



Sales Interview Question  
***Cheat Sheet!***

# Click the trait, experience, or skill below to navigate to the right questions

## TRAITS

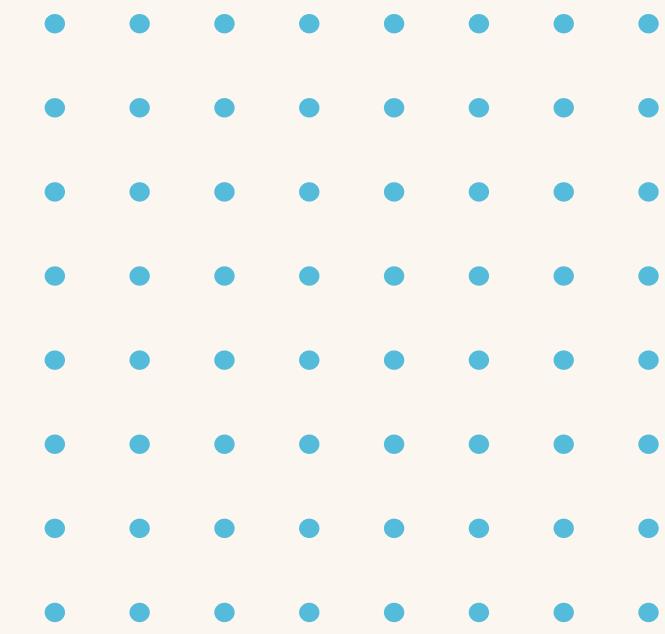
- Grit, perseverance
- Desire to Achieve
- Competitiveness
- Coachability
- Self-awareness
- Emotional quotient (EQ)
- Learner
- Team player
- Preparer, methodical, strategic
- Bias for action
- Optimism

## EXPERIENCE

- Context of their role
- Their attainment story
- Track record of success, achievements, mistakes
- Sales process & deal cycle experience
- Account executive Q's
- Account manager Q's

## SKILLS

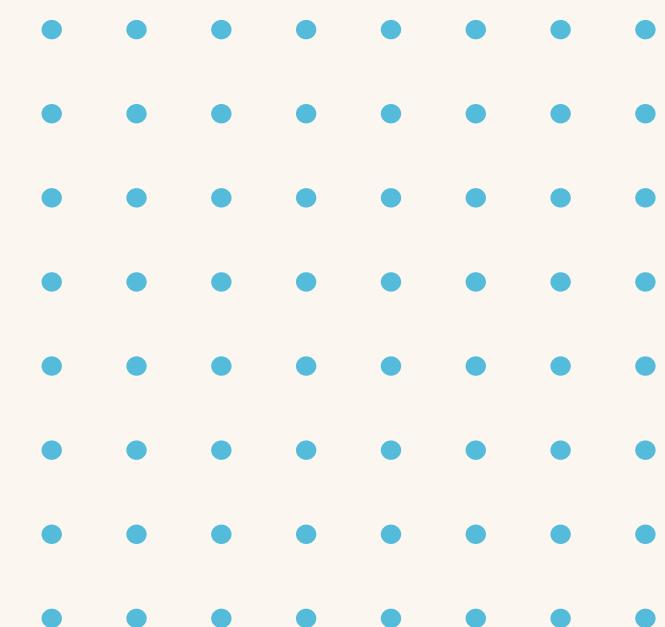
- Business acumen
- Discovery
- Presenting
- Objection handling
- Selling to Power & multi-threading
- Complex buying process
- Outbound
- Time management
- Territory & account planning



# Before you start: Successful interviewing principles

- **Focus on work history.** The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.  
Ask these questions in the context of understanding their previous work history. . . . .
- **Select no more than 4-6 must-have “traits.”** There’s a lot of traits in this cheat sheet, because there are a lot of different type of sellers. Your ideal candidate profile should have no more than 4-5 items in the “traits” section. . . . .
- **Choose what to dig into, select questions accordingly.** Throughout a hiring process, you’ll get a good sense of some aspects and a fuzzy sense of others. Use the next scheduled interview to focus on 1-2 traits, skills, or experiences to go deep on, and select your questions accordingly.
- **Probe, probe, probe.** Almost all of these questions will reveal only the tip of the ice berg. Ask several follow up questions from each one to get the full picture.

# TRAITS

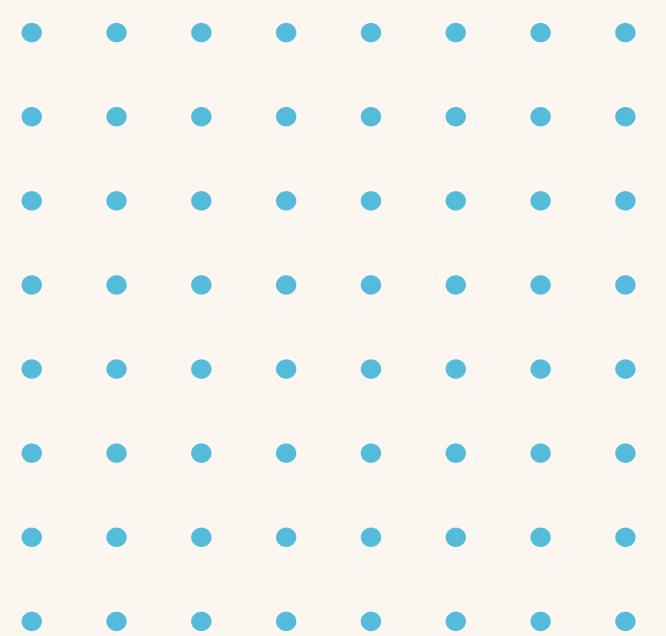


# Grit, perseverance

- What drives you, and how has that shown up in your work recently?
  - What kind of sacrifices did you have to make to be successful in [x-job]? : : : : :
    - (repeat for other jobs)
  - Tell me about the top 2-3 stories of perseverance from your life and career.
  - Tell me about a time you dug in and turned around a losing deal?
  - Tell me about your day to day and week to week work habits in x-job?
    - (repeat for other jobs)

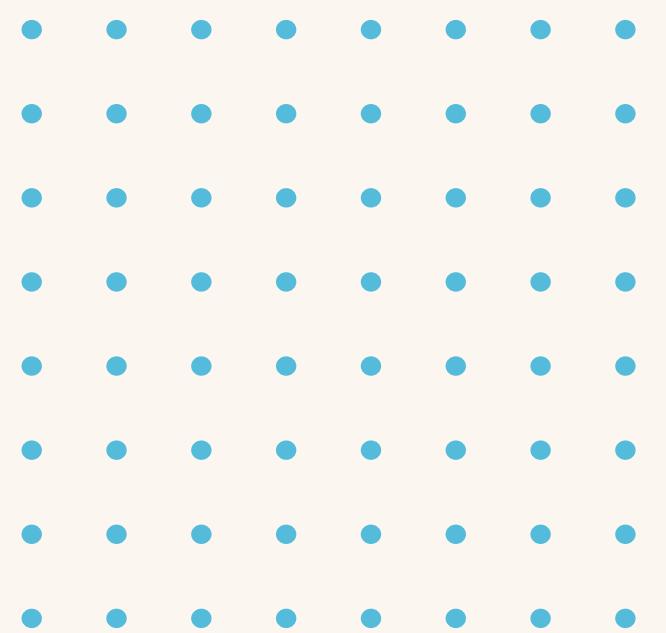
# Desire to Achieve

- Tell me about the top two times you went above and beyond expectations in [x-job]? (repeat for other jobs)
- Tell me about your proudest achievements at [x-job]? (repeat for other jobs)
- Tell me about the hardest you worked to achieve a goal at [x-job]? (repeat for other jobs)
- What's the toughest goal you've ever set for yourself and pursued at x-job? (repeat for other jobs, and for their life in general)



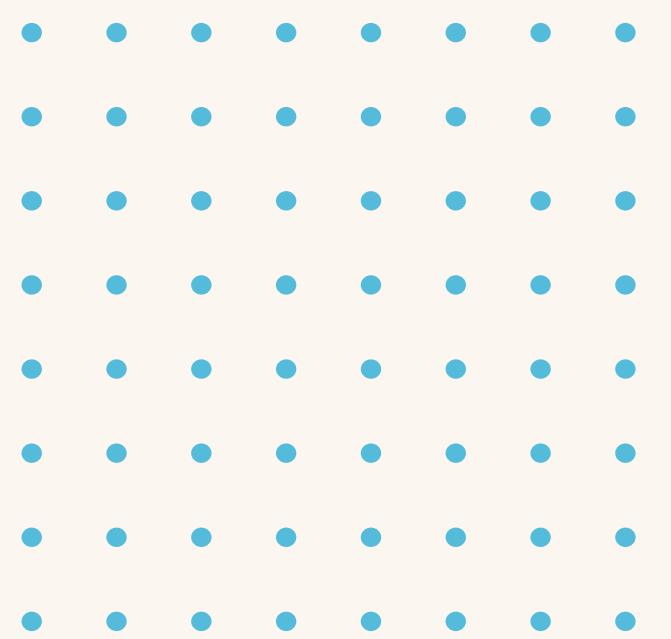
# Competitiveness

- Tell me about the last time you found yourself emotionally invested in winning some sort of competition (repeat).
- Walk me through the series of hobbies and passions you've had as your life has progressed?
- When you think about your sales leaderboard, what metric are you consistently at or near the top at?
- Who are you competing with right now, and how?



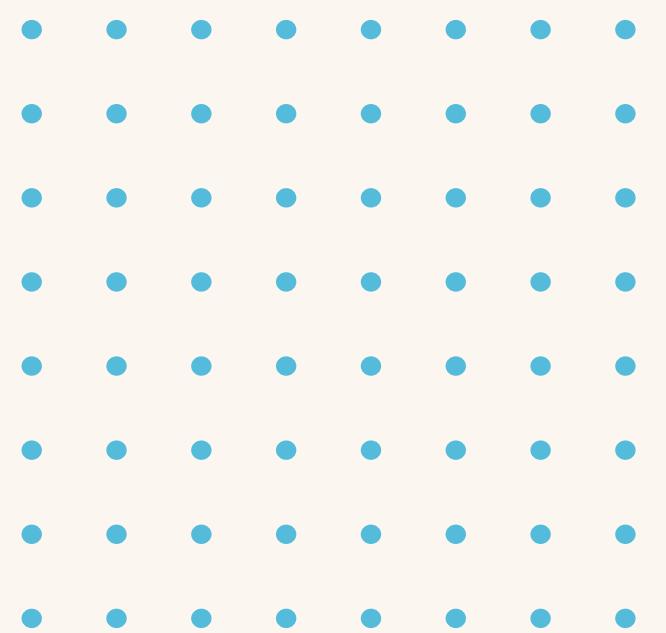
# Coachability

- Tell me about some constructive feedback you received in x-job? What did you do next? How did it change your behavior? How do you currently behave in that area? (repeat for other jobs)



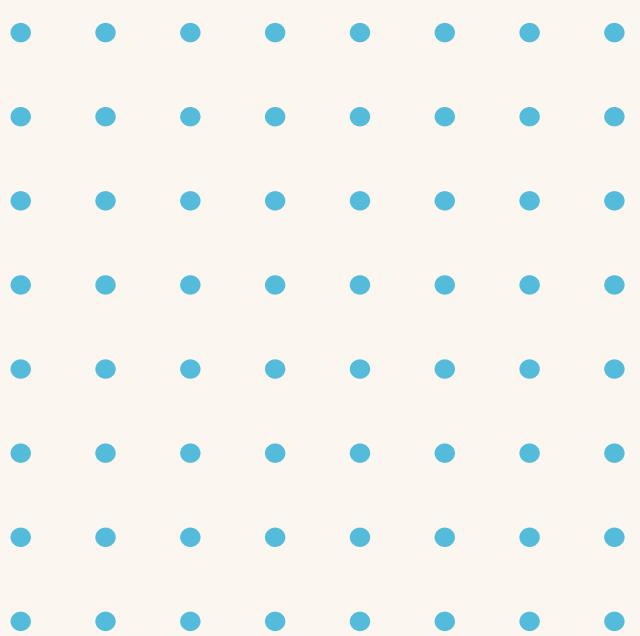
# Self-awareness

- What drives you and why?
- Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses as a seller in detail - let's aim for 5–6 in each category if you can.
- What are you NOT interested in doing professionally or as a seller?
- What was the most common misconception about you at x-job? (repeat for other jobs)
- [At the end of an interview] What's one question you wish I would have asked you?



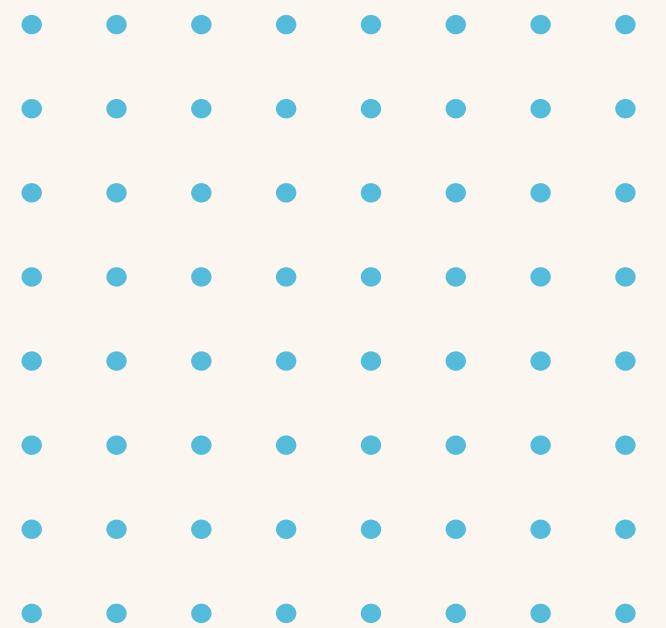
# Emotional quotient (EQ)

- Walk me through the details of a situation at x-job where you had a disagreement with a colleague, boss, or customer. How did you handle?
- Can you think of a time you inspired or motivated a teammate or colleague? Tell me about it.



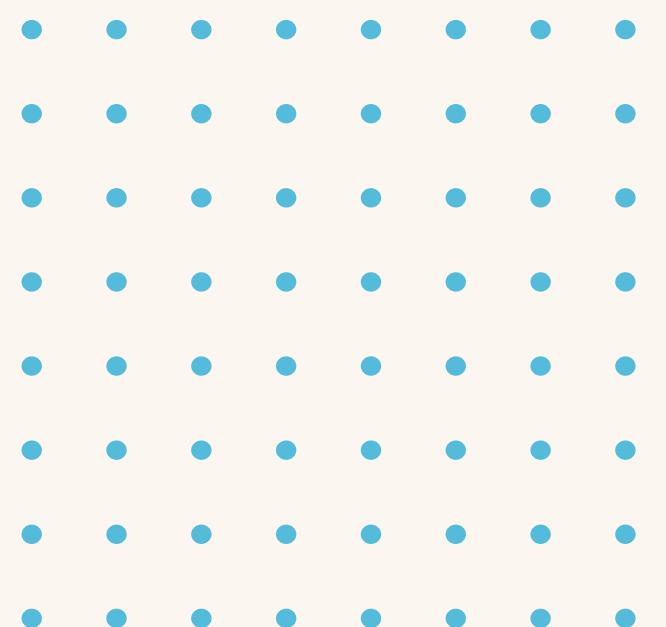
# Learner

- Walk me through how you've acquired your sales skills and learned to sell?
- Tell me about the most recent book, podcast, or course you've taken to develop yourself professionally?
- Tell me about a recent time you developed a new skill. Walk me through how you approached it?



# Team player

- Part of our hiring process is we'll eventually want to talk to a couple of your previous **teammates**. What would most of them say about the good, and not-so-good aspects of working with you?
- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond to help one of your teammates out in x-job? (repeat for other jobs and roles)
- Tell me about the most recent time you made your team better in some way? What did you do? Walk me through how you approached it? (repeat for other roles)

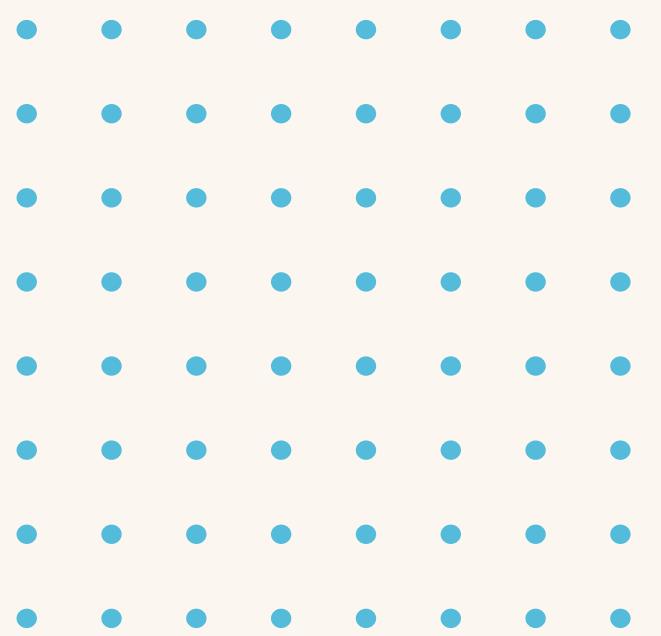


# Preparer, methodical, strategic

- Walk me through what you did to prepare for this interview? what information did you gather? What questions did you pre-plan on asking? : : : : :  
What questions did you anticipate that I'd ask and how did you prepare? : : : : :  
● Walk me through, in detail, a sticky **deal** situation you found yourself in, : : : : :  
and how you navigated out of it? Walk me through everything from how you assessed the situation, to your action plan, and how you executed.  
● Walk me through your process for how you prepare for key sales calls.

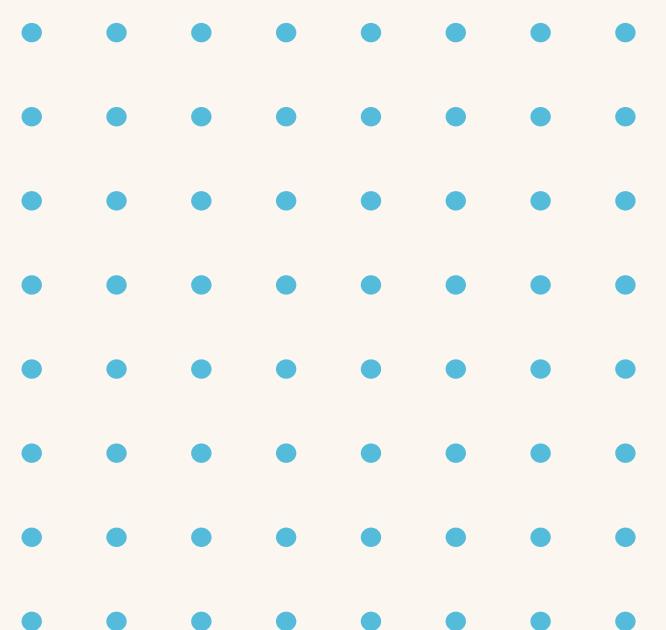
# Bias for action

- Walk me through the most recent time you had an idea about a deal or sales situation, and you **immediately** acted on implementing it.
- Walk me through how you typically plan and execute your day.

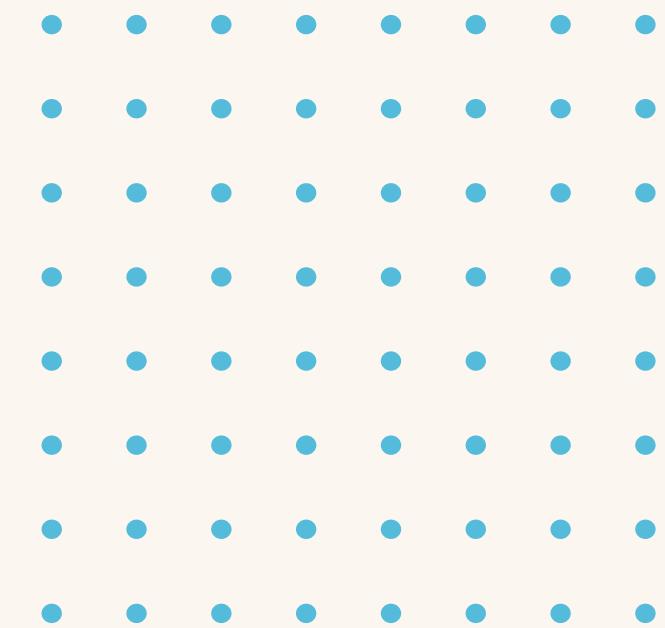


# Optimism

- Walk me through a time you found yourself in a bad situation, and how you got out of it? It could be a PIP, a deal gone-south, etc. Walk me through the moment you decided you were going to turn it around. What did you do?
- Tell me about a recent time you kept striving toward a goal even when most rational people would have assumed it was hopeless?



# EXPERIENCE



# Context of their role

- Tell me about your roles and responsibilities in [specific job]?
- What caused you to move on from your previous role?
- What compelled you to take your talents to *this* role?
- What did you like most and least about this job?

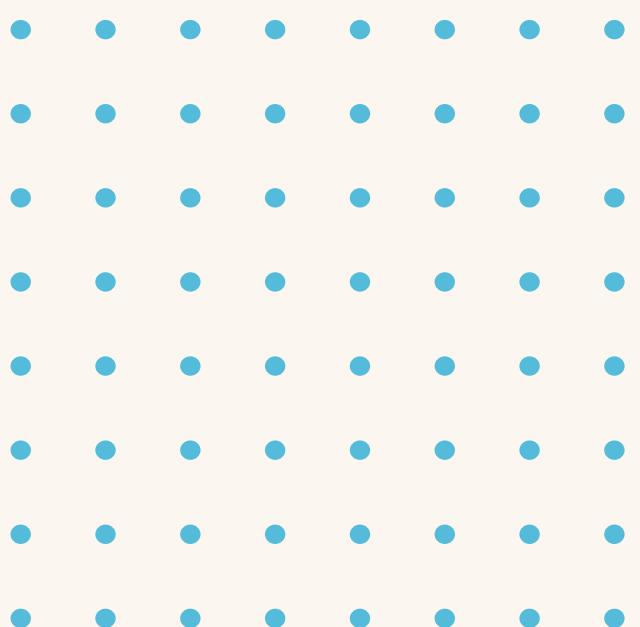
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# Their attainment story

- What was your quota during [x period?]
  - How was that quota structured? i.e. how much of that was pure net new business vs. upsell. vs. renewal ARR? :
  - How did you do against that quota during that same period? :
  - Walk me through in detail how you achieved that?
  - How many people were on your team during that time?
  - What was your stack rank on your team during that time?
  - What context, if any, would you want me to know about your attainment during this period
  - [Repeat for each relevant fiscal period]

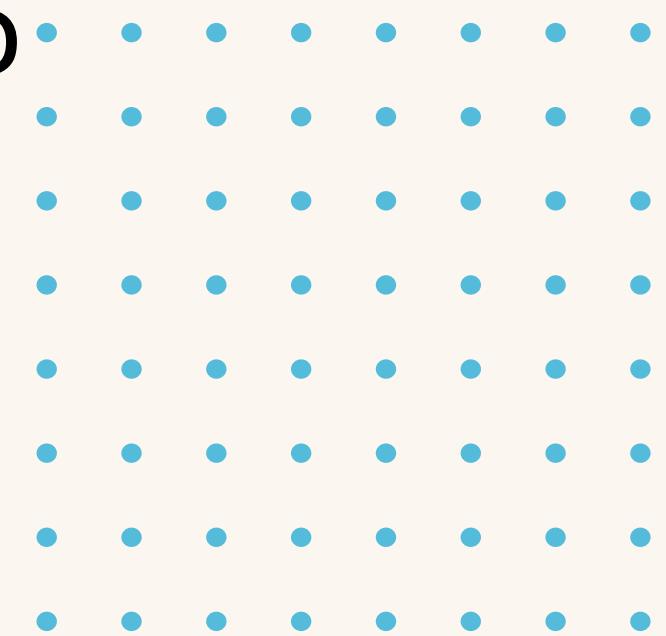
# Track record of success, achievements, and mistakes

- What are the top few achievements you're most proud of in life and career?
- What were your biggest accomplishments at x-job? (repeat for each)
- What have you demonstrated excellence at in your life or career?



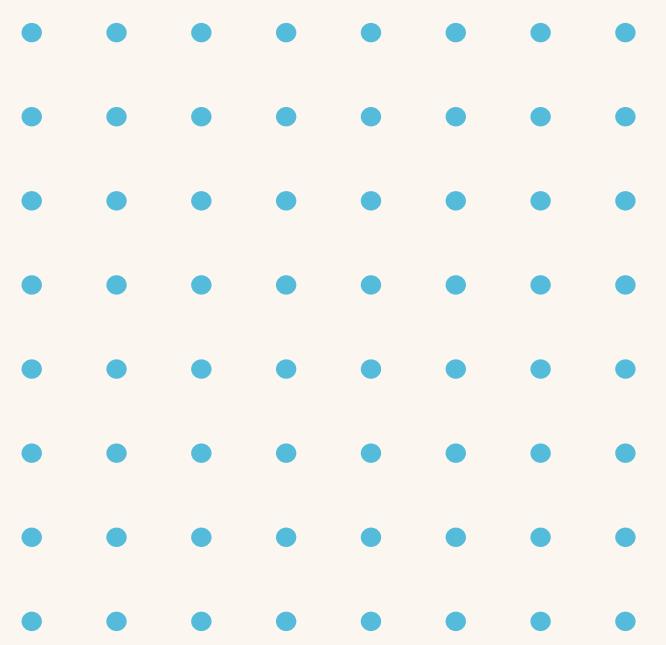
# Sales process & deal cycle experience

- At x-job, walk me through two deals from initial contact all the way to close, and every step, tactic, and strategy you took in between. Spare no detail. (repeat for each job)



# Account executive questions

- Help me understand the mechanics of [x-job] and what your roles and responsibilities were?
- What did your day to day activity look like? Number of disco calls, demos, prospecting calls, etc.?
- Where did you get your pipeline? Self? SDR? Marketing? Mix? Help me understand the mix.
- Tell me about your book of business or territory. How many accounts? How big were these accounts typically? Typical deal size? Sales cycle length?
- How was your quota structured? How much of that came from new business only? Upsells? Total contract value? etc.
- Walk me through a typical deal cycle in this role, step by step.

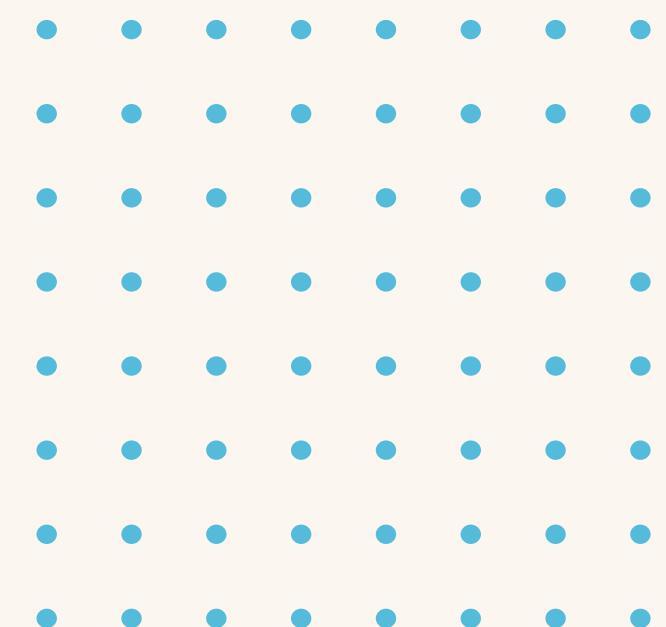


# Account manager questions

- Help me understand the mechanics of [x-job] and what your roles and responsibilities were?
- How many accounts did you manage? How big were those accounts in terms of both employee size, and account spend?
- Were you running renewals, upsells, both, or something different?
- How was your quota structured? How much of it came from renewals vs. upsells?
- Walk me through a typical renewal motion? Upsell motion?
- What was the source of expansion revenue in your accounts? Were you upselling more to an existing buying center? Selling new products? Finding *new* white space and buying centers within your accounts?

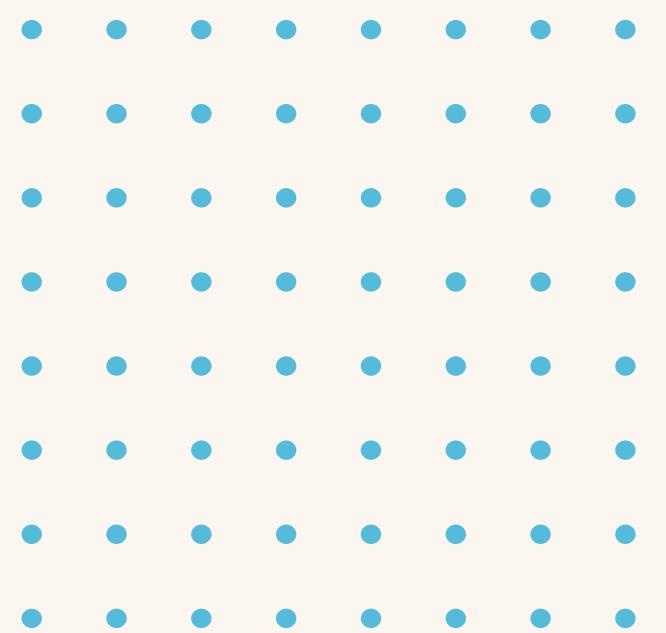
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# SKILLS



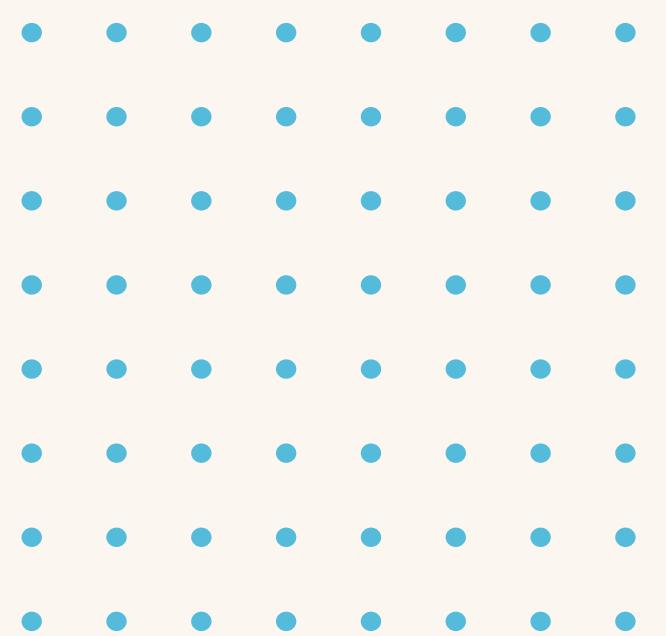
# Business acumen

- Walk me through a business case you helped a customer put together to justify a purchase.
  - What was the defined business problem to be solved?
  - What were the business ramifications of not solving it?
  - What was at stake financially? How did you come up with that math?
  - What high-level projections did you include in the business case? What were the drivers of those projections?
- If you were the CEO of your current company, what would keep you up at night when it comes to either your internal operations, or the external market environment?
- If you were an investor in our company rather than a job candidate, what would you want to know about our business?



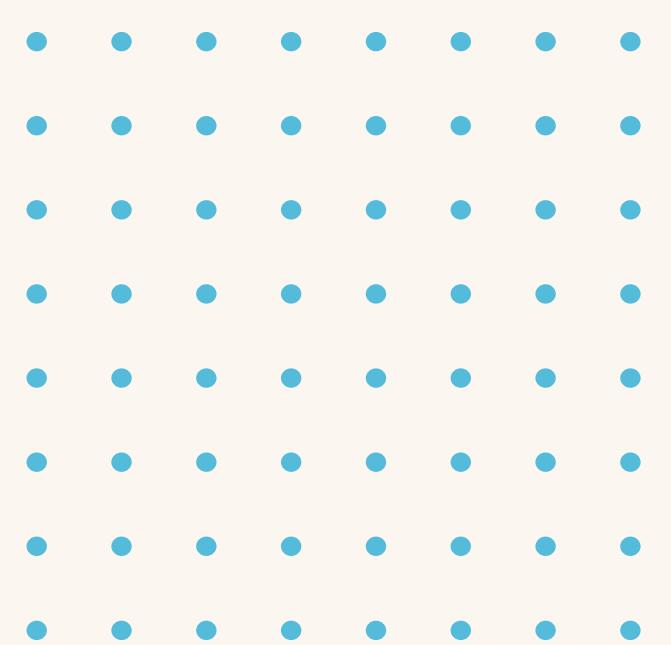
# Discovery

- What's your framework and process for running a great discovery call? How do you structure it?
- Tell me about a recent discovery call you knocked out of the park. Why was it so great? What questions did you ask? What was the business problem you eventually unearthed? How did you get there? How did you get the customer to open up?



# Presenting

- Tell me about the last sales presentation or demo you knocked out of the park.  
Why was it successful? How did you structure it? What did you say?



# Objection handling

- What's your framework and process for overcoming objections? What steps do you take? What do you say?
- What are the top 3 most common objections you get in x-job, and how do you handle them?
- Tell me about a time in this last week you got an objection and successfully overcame it? How did you handle it? What did you say?

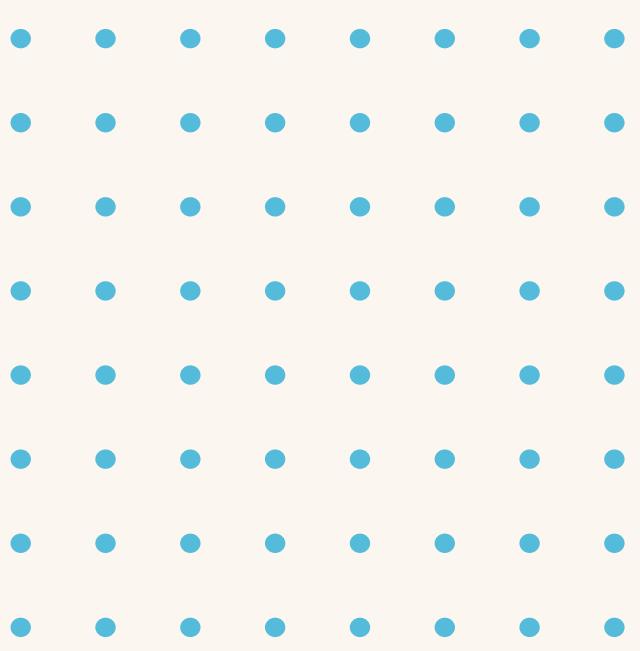
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# Selling to Power & multi-threading

- Who was the highest ranking person in your deals you typically worked with and sold to in x-job?
  - ● ● ● ●
- Walk me through how you would gain access to that person? What was your approach?
  - ● ● ● ●
- Tell me about a time you earned credibility from a high-ranking executive? What did you do? How did you make that happen?
  - ● ● ● ●
- Tell me about the ideal “blend” of people you’d navigate to get deals done? Who would you develop into a champion? Why them? Who would you try to box-out or neutralize? Why them?
  - ● ● ● ●
- Walk me through a deal where you executed multi-threading the best you ever have.

# Complex buying process navigation

- Walk me through, step by step, what steps your prospects and customers would have to take to make a purchase decision in x-job?
- Who was involved at each step, and how?
- Tell me about a successful mutual action plan you put together with your champion?
- How did you drive the process through legal, security, or procurement hurdles?
- Tell me about a time you and your champion had to go **find** or **create** budget that didn't exist at the start of the deal.

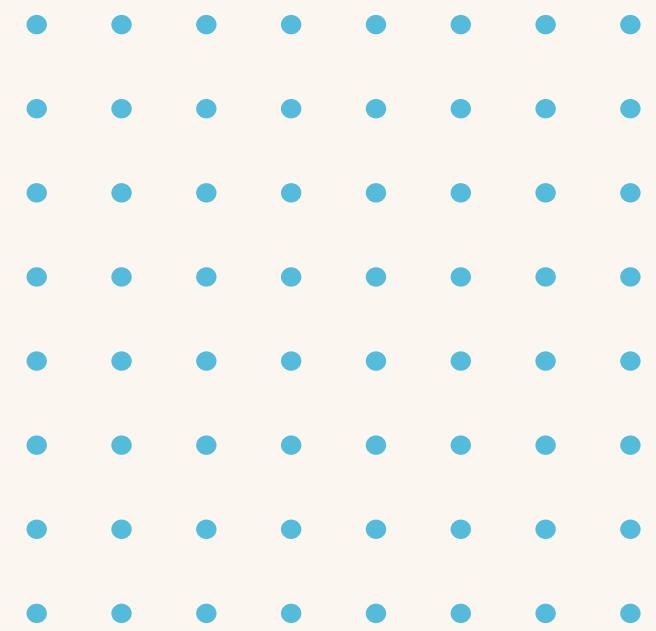


# Outbound

- Tell me about your daily prospecting and outbound habits in x-role?
- How many calls, emails, or contacts were you reaching out to daily? : . . . . .
- Walk me through how you would prepare for, and execute an outbound call, email, or sequence? What would you do for call research? What were you looking for? How would you structure the call or email? What would you say? Do you have an example you can share? : . . . . .

# Time management

- Walk me through, in detail, how you manage your time and plan your days.



# Territory and account planning

- Walk me through, step by step, how you develop an account plan?

- What are the key sections you include?
  - How do you come up with an action plan?
  - Can you tell me about a recent example?

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- Walk me through, step by step, how to develop a territory plan?

- What are the key sections you include?
  - How do you come up with an action plan?
  - Can you tell me about a recent example?

# THANK YOU!

**Got feedback on this cheat sheet?**

Shoot [Chris Orlob](#) a LinkedIn message.