



Sales Department

Sales – department specific

Let's talk a bit about our sales (or as we call it, business development) department at Wings Travel Management. Our approach to selling is a little different than other companies in the market. First off, we're a high-touch, involved business. We're not selling a product that we then support; we're selling a service. We're solving problems and offering highly professional solutions. This means we need to think on our toes, balancing a careful combination of listening to our clients and using the gift of gab. Like our operations teams, our sales people tend to specialise in one of three areas: government, oil and gas or corporate.

Our sales people at Wings are generally separated into New Business Officers (NBOs) and Key Account Managers (KAMs). These roles are quite different and need a different approach to get their jobs done.

NBOs are the hard-core, target-driven sales people who go into the market to find business. This can involve some tasks which may be perceived as difficult – cold calling and generating leads, for example. Our NBOs are challenge-seeking, adventurous individuals who revel in the chase. They're our hunters, and they bring the business to the company.

KAMs are our relationship managers, although that isn't exactly all they do. We offer a commitment to our clients to ensure their travel is managed effectively and appropriately, and sometimes that involves educating and guiding the clients. Our KAMs are, in essence, business partners and consultants – this isn't a tea and cake position.

A quick note: Sometimes, industry experience is a requirement when applying for a position. We're not quite so sticky on that point, but selling at Wings is a little different to selling second-hand cars or holiday packages. Remember, we sell a service, one which our clients sometimes don't realise they need. Clients can come in different shapes, sizes and temperaments (regardless of industry). You'll need to see working with the difficult ones as a challenge, discovering how best to work with them and closing the deals. (Helpful tip: Useful similar industries include sectors such as insurance and financial services.)

*So what does it take to work in business development? **Stress management** is especially important. This is a **target-driven**, highly pressurised industry, and this applies to both KAMs and NBOs. On a related note, **time management** helps keep our sales professionals active and productive. We can't waste our opportunities and need to be able to seize them quickly. **Enthusiasm and drive** are also important. If the services we offer are exciting to our sales people, that tends to carry over to our potential clients.*

*There are other skills that are required for business development: **Charisma, presentation and charm** are, of course, always important for sales people, but we also like our sales people to **think laterally**, analysing the needs of our clients, understanding their underlying challenges and issues, and **offering realistic, cost-effective solutions**.*

How to prepare for a business development interview

Business development interviews are dynamic and often nontraditional. We know that sales people are charismatic and interesting individuals, and so we often take a slightly different approach to discovering their capabilities and fit during the interview stage.

This is what we are looking for. Be prepared to deal with these issues:

Be prepared to give a short sales presentation.

This isn't always a requirement during sales interviews, but it is something we sometimes ask for when interviewing potential NBOs. If we do ask for this, make sure you know what is expected – ask as many questions as you can.

Be yourself.

There are a lot of stereotypes when it comes to sales. Here's the thing: Clients react differently, so using the same approach for each is not going to work. You may have a quirky style or interesting way of approaching the client – one we haven't seen before. Don't stick to what you think we want to see.

Give examples of when things have gone well.

Don't just tell us you've got experience. Be specific. Tell us about your high points, your achievements. Take us through your approach.

Give examples of when things have gone ... less well.

We'd like to hear about your crushing disappointments. We know that rejection is a part of sales – whether losing an established client or flubbing a sales pitch – so we'd like to hear how you've dealt with those situations in the past.

Know your priorities.

Business development is a time-intensive job, and sometimes we're going to have special requirements that could become an issue if you're not prepared for them. Just for example, sometimes positions may require travelling for a certain period each month, or have after-hours appointments that need to be kept. If your home life and external responsibilities don't allow for these times, *let us know that*.

Have fun.

We know this one sounds trite, but think about this for a moment. Making a sale, dealing with a difficult client, having an interview – all of these can be intensely stressful. If you can enjoy selling yourself and letting us get to know you, then you're more likely to enjoy the pressures of the job.



Have passion for people.

We've noticed that successful business development people tend to have a lot of interest in other people. They like to understand what makes others "tick" and like making them happy.
