Business Development Representative interview questions

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What to expect

Business development representative interviews test whether you can open a conversation with a stranger, qualify honestly and keep a CRM in order. Expect at least one role play or mock call, because employers treat outbound as a skill they want to see in action rather than a claim on a resume.

- **Motivation and fit:** Why outbound, why this company, and whether you understand that most calls will not convert. Employers are listening for someone who is comfortable with that ratio and can explain what keeps them going.
- **Process questions:** How you research an account, choose who to contact and sequence your touches. These are answered as a walk-through rather than a story.
- **Behavioural questions:** Past examples of prospecting wins, objections handled and activity targets met. Answer with a specific situation, your actions and the outcome.
- **Scenario and role play:** A mock cold call, voicemail or response to a brush-off. The interviewer is usually in character, so stay in the call rather than stepping out to explain yourself.
- **Technical and tool-based questions:** How you use Salesforce, HubSpot, LinkedIn Sales Navigator and sequencing tools, and which metrics you track and why.
- **Compliance and judgement questions:** How you handle opt-outs, consent and the Do Not Call Register. These check that you can prospect hard without creating legal or reputational risk.

Most processes run across two or three stages. A recruiter or talent screen covers motivation, availability and your understanding of the role, often over the phone. A hiring manager interview follows, mixing behavioural questions with process questions about how you build a pipeline. The final stage is usually a role play or mock call with the sales manager, sometimes with a peer representative in the room, and some employers add a short written exercise such as drafting an outbound email to a named prospect. The role play is scored on structure, listening and how you ask for the meeting, not on a flawless close.

1. Walk me through how you would build a pipeline from scratch in your first four weeks in this role.

Why they ask

This is the core of the job and the interviewer wants to hear a repeatable method, not enthusiasm. It also reveals whether you plan your week or wait for leads to arrive.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a process walk-through. Confirm the target profile, build the list, write the sequence, set a weekly contact volume, then measure and adjust. Give it a timeline so the answer sounds like a plan rather than a list of activities.

Example answer

“First I would sit with the sales manager and confirm who we are actually targeting: industry, company size, the job titles that make the decision, and the trigger that makes someone look for what we sell. Then I would build a list in LinkedIn Sales Navigator and cross-check it against the CRM so I am not contacting accounts already in play. From there I would write a three-step sequence, an email, a call, then a LinkedIn message, with the opener personalised to something specific about the company. I would aim to have the first fifty accounts loaded and contacted in week one, then review connect and reply rates every Friday and cut whatever is not working. By week four I would expect a clear picture of which segment responds so the effort goes where it earns meetings.”

2. Tell me about a time you turned a cold prospect into a booked meeting.

Why they ask

A behavioural question that checks your actual prospecting method and whether you can hold a prospect's attention long enough to earn time on their calendar.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Keep the situation short, spend most of the answer on the specific things you said and did, then finish with the outcome and what you learned. Include the number of touches it took.

> **Example answer**
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> *"A prospect in our target list had ignored two emails and hung up on an earlier call from a colleague. Rather than pitching again, I looked up a conference talk their operations manager had given and opened with a question about a problem raised in it. That got a two minute conversation, and I asked whether handling that issue manually was still the case. It was, and when I said I would not try to sell on the call but could show them how three similar businesses had automated it, they agreed to a thirty minute slot the following week. It turned into a genuine opportunity, and I now open with a question about something public the prospect has said before I mention the product."*

3. Role play: I am a prospect and I tell you we already have a supplier and we are not looking. Get me to agree to a meeting.

Why they ask

This is the most common objection in outbound and the interviewer wants to see whether you push, retreat or ask a question. They are assessing tone as much as technique.

How to structure your answer

Stay inside the role play. Acknowledge the position, ask one clarifying question about what the current supplier covers, look for a gap, then ask for a small, low-risk commitment rather than a sale.

> **Example answer**
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> *"Fair enough, and I would rather not waste your time if that is genuinely settled. Can I ask one thing though, is your current supplier covering the whole [problem area], or is there a part of it you are still handling in house? If they say there is a gap: that is the bit I would want twenty minutes on. I am not asking you to move anything, I just want to show you how we handle that one piece, and you can tell me whether it is worth a second conversation. If they still say no, I would ask when a sensible time is to check back in and log that date in the CRM rather than calling again next week."*

4. You are halfway through the month and your booked meetings are well below where they need to be. What do you change?

Why they ask

This probes self-management and how you respond when the numbers are down, which happens in every outbound role. Employers want someone who diagnoses rather than panics.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a diagnostic. Start with the data, form a hypothesis, change one variable at a time, then set a checkpoint. Show you would tell your manager early rather than hiding it.

> **Example answer**
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> *"First I would pull the numbers apart rather than just look at the meeting count, because the problem is usually upstream. Is it dials, connect rate, conversations, or conversations that are not converting to meetings? If dials are fine but connect rates have dropped, something has changed in when I am calling, so I would shift blocks earlier in the morning. If connects are fine but meetings are not coming, my opener or qualification is the issue, so I would test one new opening question for a week and compare. I would also flag it to my manager at the halfway point with what I am testing, because they may see something in the CRM data I cannot."*

5. How do you keep the CRM clean enough that an account executive can trust what they pick up?

Why they ask

Pipeline hygiene is where representatives either add value to the team or create work for it. The interviewer is testing whether you understand that a falsely qualified lead costs someone else an hour.

How to structure your answer

Explain what you log, when you log it, and how you use the reports. Give a concrete rule you apply, then tie it back to the handover to the account executive.

Example answer

"I log every touch as it happens rather than at the end of the day, because detail gets lost otherwise, and I never leave a record without a next step and a date. When I qualify a lead I write a short note in the CRM covering what they told me about the problem, who else is involved in the decision, and the timeframe, so the account executive walks into the meeting already knowing the shape of it. If a prospect goes quiet I move them to a nurture stage rather than leaving them sitting in an active stage where they would distort the forecast. I also check the pipeline report weekly to see if my own stages are honest."

6. A prospect tells you to stop contacting them and to delete their details. What happens next?

Why they ask

Outbound has legal and reputational limits, and the interviewer wants to know you respect them without being prompted. It also tests judgement under a mildly uncomfortable moment.

How to structure your answer

Give a short compliance-aware walk-through: immediate action, the system record, the effect on future contact, and what you would tell your manager if there were wider implications.

Example answer

"I would apologise for the interruption, confirm I will not contact them again, and thank them for telling me rather than just ignoring it. Then I would update the CRM the same day, mark the record as do not contact and remove them from any active sequence, because leaving them in a sequence means someone else calls them next week. If they asked for their details to be deleted I would pass that to the sales operations or privacy contact rather than deciding alone whether we can remove the record, since there may be obligations to keep a record of the request. I would mention it to my manager if it suggested the list source had a consent problem, because that affects the whole team."