If you think my free feed is valuable then you can imagine what the paid stuff is like. Here's the link to check it out [link].

For requests, comments or questions please find me on twitter [link] or email at bowtiedcocoon@gmail.com

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A) Personality Questions:

Tell me about yourself?

Highly specific to the individuals. Answers should be 2-3mn long and should show a logical progression toward this position you're applying for.

Everything you say will either add to your cause and help you land the role or will hurt you. Choose your words and stories carefully.

Some examples:

Stories about close relationship with family signals a good culture fit in org
Stories about personal achievements signals a high performing individual
Stories about overcoming setbacks signals grit and resilience

so and so forth.

Choose what you say carefully! Practice your answer a x100 time and deliver it as authentically as possible. Be enthusiastic. This will set the tone for the rest of the interview.

Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years ?

No reason to share with master clown your personal agenda. Again, just tell him what he wants to hear.

My 20s are for learning, my 30s are for earning.

- **Year 1 :** Learn as much as I can (product & sales methodology), grasp the company culture and break into the best 10% —> SDR or AE
- **Year 2-3**: Taking on more responsibilities (working on bigger deals or helping manager with day to day on top of my existing responsibilities)
- **Year 4-5:** Break into sales management and transmit to others everything I was able to learn.

Are you comfortable being told "no" a lot?

The reality is that sales is often just a number's game, so I know that by outworking everyone I will get to my target independently of the number of no's.

I am really trying to become a system person, meaning that my primary focus is to execute everyday on a set of actions (in this case # touchpoints like calls etc) that should lead to results while being detached from the outcome. So in that sense I am very comfortable as I know that the next yes is just around the corner.

Another good response: "Ha. I don't think anyone likes being told "no" a lot but it's a reality we face in sales. I have the mindset of "Every no leads me closer to a YES!" so I'm not phased by it. In fact, I think it's a necessity to be comfortable with being told "no", that's why sales rep and objection management are here for.

What's your biggest failure?

Describe first a failure. Then clearly identify 1-3 learnings that were made and give examples of how you implemented them when you were faced with a similar situation. +1 if those learnings are applicable to the sales position.

B) Questions about the sales position:

Succeeding in sales means that

a) you helped solve your customer's problem;
b) you made shareholders happy;
c) you helped your firm's tech support and admin staff keep their jobs; and,
d) you're bringing home something extra for yourself or your family.

Why sales?

Beside the fact that it is the single most transferable skill, I can enumerate a thousand reasons why I want to get into sales. Here are a few:

- **Human growth:** You're forced to become resilient, efficient and most importantly an optimistic person and these are values very dear to me that I will get the chance to practice everyday.
- **Financial aspect:** There is a direct correlation between effort and reward that simply can't be matched by an hourly rate
- **Route into management**: Most chief executives (Dan Valentine from Sequoia, Mark Hurd) and senior managers either started their career or at least have spent some time in their career in sales.
- **The people:** I've had the pleasure of discussing with several AE, SDR and VPs and I admire their thirst for growth, challenge and I also enjoy learning from them!
- *[read efficiency by WSP/BTB for further examples]*

Bottomline, by working in Sales I will be building a skill that is needed in every single business, I have an extremely high likelihood of becoming rich and I will be forced to become a positive thinking person. I can't think of a better career.

What makes you the right person for this job?

Great question Master Clown. I think the best way to answer is to put myself in your shoes.

If I were to hire someone, I would like an individual that can perform at a high level for this position. That implies right *skills* and right *attitudes*.

Skills:

- Management consulting = experience with customer facing role including c-level executives + Business requirement gathering + I have hands on experience at [Clown Saas] selling SaaS accounting (top 5% sales rep)
- Any previous xp within the same industry as org you're applying to. If not, focus on transferable skills.

Attitude:

- Self starter, resilient and is ok operating in a fast paced and ambiguous environment = link with entrepreneurial xp if applicable.
- A team player —> Sales is a team sport. There are so many parts of the company that support us every day, and it's very important that I get to know those people. These are people like: Finance, Logistics, Customer Service. Give an example that shows you're a team player.
- Coachability: Someone that can adapt and learn. I will be honest here, one of the main reasons I want to work in your organization is because I've heard very positive feedback about your sales training, and I believe I can learn a lot from you and the rest of the team.

What's the perfect salesman:

Someone who's trained like an SDR, Close like an AE, onboard like a Customer Success rep & think like an owner.

Why is now a good time to join us?
Make them feel good about themselves.

I think now is the best time to join your company and I attribute that to several factor

- The addressable market has never been bigger across all product categories
- Technology is year ahead of competition
- The success the customers are experiencing by leveraging your product/service are incredible and I want to contribute to this impact

What would you tell this gate-keeper that answered the phone in order to convince them to put the decision-maker on the phone?

- Avoid the gatekeeper —> get the decision maker information directly through a different medium (linkedin, colleague etc)
- Create a great interaction with the gatekeeper prior to asking my demand
- Act like a Senior and be assertive
- Last resort for whale account: Prepare the copy and ask my manager or director to reach out to prospects on my behalf and introduce me.

Tell me about the sales cycle you were previously involved with?
So there were two sales cycles: For existing customers + For new customers. I had the opportunity to work on both.

1. Renewing existing customers: Engagement > Discovery > Summary > Pitch > Close
2. New Customer Acquisition: Prospecting > Qualify (Gather info about customer: are you a decision maker? Do you have budget?) > Interview/Sales Call > Proposal > Negotiation > Close > Follow up & Referral

What's the perfect salesman:
Someone who's trained like an SDR, onboard like a Customer service rep & think like an owner

How do you see your first 90 days?

1. **Industry/Product knowledge:** #1 priority is to absorb as much as I can about the company, our product suite, the industry jargon, the organizational tools to hit the ground running (CRM etc).
2. **Meet the team:** Sales is a team sport (support, finance etc) and I want to start building relationships with internal stakeholders so I can understand what everyone's role is and we can contribute to their success. I would also love to shadow the best performers on your team and break down their success.
3. **Performance**: Get into the top 10% AE/SDR in the organization asap. More concretely, I'd want to break the sales record of a rookie on his first quota.

Why are you looking to leave your current company? *also applies if you've only been at current company for a few months.*
Good question Mr Hiring Manager. I believe #1 priority of a sales is rep is to sell for companies that have the intention to dominate their space - meaning the right 1) people 2) resources and 3) product

Don't get me wrong, I love my work & my team, but our product is inferior and there is no clear timeline as to when we'll develop *key* functionalities and integrations that our competitors deployed already.

I witness them eating our lunch a bit more every day and I believe it is my responsibility as sales professional to position myself within the organization & industry where I will be able to sell the most and have the best career opportunities.

John, I qualify prospects everyday! Can you imagine if I did not do the same for the company I worked for?

C) Questions about the company X:

What do you know about our company:

*Make some research and when possible find one *original* insight about the company (check CEO podcast, news etc). If you teach the recruiter something about his own company, he wont forget you.*

Tools to use:
Crunchbase (look up if they raised $$, made acquisitions etc)
Google: [company name] + click "news" + read wikipedia page
Read reviews on Glassdoor, G2, Reddit, etc
Talk to friends in the company (if you know people leverage them!), otherwise use linkedin.
Company website [read through company culture/value BS]

Why our company?

- **Context:** Addressable market has never been bigger *(particularly relevant if org has benefited from macro trend)*
- **Position:** want to have an impact by helping individuals and organizations increase their efficiency/revenue/cost/etc by adopting your solution.
- **People:** *Make them feel good about themselves.* You guys managed to take a company from nothing to something worth +$XB in 7 years. I want to learn how you guys did it
- **Culture:** *Look up the company's website and tie their mission/values to real situations that exemplifies those.*

What do you find innovative about our company?
*Do some reading about the organization. *tip: Type their name in google and filter by ews.*

D) Questions to ask the interviewer:

Get to know Interviewer better
How did you end up in sales? What did you wish you knew when you started?

Company culture:
What's a typical week in this position look like?
What's the culture like in the [city] office?

Future Success in Position:
What is it that you would like someone to accomplish in the first 90 days?
What is the one trait that you believe is absolutely necessary to perform well in this position?
How are we planning to adapt to [big change coming in industry]?

Learning Material:
What learning material do you suggest to support my success as a sales rep —> Book, podcasts, Non Profit, High authorities, training… anything

How to fast track career in sales:
What do you think has mostly helped you get in X company ?
How can I get into management within a 2-3y timeframe?

Follow up question:
Do you consider yourself honest ? Is there anything that leaves you with hesitancy with hiring me for the position?

E) Finish Interview on High Note

BONUS* Collateral to Finish Strong (shoutout to @BowtiedChemist)

For making it to the end, I wanted to share a tactic I've used that *always* guarantees me the offer (seriously, I mean *always*).

At the end of each interview, when it's time for any questions you have, always ask the interviewers: "When you think of your highest performing SDR (or AE, applicable to both), what are the qualities or traits they exhibit that consistently has them outperforming their peers". Whatever they say following this, *we genuinely don't care*. For our purposes, this is just to lay up our follow up question: "Perfect, well hopefully I've been able to exemplify at least a few of those today. With that said, is there any reason you feel this wouldn't be a good fit or concerns on your end I can further touch on? Now, shut up.

This is accomplishing a few things:

1. Demonstrates willingness to ask the difficult questions
2. You already primed the interviewer by painting a picture of their highest performer and attached your identity to it
3. You're showing objections are something to seek out rather than shy away from
4. You're treating the interview like a sales call asking for next steps
5. Executes a soft close

Seriously, this question is a cheat code and sales managers love it. Worst case scenario, you end the interview on a strong note. Best case scenario, you get the job on the spot and *make the sale*.

If you use it, let me know how it went or any stories by tweeting @BowtiedCocoon. I'd love some feedback on any success this brings.

F) Prepare to pitch the product/service:

BONUS* Nailing the sales portion of the interview where you showcase your skills selling their product (shoutout to @BowTiedSalesGuy).

This is where you demonstrate your sales ability. Remember, "Demonstrate, do not explicate." It's infinitely more powerful to SHOW them your sales skills as opposed to TELLING them you have sales skills.

Ok, let's begin.

Make sure you do all the research/prep necessary before taking this call!

Every sales presentation follows this *general* flow:

The Intro

Since you are selling to the hiring manager (clown) then this part will be quick and easy. It should look something like this:

You: "Hey name, how's it going?"
Them: "Good and you?"
You: "Doing great. Glad we could both find the time to jump on this call"

And then you transition into step 2, the bridge:

The Bridge

You: "So [name], I think a good place to start would be for you to tell me what brought you to us?"

This question naturally leads you to step #3

The Q&A

You want to follow the SPIN method of questioning (read SPIN selling). Here is where you "become the doctor" probe for the *real* problems and ask the hard questions.

Once you identify the problem you then build up the perceived issue with implication questions. So it looks something like this:

You: So what brought you to us? (Situation question)

Them: Yeah we are looking for a way to find leads efficiently

You: What about your current lead gen process is inefficient? (Problem question)

Them: We have to use many different tools to find our leads and even then there's no guarantee we are getting the accurate contact details.

You: "How many leads a month do you guys lose due to the inefficiencies? (Implication question)

Them: Umm, I would say hundreds maybe even thousands

You: "That's a lot. Your guys avg price point is $10k / year. So assuming you miss out on 1,000 leads a month and close 2% of them (industry average) that's 20 deals a month you're losing. 20 deals x $10k that's $200,000/year in lost income due to your current processes!"

Them: "Wow when you put it that way. That's a lot."

You: "And not to mention how frustrating it must be for your team to waste so much time finding inaccurate contact info!" (More implications.. "twist the knife!"

Them: Yeah this is a serious issue.

You: Then you're in luck, [name]. Ok, let's dive into the product and I'll show you around.

Move to step #4

The presentation

This is where *you* will be doing most of the talking. You are now armed with a business case and both you and the prospect are aware of the burning problem AND, this is key, you can tie a numeric value to the problem. You need to sound slightly bored as if you've done this a million times. Use LOTS of social proof. Name drop their competitors etc. Show them how you solve the same problem they have BUT for other companies. This will create intrigue and attract them to you guys as the solution.

*TIP: Don't go into all the features of the platform. Only the key features that will help them and then finally you end with:

"And that's just scratching the surface [name]. We're coming up on our time here. Any questions for me before we wrap up?"

Next steps / Close

They will almost always ask you “What’s the price?”. That’s where you pull up the pricing on the screen share and you SHUT UP! Let the prospect ask their questions. You have to answer them in a cool laid back way. Your mindset is “I’m interested in closing this deal but no big deal if it doesn’t. I’ve got 5 more in the pipeline”. Then you say:

“Cool so here are the next steps. If you guys are ready to move forward I’ll send over the agreement. Otherwise we can set up a follow up call for early next week. Which works best for you?

If prospect asks for agreement, ask them which package they want and close the deal

If prospect wants follow up call then coordinate the meeting ON the call and lock it in!

Then finish with “Ok [name], it was good to connect today. I look forward to catching up with you next week Monday at 4pm”

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