sales professionals is crucial for attracting and retaining the talent that can navigate the sector's challenges. Sales professionals in the SaaS industry are driven by more than just financial incentives; they seek roles that offer growth, challenge, and the opportunity to be part of innovative solutions that make a real impact.

Understanding the Candidate's Perspective

From a candidate perspective, sales hiring in 2024 is shaped by several factors, including evolving job expectations and market dynamics. One key statistic is that 68% of sales professionals believe that the flexibility to work remotely is a crucial factor when considering a job offer, according to a survey by Sales Hacker. Candidates are increasingly prioritising work-life balance and flexibility, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. Additionally, sales professionals are seeking opportunities for career growth and development, with 82% stating that they value companies that offer clear paths for advancement, according to LinkedIn's "State of Sales 2023" report. As such, organisations that can offer competitive compensation, remote work options, and opportunities for advancement are likely to attract top sales talent in today's competitive market.



Unique Motivations of SaaS Sales Professionals

Sales professionals in the SaaS sector are often motivated by the opportunity to work in a fast-paced, innovative environment. They thrive on the challenge of selling complex solutions that require a deep understanding of the customer's needs and the technology itself. The satisfaction of closing deals and contributing to the company's growth is a significant motivator. Moreover, the chance to work with cutting-edge technology and stay at the forefront of industry trends highly appeals to those passionate about tech and innovation.

Career growth and professional development are top priorities for sales professionals in the SaaS industry. They aspire to advance in their careers, moving into leadership roles or specialising in areas such as enterprise sales or customer success. Opportunities for continuous learning through formal training programs or on-the-job experiences are essential for keeping employees engaged and committed.

Strategies to Attract Top Talent



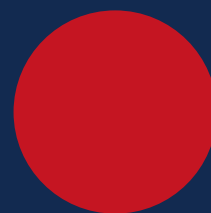
Employer Branding: A strong employer brand is vital in attracting quality candidates. This involves showcasing your company culture, values, and the opportunities for growth and development within your organisation.



Candidate Experience: The recruitment process should be transparent, respectful, and engaging. This includes clear communication, timely feedback, and a streamlined interview process. Ghosting candidates or prolonged hiring processes can deter top talent.



Competitive Compensation: Determining a competitive compensation package for a sales professional requires a more nuanced approach than for other roles. Companies must carefully consider the appropriate commission structure to attract top talent, balancing base pay with performance-based incentives. Researching competitor packages is essential to ensure the offering is attractive and competitive in the market.





Flexibility and Understanding



Remote Working:

- **Flexibility:** Remote working offers sales professionals the flexibility to manage their schedules according to their productivity peaks and personal commitments.
- **Work-Life Balance:** By eliminating commuting time and offering the freedom to work from any location, remote roles promote a healthier work-life balance, reducing stress and improving overall well-being.
- **Increased Productivity:** Some sales professionals find that remote working environments allow them to focus better, leading to increased productivity and efficiency in their sales activities.
- **Cost Savings:** Remote working can result in cost savings for both employees and employers, as it reduces expenses associated with commuting, office space, and utilities.



Development and Growth Opportunities:

- **Skill Enhancement:** Sales professionals value opportunities for continuous learning and skill development to stay competitive in the dynamic sales landscape. Access to training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities supports their professional growth.
- **Career Advancement:** Companies that invest in the development of their sales teams demonstrate a commitment to their employees' long-term success. Clear career progression paths and opportunities for advancement motivate sales professionals to perform at their best and stay engaged with their roles.



Overseas Working:

- **Cultural Exposure:** Working overseas provides sales professionals with valuable cultural exposure and international experience, broadening their perspectives and enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills.
- **Market Expansion:** Overseas assignments offer opportunities to tap into new markets and expand business reach, allowing sales professionals to develop a deeper understanding of global customers' needs and preferences.
- **Personal Growth:** Living and working in a foreign country challenges sales professionals to adapt to new environments, develop resilience, and cultivate a global mindset, fostering personal growth and self-discovery.

The Role of **Employer Branding**

Crafting an employer brand that resonates specifically with sales professionals is crucial. It's not just about broadly showcasing the company's culture and values; it's about highlighting the success stories, growth opportunities, and competitive advantages that matter most to those in sales roles. A well-defined employer brand that speaks directly to sales talent can significantly differentiate a company in a crowded market.

Showcasing Success Stories and Growth Opportunities

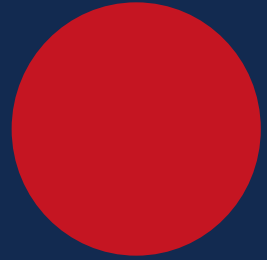
Sales professionals are driven by achievement and growth⁶. They want to see clear examples of success within your organisation and understand the pathways available for their own career advancement. Highlighting success stories of sales teams and individuals who have excelled in your company can be incredibly compelling. These narratives detail the challenges overcome, the deals closed, and the impact made on the company's growth.



Communicating Competitive Advantages in the **Sales Domain**

What sets your SaaS product or service apart? How does your sales approach differ from competitors? Answering these questions in your employer branding efforts can attract sales professionals eager to work with innovative solutions and distinctive sales strategies.

Presenting a pitch deck as part of the recruitment process offers tangible benefits, allowing potential sales hires to gain insight into the business's positioning and the size of the target market, beyond just a job description.



How to Retain

Onboarding: Best Practices for SaaS Sales Talent

Effective onboarding of sales talent within the SaaS environment is pivotal, not just for the immediate success of the new hires but for the long-term growth of the company. A strategic onboarding process tailored specifically for sales roles can significantly enhance a salesperson's performance and engagement with the company.

Here's how to structure an onboarding process that sets sales talent up for success:



Comprehensive Introduction to the Company and its Products

Begin with an in-depth introduction to the company, emphasising its culture, values, and mission. This foundational knowledge helps new hires align with the company's objectives and understand their role in achieving them. Equally important is detailed training on the company's SaaS products or services. Given the longer sales cycles and fewer leads characteristic of the SaaS market, a deep understanding of the product is crucial for successful selling.



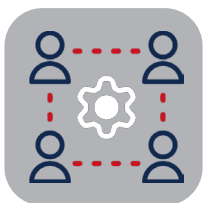
Role-Specific Training and Expectation Setting

Role-specific training should cover sales techniques, customer relationship management, and the use of sales tools tailored to meet the unique challenges of the SaaS market. Clear communication of expectations, targets, and performance metrics is essential. Setting realistic expectations helps new hires gauge what success looks like in their role.



Mentorship and Support

Assign mentors or coaches from among experienced sales team members to provide guidance and support. This mentorship can offer insights and advice based on real-world experiences, facilitating a smoother transition for new hires. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions are crucial to address any concerns and provide ongoing support, ensuring new hires feel valued and supported.



Integration into the Team

Creating opportunities for new hires to integrate with the team is vital. This could involve team meetings, social events, or collaborative projects. Encouraging team collaboration not only helps new hires feel part of the team but also fosters a supportive work environment conducive to shared success.



Continuous Learning and Development

The SaaS market's rapid evolution necessitates continuous learning and development. Offering sales training programs, workshops, or access to online learning resources ensures that sales professionals can keep pace with changing products and customer needs. This commitment to ongoing development is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge.



Feedback and Evaluation

Implementing a structured feedback and evaluation process is key to identifying areas where new hires excel and where they may need additional support or training. Regular feedback allows new hires to adjust their strategies and continuously improve their performance.

Effective sales onboarding emphasises the importance of a structured plan that covers all essential elements new hires need to learn. This plan should provide a logical flow of information, gradually building upon previous learning and allowing new hires to absorb and apply their knowledge effectively. Incorporating interactive training methods such as role-plays, case studies, and hands-on demonstrations enhances understanding and retention, setting new sales team members up for long-term success.



Compensation and Benefits in SaaS Sales Roles

Competitive Salaries and Commission Structures

Attracting top sales talent begins with competitive base salaries, but the true differentiator lies in the commission structure. Performance-based incentives are pivotal, these incentives must be strategically designed to not only reward individual achievements but also to ensure alignment with the company's growth objectives. A well-thought-out commission structure can significantly boost motivation, driving sales professionals to exceed their targets.

Benefits Beyond the Paycheck

While financial compensation is vital, the broader benefits package often tips the scales for sales professionals considering their options. Modern benefits, such as flexible working arrangements, have seen a surge in demand, reflecting a shift in priorities among job seekers. The inclusion of benefits like remote work options speaks directly to the desires of today's workforce for greater work-life balance and flexibility.

Tailoring Benefits to Individual Needs

Personalisation of benefits packages can distinguish a company in the SaaS sales job market. Customised packages that offer wellness programs, mental health support, and professional development opportunities signal a company's investment in the overall well-being and growth of its employees. For those in more senior sales roles, there may well be a conversation needed around equity as an incentive.

Transparency and Clarity in Compensation Packages

Clarity and transparency in outlining compensation packages are fundamental. Detailed communication regarding base salary, commission structures, and any additional benefits is essential for setting clear expectations and building trust from the outset.

In the SaaS sales arena, where the battle for talent is intense, companies that offer comprehensive, transparent, and personalised compensation and benefits packages stand out. Providing clarity on commission percentages for the first and second years, along with details on payment timelines and potential accelerators, is essential. Seasoned sales professionals seek not only to understand how they can meet their On-Target Earnings (OTE) but also how they can exceed them. Harvey Thomas's consultative approach ensures that companies are positioned as employers of choice, capable of attracting and retaining skilled professionals who will drive their success in the challenging SaaS market.



Data-Driven Recruitment – Cultural and Value Fit

Utilising data in the recruitment process is essential for ensuring cultural and value alignment, especially when it comes to hiring sales talent. The importance of cultural fit cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in retaining sales talent and ensuring long-term success.



Utilising Data for Cultural and Value Alignment

Data-driven recruitment involves using analytics and insights to make informed hiring decisions. This approach allows companies to assess candidates not just based on their skills and experience but also on how well they align with the company's culture and values.

According to a recent report⁸, companies are increasingly focusing on soft skills and cultural fit. This shift is driven by the recognition that employees who align with the company's culture are more likely to be engaged and productive and stay longer.



The Importance of Cultural Fit

Cultural fit is about how well a candidate's values, beliefs, and behaviour align with the company's culture. In the SaaS sales environment, where teamwork, adaptability, and customer-centricity are key, a good cultural fit is essential.

A study by Deloitte⁹ found that 94% of executives and 88% of employees believe a distinct workplace culture is important to business success. This underscores the importance of hiring candidates who not only have the right skills but also fit well within the company's culture.



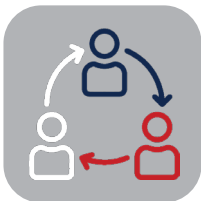
Strategies for Data-Driven Recruitment

Implement tools and technologies that can analyse candidate data and provide insights into their potential cultural fit. This can include personality assessments, behavioural interviews, and AI-driven analytics.

Use data from current high-performing employees to identify traits and characteristics that are indicative of success in your company's culture. This can serve as a benchmark for assessing new candidates.

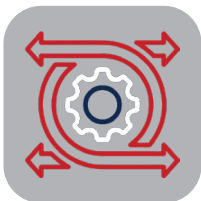
Creating the Right Environment for Sales Success in SaaS

Enquiring about the sales support environment involves understanding lead generation sources, whether leads are provided or self-generated, and the tools and support systems that have contributed to their success in previous positions



Supportive and Collaborative Culture

A culture that supports and values sales professionals is fundamental. This includes recognising achievements, providing constructive feedback, and offering clear paths for career advancement. Collaboration is equally important, as it encourages knowledge sharing and the development of more effective sales strategies. Such a culture not only boosts morale but also enhances productivity and team cohesion.



Access to Tools and Resources

Equipping sales teams with the necessary tools and resources is crucial. This encompasses everything from advanced CRM systems and sales enablement tools to comprehensive market data. These resources aid in effective pipeline management and informed decision-making. Additionally, ongoing training and development opportunities keep sales professionals abreast of the latest trends and techniques in the ever-evolving SaaS market.



Flexible and Adaptive Work Environment

Flexibility in the workplace can significantly attract and retain sales talent. Options for remote work, flexible scheduling, and a focus on work-life balance are increasingly sought after in today's job market. Moreover, an environment that can swiftly adapt to market changes and new sales strategies ensures that the sales team remains competitive and effective.



Encouraging Innovation and Creativity

Fostering an environment where innovation and creativity in sales strategies are encouraged can lead to more successful outcomes. Sales professionals should feel empowered to experiment with new approaches and contribute innovative ideas. Such a culture not only attracts ambitious talent but also drives the company's growth by harnessing the creative potential of its sales force.

Overview

Key points to consider when trying to hire great sales talent:



Employer Brand

- Make sure you consider your reputation and position in the market.
- Make sure your careers and social pages are well populated.
- Review your competitors, they are also your competitors for talent.

Talent Attraction

- Write jobs adverts to appeal specifically to a sales hires – think about what makes you a great company to sell for – Is it the product/ commission/ support/ progression.
- Message potential candidates directly, don't rely on advertising.
- Use a specialist recruiter who knows the SaaS market.

Commission

- Keep it simple and transparent with realistic earning potential and always reward over achievement.
- Consider their first year and how someone can earn commission during the ramp period.

Interview process

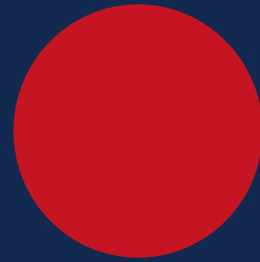
- Offer a copy of the pitch deck, rather than a generic job description – It offers detail on product fit and addressable market.
- Offer a demo of the product if you can.
- Remember you are also selling the role and business to them.

Onboarding

- Makes sure they are well looked after from day one – any poor experience during the first 3 months will sit negatively for a long time.
- Plan it well, don't wing it each day – first impressions are vital.

Environment

- Find out exactly what makes them successful in their current/last role - support, market, leads etc. – Make sure you are able to offer a similar environment.
- Why would they leave? Get to the bottom of their frustrations and make sure you understand what you need to offer.



Why choose Harvey Thomas

Leveraging Harvey Thomas's Insights for Stronger Employer Branding

Harvey Thomas's deep understanding of the SaaS sales landscape can significantly enhance your employer branding strategy. By leveraging our insights, you can ensure your employer brand effectively communicates the specific attributes that attract top sales talent. This includes:

- **Employee Advocacy:** Encouraging sales professionals within your company to share their experiences and successes can provide authentic and relatable content that speaks directly to potential candidates.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Showcasing a commitment to diversity and inclusion within your sales teams not only reflects well on your company culture but also appeals to a broader range of candidates, enriching your talent pool.
- **Digital Presence:** A strong digital presence that highlights the dynamism of your sales teams, the innovation of your products, and the culture of success within your organisation can be a powerful tool in attracting sales talent.

By focusing your employer branding efforts on the aspects that specifically appeal to sales professionals—success stories, growth opportunities, and competitive advantages—and leveraging the expertise of Harvey Thomas, your company can stand out as an employer of choice for top sales talent in the SaaS market.



Harvey Thomas specialises in understanding these unique motivations and aspirations of sales professionals in the SaaS market. With our deep knowledge of the industry and what drives sales talent, we can help companies craft compelling value propositions that resonate with top performers. Our expertise in the SaaS sales landscape allows us to guide companies through the challenges of attracting and retaining sales professionals who are not just looking for a job but a career where they can grow, succeed, and make a meaningful impact.

Working with Top Talent Providers like Harvey Thomas

Partnering with specialised recruitment agencies like Harvey Thomas offers significant advantages for companies seeking to attract and retain top sales talent.

Our deep understanding of the SaaS market, including its trends, challenges, and the specific skills required for sales roles. This expertise enables us to identify candidates who are not only skilled but also a good fit for your company's culture and the specific demands of the role.

Specialised agencies like ours have access to a broader network of potential candidates, including those who are passively looking for new opportunities. This access is crucial in a market where top talent is often not actively seeking new roles.

Working with us can streamline the recruitment process, making it more efficient and effective. We handle the initial stages of the recruitment process, from identifying potential candidates to preliminary screenings, saving companies valuable time and resources.



How Does Harvey Thomas Aid in Finding the Right Fit?

With more than 15 years of expertise in recruiting seasoned sales professionals for the global SaaS sector, we possess a deep understanding of excellence and effective methods for thoroughly vetting potential candidates.

- **Tailored Recruitment Approach:** Tailoring our recruitment approach to each company's specific needs. We take the time to understand your company's culture, goals, and the specific requirements of the sales role, ensuring that the candidates we recommend are well-aligned with these aspects.
- **Quality Over Quantity:** Our focus is on providing quality candidates rather than a large number of potential hires. This approach increases the chances of a successful hire and reduces the time and resources spent on the recruitment process.
- **Long-Term Partnership:** We view our relationship with companies as a long-term partnership, providing ongoing support and advice and helping you adapt your recruitment strategies as the market evolves.

Harvey Thomas' Proactive Approach to Attracting and Retaining Quality Sales Talent

Harvey Thomas is well-positioned to navigate the SaaS market's talent landscape demands precision and adaptability. Our deep understanding of the SaaS market allows us to anticipate changes and adjust our recruitment strategies accordingly. By staying ahead of industry developments, we can continue to provide top talent that meets the evolving needs of SaaS companies.

Ready to take your SaaS venture to new heights? Get in touch with our Founder directly at jon.eyers@harvey-thomas.com

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