



sanofi-aventis

REALIZED IT.

THE BEST SALES TALENT TO DRIVE
CONTINUED GROWTH.

HIRING & PROMOTING THE BEST



AN EFFICIENT HIRING SYSTEM ENABLES A SUCCESSFUL SALES FORCE EXPANSION

ABOUT SANOFI-AVENTIS

- > World's third largest pharmaceutical company; headquarters are in Paris, France; U.S. headquarters are in Bridgewater, N.J.
- > 2005 U.S. sales of \$33.7 billion.
- > Employs 100,000 people worldwide, including a sales force of 4,200 in the U.S.

Since 2000, sanofi-aventis has emerged as one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, now the third largest in the world and the largest in Europe. Helping fuel this growth is a strong roster of products. One of these, Lantus[®], was first introduced in Europe in 2000 and has become the world's best-selling insulin, due in large part to its strong sales in the U.S.

When, in 2004, sanofi-aventis launched Apidra[®], a complementary metabolism drug for treating Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, it needed to scale up its sales force in order to optimally market the two drugs.

By a scale-up, sanofi-aventis meant a *fast* scale-up. Five hundred new sales reps, 75 district managers, and 20 regional directors were needed for an entirely new metabolism drug business unit. And they had to be in place within seven months. Making this sales force scale-up even more challenging was that sanofi-aventis wanted a certain type of sales professional.

"We were looking for people who were very driven, who had the proven intellectual ability to absorb the information around the products, and who had also proven themselves to be effective salespeople," says John Harrington, VP of the metabolism business unit.

A 2002 McKinsey study captured the challenges associated with calling on physicians, finding that pharma sales reps typically get to speak with a doctor in just one out of five office visits. When they do, the discussions last an average of less than two minutes and the physician later only recalls about 40 percent of these discussions.

Finding the right talent to thrive in this difficult sales environment required a deep pool of candidates, which led sanofi-aventis to look seriously at those with little or no pharma sales experience, in addition to candidates who were experienced pharma sales reps.

"We wanted to cast a wider net, move away from the traditional hiring model, and act on the belief that if we could offer people the opportunity to join the industry, they would be very motivated by that opportunity," says Harrington, who explains that those who had been involved in "technical sales positions," such as selling networking equipment or rental car services, were viewed as viable candidates. "We were looking for a core of people with a mixture of experience and new ideas so that we could create an innovative environment."



BUILDING THE BOTTOM LINE BY HIRING THE BEST SALES TALENT

“WE WOULD HAVE DIFFERENT PROCESSES and

systems going on in different parts of the country, and what DDI did was bring it all together into one selection system, one process, and with everyone following that process.”

CHRIS JONES,
REGIONAL SALES
DIRECTOR,
SANOFI-AVENTIS

Filling the positions within the seven-month time-frame itself represented a challenge. But bringing the right people into the selection process, evaluating them against the requirements for success in pharma sales, and ultimately selecting the best people for these important positions required a well-thought-out, well-planned, and well-executed selection system.

ONLINE AND PHONE SCREENS IDENTIFY THE BEST

In 2001, DDI helped sanofi-aventis successfully source, screen, and assess more than 31,000 candidates, and hire more than 1,000 top-notch sales professionals for its metabolism sales unit. This highly successful initiative, completed in just four months, provided an excellent model for the current sales force scale-up. But because people from outside the pharma industry would be targeted, new recruiting and screening processes were required.

Understanding the need to have a strong management team, sanofi-aventis first moved to fill the regional director and district manager positions. These hires were made from within the organization.

“We took existing candidates that had come through our management development leadership classes, as well as taking regional directors and sales managers from existing sales forces, to cross-pollinate the new sales force,” says Chris Jones, regional sales director for sanofi-aventis. “That way, there could be some sharing and collaboration from other experiences that could contribute to this group achieving its goals.”

While hiring for the leadership jobs, sanofi-aventis simultaneously focused on building the right system to fill the 500 sales rep positions. Sanofi-aventis engaged DDI to help design and execute the fully integrated system, which entailed candidate sourcing, online and phone-based screening, and multiple behavior-based interviews.

DDI worked with sanofi-aventis to create a success profile for the sales rep positions. All candidates for these positions would be assessed against the competencies in this success profile, including Planning & Organizing, Customer Focus, Communication, Decision Making, Sales Ability/Persuasiveness, and Building Working Relationships. Jones says this mix of competencies, which notably didn't include knowledge of pharmaceuticals or pharma sales, gave sanofi-aventis the flexibility to hire good people from other industries.

“You look at companies that are known to have excellent training programs and that produce solid performers. When you bring those people into a sanofi-aventis organization with our pipeline, our portfolio, the culture that we have here, it really makes for a good mix.”

To find the best candidates, sanofi-aventis drew on multiple sources, including employee referrals, its database of past applicants, and online job boards. All candidates, regardless of their source, completed an online application, after which they immediately progressed to a DDI-designed screening site that captured their work experience, education, skills, and other pertinent information relative to the job requirements and success profile.

After completing the online screening, candidates were sorted into A, B, C, and D bands. These bands were not grades, but instead captured the candidates' level of experience and past professional performance. For instance, a high-performing salesperson might be an A, while a teacher or someone with a military background, but no sales track record would be a C. A recent college grad with no professional experience would be a D.

All candidates who completed the screening received immediate feedback. Those identified as promising, based on their responses, were then invited to schedule a phone-delivered assessment,

“WE ONLY HIRED ABOUT THREE PERCENT

of the people that applied, but we were able to screen and hire them quickly, and get them on the road to performance earlier.”

JOHN HARRINGTON,
VICE PRESIDENT,
METABOLISM
BUSINESS UNIT,
SANOFI-AVENTIS

which was conducted by a DDI assessor. Sanofi-aventis managers also could manually select additional individuals to advance to the phone-delivered assessment upon reviewing the results of their online screening.

The phone-delivered assessment included questions tied directly to the information the candidate had provided during the online screening. Assessors probed for additional information in order to compile a complete picture of the candidate's background and qualifications and assessed the candidate against the competencies in the success profile. Unlike with the online screening, where sanofi-aventis gave managers the ability to take another look at candidates who were not automatically advanced to the next step, a minimum total score on the phone-based assessment was required for a candidate to advance to the interviewing phase. Jones says that the rationale for this requirement was based on sanofi-aventis' past hiring experience.

“In 2003 we did a study and in 2004 it was confirmed that if you hire people that have acceptable scores within each of the competencies in the phone assessment, they're almost two times more likely to achieve or exceed sales objectives. So, understanding that, if a candidate did not have the required minimum score on the phone assessment they were not moved on to the interviewing stage.”

Candidates who advanced to the next phase went through two to three interviews with sanofi-aventis hiring managers using DDI's *Targeted Selection*[®] behavior-based interviewing system. DDI had trained and certified nearly 100 sanofi-aventis managers in *Targeted Selection*[®], which gives interviewers the skills to gather the data they need from candidates in order to arrive at hiring decisions.

In some larger markets, where multiple sales reps were to be hired, sanofi-aventis held job fairs and invited the best candidates. During these fairs, the candidates went through multiple *Targeted Selection*[®] interviews on-site and, if selected, left with a job offer. Using this approach, sanofi-aventis was able to compress time-to-hire—moving a candidate through the hiring process, from online application to job offer, in as little as one week.

MORE SELLING DAYS AND BIG SAVINGS

In all, using the hiring system designed and executed in partnership with DDI, sanofi-aventis was able to screen 17,000 applicants, complete 4,000 phone-based assessments, and fill all of its positions in just 32 working days compared to the seven months projected for the sales force scale-up. By completing the scale-up in this compacted time frame, sanofi-aventis was able to realize 15,578 additional selling days, equating to an estimated \$15 million in savings.

“We started in the first week of January and we finished by March 15. The target date was to finish by the end of July,” says Harrington. “We only hired about three percent of the people that applied, but we were able to screen and hire them quickly, and get them on the road to performance earlier. When you do that, it allows you to generate an enormous number of extra sales calls that you never budgeted for.”

Seventy percent of the new hires had no pharma experience. Yet, they represented a strong group of top-quality talent, as evidenced by the new hires' scores on sales training knowledge tests and role plays, which were above the company's historical averages.

“We had a more stringent recruiting process, we got better quality, and we wound up with people who are well-suited to the job,” says Harrington. “So, we got this combination of more sales calls, because we hired quickly, and got better quality, which is also conventionally very powerful.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

- > Sales force scale-up completed in 32 working days, as opposed to the seven months originally projected.
- > Completion of the sales force scale-up well ahead of schedule provided 15,578 additional sales days worth an estimated \$15 million in savings to the company.
- > New hires performed above historical averages on knowledge tests and role plays during training.
- > High-quality candidates with little or no pharma sales experience were accurately assessed and hired; 70 percent of sales reps hired had no pharma sales experience.

THE AMERICAS

WORLD
HEADQUARTERS
PITTSBURGH
412.257.0600

MEXICO CITY
52.55.1253.9000

TORONTO
416.601.5500

Other offices include
Atlanta, Calgary,
Chicago, Dallas, Detroit,
Monterrey, Montreal,
New York, St. Louis,
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and São Paulo

EUROPE/AFRICA

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ABOUT DDI. It's a grow-or-die marketplace. And having the right talent strategy is crucial. Development Dimensions International will help you systematically and creatively close the gap between today's talent capability and the people you will need to successfully execute tomorrow's business strategy.

We excel in two areas:

- :: Designing and implementing selection systems that enable you to hire better people faster.
- :: Identifying and developing exceptional leadership talent critical to creating a high-performance workforce.

DDI is all about giving you the kind of business impact you want over the long term—that's what we call realization. The work we do together is tied to your organization's strategies and becomes part of your business and your culture.

And if your business is multinational, DDI has precisely the kind of global resources needed to implement your talent initiatives effectively and consistently worldwide.

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EMAIL: INFO@DDIWORLD.COM

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HIRING &
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DEVELOPING
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