

Account Executive Interview Workbook

A structured interview plan for testing quota proof, pipeline creation, discovery, deal judgment, coachability, writing, and role fit.

Source article: <https://accountexecutivejobs.com/blog/hiring-salespeople/account-executive-interview-questions>

How to use this workbook

Define the sales role before the interview. Ask the same core questions of every candidate. Write down evidence before discussing the candidate with the rest of the panel. Score the answer you heard, not the confidence used to deliver it.

Role brief

Role and segment	Primary buyer
Average deal size	Typical sales cycle
Annual quota	Base and OTE
Pipeline source	Territory

Interview stage plan

Plan	Item	Notes
[]	Recruiter screen: role fit, compensation, location, and basic quota proof	
[]	Hiring manager: sales motion, pipeline, discovery, and deal judgment	
[]	Work sample: writing exercise or account plan	
[]	Role-play: discovery, qualification, and next-step control	
[]	Panel review: independent scores before group discussion	
[]	References: verify the claims that matter to the decision	

Recruiter screen

Question	Evidence to capture	Score
Walk me through your current role in numbers.	Segment, buyer, deal size, cycle, quota, attainment, and pipeline source.	1 2 3 4 5
What did you personally own in the sales process?	Clear separation between the candidate's work and team support.	1 2 3 4 5
What are you looking for in your next sales role?	Fit with motion, manager, market, territory, and growth path.	1 2 3 4 5
What base, OTE, location, and travel setup do you need?	Alignment before the process becomes expensive for either side.	1 2 3 4 5

Hiring manager: results and sales motion

Question	Evidence to capture	Score
What was your quota, and how did you perform against it?	Time period, ramp status, ranking, and evidence.	1 2 3 4 5
Describe the sales motion where you have been most successful.	Buyer, ACV, cycle, territory, lead source, and support.	1 2 3 4 5
Tell me about a period when you missed. What caused it?	Ownership, diagnosis, adaptation, and honesty.	1 2 3 4 5
Which part of our role is closest to your past work, and which part is new?	Accurate self-assessment and a credible plan for the gap.	1 2 3 4 5

Prospecting and pipeline

Question	Evidence to capture	Score
How much of your pipeline did you create yourself?	Percent or dollars, sources, activity, and conversion.	1 2 3 4 5
Show me how you chose which accounts to pursue.	Prioritization based on fit, timing, access, and value.	1 2 3 4 5
Walk me through an outbound opportunity you created and closed.	Specific outreach, stakeholders, timeline, and next steps.	1 2 3 4 5
What do you do when pipeline coverage is weak?	A repeatable operating plan, not only more activity.	1 2 3 4 5

Discovery and qualification

Question	Evidence to capture	Score
Walk me through your first discovery call.	Agenda, questions, buyer context, qualification, and next step.	1 2 3 4 5
Tell me about a deal you disqualified.	Judgment, opportunity cost, and willingness to walk away.	1 2 3 4 5
How do you uncover urgency without manufacturing it?	Buyer evidence, consequence, timing, and decision process.	1 2 3 4 5
What has to be true before you forecast a deal?	Clear exit criteria and realistic risk assessment.	1 2 3 4 5

Deal judgment and closing

Question	Evidence to capture	Score
Walk me through the hardest deal you won.	Buying committee, obstacles, tradeoffs, and candidate ownership.	1 2 3 4 5
Tell me about a late-stage deal you lost.	Accurate diagnosis, accountability, and lessons applied later.	1 2 3 4 5
How do you handle a deal with one enthusiastic contact and no executive access?	Multi-threading, value, risk, and respectful pressure.	1 2 3 4 5
When do you ask for the business?	A specific close tied to buyer readiness and agreed process.	1 2 3 4 5

Coachability

Question	Evidence to capture	Score
What is a piece of sales feedback that changed your behavior?	Specific feedback, changed action, and measured result.	1 2 3 4 5
What would your last manager coach you on today?	Self-awareness without a rehearsed weakness.	1 2 3 4 5
After feedback, repeat part of the role-play.	Visible improvement in the same interview.	1 2 3 4 5

Writing exercise

Give the candidate a short buyer scenario and 15 to 20 minutes. Ask for a follow-up email with a recap, unresolved questions, business value, and a clear next step.

Review	Item	Notes
☐	The opening is direct and appropriate for the buyer	
☐	The recap reflects what the buyer actually said	
☐	The business problem and consequence are clear	
☐	Open questions are specific	
☐	The next step has an owner and date	
☐	The message is concise and easy to scan	

Role-play score

Score	Item	Notes
☐	Sets an agenda	
☐	Asks useful discovery questions	
☐	Listens and follows the buyer's answer	
☐	Qualifies impact, process, and urgency	
☐	Avoids pitching too early	
☐	Handles uncertainty without bluffing	
☐	Earns a specific next step	
☐	Improves after feedback	

Evidence and decision notes

Candidate	Role
Interviewer	Interview date
Total score	Must-have failure

Strongest evidence for the role

Open questions or reference checks

Reason for the recommendation

Final recommendation: ☐ Strong yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strong no

Decision rule: a polished interview is not a substitute for evidence. Record the proof, the open questions, and the reason for the recommendation.