

# Building sales force superstars in the auto industry

A handbook for bringing your sales hiring strategies in tune with the automotive sector's evolving requirements



welcome to brighter

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# Preface

Global automotive sales estimate was a whopping 80 million units annually in 2017. In India, major auto segments share a considerable part of the market size. For example, Maruti Suzuki India sold 165,000 units (passenger vehicles), Vitara Brezza sold an average of 120,000 units (utility vehicles), and TVS sold 207,778 units in two-wheelers, and three-wheeler sales stood at 635,698! However, the recent disruptions have led to significant fluctuations in these promising numbers.

Automation, digitization, and evolving buying behaviors have influenced global economies, with 2020-2021 being a particularly tumultuous year for the automotive sector. With COVID-19 and its resurgences pumping the brakes, the numbers dwindled to the extreme, and sales dropped by 71% in China, 47% in the US, 80% in Europe and 90% in India. Interestingly, with markets opening and an improvement in buying sentiments, India is witnessing a slow revival in demand for two-wheelers, small cars and pre-loved vehicles.



**In fact, the sector is expected to account for 65 million new jobs within India by 2026 as companies increase production. The automotive sector will play a central role in India's aspiration to become a \$5 trillion economy. The recovery from the COVID-19 crisis has created a unique situation in which automakers can reinvent their industry and emerge stronger within India and globally.**

**The Indian automotive industry: From resilience to resurgence?  
Automotive and Assembly Insights, McKinsey & Company**

Additionally, there is also a rise in the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) globally because of stricter emission regulations, lower battery costs, better-charging infrastructure and a boost in customer acceptance. According to predictions by McKinsey & Company, by 2030, the share of EVs could range from 10%-50% of new vehicle sales.

Adoption rates are said to be the highest in developed dense cities. However, in small towns and rural areas, the sales penetration may be lower due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure.

It is no wonder that technological trends are causing disruptions in the market.

The first indicator is several incredible advances by automotive brands. For instance, Audi has already replicated an immersive showroom experience for its customers through virtual reality (VR). Similarly, many car dealerships now use augmented reality (AR) to enhance a prospective car buyer's online experience. The second indicator is the gradual emergence of auto sales channels online with technology-enabled innovation.

## Adding to the transformation is the introduction of the CASE model:



### Connected

Uninterrupted connection between the car, the owner and the outside world.



### Autonomous

Self-driven vehicles eliminate the need for human intervention.



### Shared

Managing fleets of shared vehicles to reduce the carbon footprint and cost of mobility.



### Electric Vehicles

A sustainable solution and a viable way to revolutionize the auto industry.

However, a few automobile marques or non-traditional entrants occupy the digital space intensely. As a result, competing original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are compelled to embrace the transformation to sustain and be at the forefront of the industry. After all, the companies that choose to reimagine operations are more likely to perform the best post the “new normal.”

Multiple reasons are fueling the transformation. Recent years have witnessed a tremendous evolution of sales models. Owing to the changing customer preferences, further intensified by the COVID-19 disruption, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) need to rethink their approach if they want to be at the top of their game.

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**Global giants like Tesla identified the said changes in buying behavior and attitudes. As a result, the brand adopted the online sales approach in 2019 to direct customers to order electric vehicles through their phones.**

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**Since online customers are already used to elevated levels of convenience and online shopping experiences from other industries, they expect no less when buying cars.**

**Future car sales: How to go direct,  
Arthur D. Little Insights**

## Few of the factors that may influence the tendency to lean toward e-commerce over traditional showrooms:

- Rise of the tech-savvy generation (with the target audience in India rapidly moving toward this trend): They are gradually pivoting toward a hybrid model for sales, which is a mix of offline and online to gain flexibility in car shopping.
- Introduction of the online direct sales model with strategic and financial benefits (propelled further by the COVID-19 disruption): Such a model has reduced dependency on a dealer network, led to a better understanding of customers' needs and increased profitability with cost-efficiency.

But most auto manufacturers still depend on dealer networks to sell vehicles to end-users. They are inhibited from altering their decade-old processes, restricting customers' ability to purchase online and get a transparent and fixed price.

The pointers now pose one vital question for traditional OEMs:

## How will they ensure continued success?

Most OEMs need to deep-dive into their sales models and distribution processes to get a rational answer. Along with that, hiring managers should also re-align their focus on drawing from a deep well of the sales force talent in the market.

Interestingly, experts at Mercer | Mettl have created a research-based mini handbook for the auto industry that paints a comprehensive picture of some critical sales competencies that can update and improve sales hiring. These are not necessarily new but seem to be gaining more importance due to changing trends. With detailed industry insights, the report urges auto players of all sizes to comprehend the structural changes. The report also urges a rigorous assessment of sales hiring frameworks in tandem with the evolving needs of the customer and the industry.

# An overview of auto sales models

The move toward advancement begins with understanding the industry developments, trends and challenges. Hence, the first section of the research shares an overview of the current and evolving auto sales models.

## 1. The dealership model

The most prominent trait of the dealership sales model is OEMs and dealers' independence. The sales channel is linear in this B2B model. OEMs sell directly to dealers, and dealers directly sell to customers. As a result, the manufacturers enjoy higher cash flow liquidity and quicker distribution via cost-effective sales networks.



### The need to upgrade

The need for a new sales model stems from the lack of efficient monitoring of sales metrics (lead response time, vehicle demand vs. inventory, personnel efficiency, etc.) and minimal interaction between OEMs and their end customers. Other challenges accompanying the dealership model include:

- Unnecessary transactional costs (such as profit sharing, dealers' margins, etc.) due to a dealer's involvement eventually affecting the retail price.
- OEMs' inability to guarantee a more satisfying customer buying experience because of minimal interaction.
- Threat to brand image and economic value due to zero control over dealers' sales activities.

## 2. Direct sales model

With a B2C model, direct sales remove the intermediaries and ensure direct interactions between OEMs and customers. OEMs can have their experience stores, online and offline, fully controlled distribution networks and the freedom to control retail prices.

### Challenges

Despite the advantages of the direct sales model, most manufacturers are reluctant to make the switch right away due to the following challenges:

- No dealers to share operational risks.
- Higher dependency on the conventional dealership model.
- Struggles around managing distribution channels (The need to reassess, redefine and rebuild warehousing, legal compliance frameworks, organization, associated costs, etc.)



However, to catch up with the rapid market shift worldwide, embracing such B2C upgrades might become necessary for OEMs.



In India, industry leaders like Mahindra & Mahindra and Hyundai have begun exploring the approach with digital sales. Moreover, with certain e-commerce platforms supporting the online sales of auto parts, trends are beginning to take a fresh turn. The goal is to create an immersive experience for customers through proper channels. And all that demands exceptionally streamlined strategies for hiring salespeople.

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### 3. Agency model

Another effective upgrade to conventional sales is the agency model, where the manufacturer becomes the retailer while the dealer remains the physical touchpoint with the customer. It is a process where auto manufacturers entrust local agents or online platforms to sell on their behalf to enable cross-channel sales. However, unlike in the dealership model, dealers are exempted from operational risks and have limited control over retail prices. It offers OEMs the chance to regain control over multiple sales channels with direct customer access, reduced price pressure, lower financial risks and an overall increase in sales.

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**Daimler and Volvo are pursuing the agency model in specific markets.**

The changing sales models need professionals who can meet the demands of these changes. And the road to building a future-ready industry also involves deepening your knowledge about the unique sales job roles. That enables you to make the right people decisions and hire a winning sales team.

# Sales competencies: The bedrock of sales assessments

Everyone knows that a sales environment is dynamic. Selling is becoming more complex as industry models change and customers seek more profound and genuine value propositions. Hence, the sales force ought to have the right mix of desired personality traits and skills that optimize sales. Experts at Mercer | Mettl have identified such skills. It is recommended that sales personnel possess these skills to create a competitive edge for OEM players.

## List of evolving must-have sales skills:

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The role of an automotive salesperson is changing due to the disruptions and evolving trends, in the industry. Mercer | Mettl's psychometricians studied job descriptions, which have now been transformed by the said trends to identify skill sets that are gaining importance. These skills are vital in assessment frameworks to ensure quality hiring/re-skilling.

- Stakeholder management
- Customer focus
- Adaptability
- Learning agility
- Initiative taking
- Numerical reasoning
- Strategic thinking
- Business acumen
- Creativity and innovation
- Analytical ability and problem solving
- Result orientation
- Planning and organizing / sales planning
- Collaboration & teamwork / people development
- Effective communication (with elements of negotiation)
- Process adherence / process excellence

**The next-gen sales hiring needs to look beyond conventional assessment methods. There should be an expert involvement to critically evaluate these competencies that have grown to be even more significant for success in the current auto sales market worldwide.**

The next section of the research elaborates on these recommendations before exploring the competencies across specific B2C and B2B sales roles.



# Key industry findings and action points for future hiring

Given the nature of the industry and expert understanding, we must state that the game is changing. Moreover, players looking to thrive in times of impending disruptions need to recalibrate their hiring approach. That begins with envisioning qualitatively superior and practical sales competencies.

The current section talks about some key findings related to the automotive industry's development. It is followed by key sales competency recommendations to help build a more dynamic framework for organizational success.



## Key finding 1

- As per Deloitte Insights, the collaboration between manufacturers and dealers will increase with the changes in sales channels. Additionally, organizations can utilize these interactions to accelerate the adoption of digital tools designed to ensure a seamless customer experience.
- As per Mercer | Mettl data, stakeholder management skill is crucial and has been added in most of the assessments. Managing relationships with multiple stakeholders is essential to ensure continuous business opportunities.

## Recommendations for sales hiring

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- Organizations should continue to assess their sales force in **stakeholder management**. It is a vital competency for dealers to gather useful information about their customers. Moreover, a robust collaboration between OEMs and dealers would help align customer engagement strategies. Also, the sales force must form connections in the industry to leverage resources for the organization's benefit.
- **Customer focus** competency plays a pivotal role in hiring a sales force. It helps organizations understand how salespeople can acquire and educate prospective strategic customers and accommodate their expectations. Therefore, organizations should focus on hiring salespeople with a customer-centric mindset who can successfully materialize deals by putting customers first.

## Key finding 2

- Due to inevitable technology-driven disruptions, vehicles are becoming more and more complex, as are the end-users, who are becoming increasingly aware. This change requires a salesperson to possess a deep technical understanding of a vehicle and its features. As newer technologies enter the market, customers expect salespeople to know more than just the latest car models.

## Recommendations for sales hiring



- **Adaptability** is a necessary element to assess in the sales force to ensure they can embrace changes, sustain a dynamic environment, and can adapt to new processes and digital sales channels. Organizations should understand how candidates can adjust their approach toward work in response to the demands of a situation.



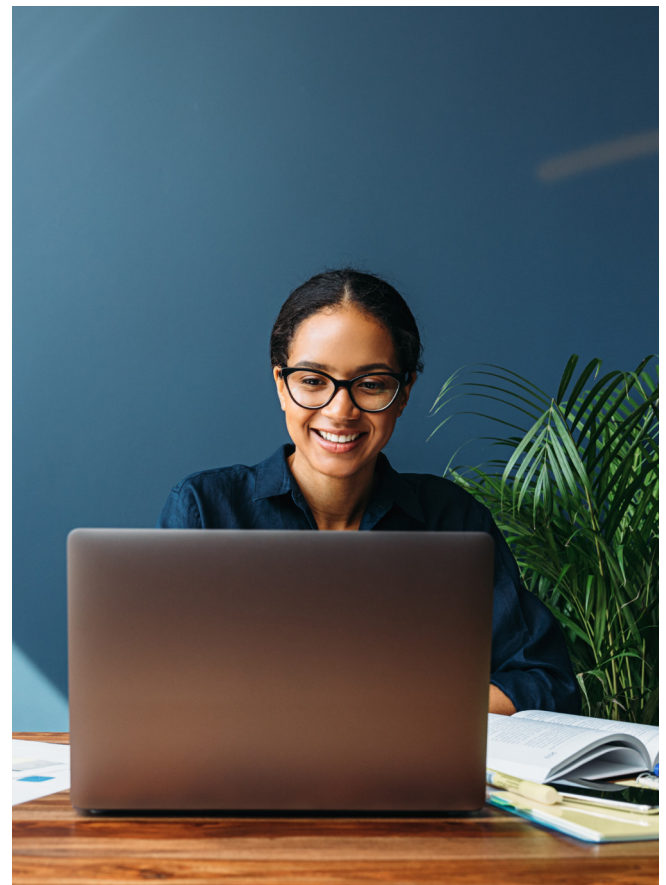
- **Learning agility** is another important skill that automotive companies should assess in a salesperson to understand their inclination to continuously learn about the latest technological trends in the industry, which are evolving at a fast pace.

## Key finding 3

- As per Mercer | Mettl data, we observed that initiative taking was added in about half of the assessments designed for sales roles in the automotive industry.

## Recommendation for sales hiring

- Organizations should continue to focus on hiring a sales force that demonstrates **initiative taking** competency. An ideal salesperson must be able to proactively engage with customers to provide appropriate solutions. Moreover, given the overall nature of the sales role, it is vital to assess this competency to understand how salespeople look for various areas where they contribute to the business without being asked to do so.



## Key finding 4

- As per Mercer | Mettl data, an exceedingly small percentage of assessments created in the past for automotive sales hiring assess numerical reasoning.
- As automotive companies explore sales avenues through digital platforms, the focus is shifting toward integrating customer data from various channels. A deeper view of the data can help the sales force approach customers in a more targeted manner. Therefore, organizations should hire a sales force with good data analysis skills to ensure accurate forecasting of numbers.

## Recommendation for sales hiring

- The need to regularly track metrics to draw meaningful insights has become crucial. It will also help in understanding counterproductive trends. Excellent data crunching and analysis of numbers are needed to understand changing customer behavior, tap into newer markets, and provide data-driven recommendations to stakeholders to ensure profitability in the sales division. Hence, organizations should focus on hiring people with good **numerical reasoning** skills.

## Key finding 5

- Globally, automakers are fiercely competing as newer players enter the market with the capability of manufacturing EVs. It becomes imperative for the sales force to continuously analyze competitors' activities and develop transformative sales strategies to ensure the organization's growth.



## Recommendations for sales hiring

- **Strategic thinking** and **business acumen** become vital skills that organizations should assess as the sales force manages large accounts. They should be able to build comprehensive strategies and think about the business's pain areas to penetrate booming vehicle markets.
- A well-rounded understanding of where future opportunities require thinking outside the box. With the increasing speed of automation in the sector, the sales force needs to adopt innovative sales approaches to gain a competitive advantage. Therefore, organizations must focus on assessing **creativity and innovation** as a sales professional needs to develop novel selling techniques to cope with and sell through newer digital channels while making continuous breakthroughs.
- Organizations should hire candidates with excellent **analytical ability and problem-solving** as the selling process has become more complex and competitive. Sales professionals should have the ability to think analytically and solve problems for the products they represent and understand the key buying objectives of the customer through need analysis.

## Key finding 6

- As per Mercer | Mettl's data, result orientation competency was most widely used across auto frameworks created for sales roles.



## Recommendations for sales hiring

- With the growing challenges in the automotive industry, organizations should assess the persistence of salespeople to understand if they can manage complex deals and enable their team(s) to meet sales targets and objectives. Therefore, **result orientation** remains an essential competency to understand the salesperson's commitment and passion for excelling at the job.
- In addition to target achievement, the sales force is also responsible for maintaining documents and managing specific administrative tasks after deal closures. Automotive brands should focus on hiring people with excellent **planning and organizing** skills, as being highly organized in one's undertakings and meticulously approaching work is an important trait. **Sales planning** is more important at higher levels than planning and organizing, which includes periodic target reviews for gap identification and corrective actions.

## Key finding 7

- As per Mercer | Mettl's data, **people development** competency was used in more than half of the assessment frameworks, as sales leaders are expected to lead and mentor teams and dealers effectively to ensure sales targets are met.

## Recommendation for sales hiring

- Companies in the automotive industry should continue to assess **collaboration and teamwork** since a salesperson has to support other teams and work closely with them to execute sales processes. Additionally, at higher levels, training and supervising team members and dealers are vital to achieving sales targets.

## Key finding 8

- Due to the advent of digital sales and cross-channel selling, salespeople may need to interact with customers virtually. Therefore, sales leaders will need to embrace the new dynamics of virtual selling by presenting appropriate information to customers clearly and concisely.

## Recommendation for sales hiring

- Organizations should evaluate **effective communication (with elements of negotiation and influence)** to understand if the salesperson can succinctly position products to customers/dealers. Additionally, this competency becomes vital for organizations to assess a salesperson's ability to influence internal stakeholders in an ever-changing and dynamic environment. Also, to ensure the closure of critical deals, the sales force must drive complex negotiations while understanding the scope of the company's policies.

## Key finding 9

- As per Mercer | Mettl's data, process excellence competency was included in most assessment frameworks for the automotive industry as the sales force needs to ensure compliance with objectives and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and encourage continuous improvement in sales processes.

## Recommendation for sales hiring

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- **Process excellence** is a highly relevant competency that should continue to be assessed by organizations. Due to the adoption of newer sales channels, there will be changes in policies and operations to which the salesperson must adhere. Additionally, sales leaders need to identify bottlenecks at higher levels and modify existing sales processes by taking corrective measures.



### **Forward-thinking brands can now raise the bar regarding who they hire. However, what about how to hire?**

It is equally crucial to keep up with an ever-changing market with state-of-the-art hiring tools. Thus, the following section helps you reimagine your sales assessment strategy with the right tools customized for all sales competencies.



# Essential competencies for key sales profiles

A sales professional is no longer the ancillary role it once was - acting as a liaison between the dealership and the customer. Instead, it now involves ensuring direct sales to create a solution where everyone benefits. Thus, it is critical for hiring managers in the auto industry to recognize new focus areas and effectively capture the essence of the job in tandem with their requirements.

Along with a handy job description, a sales hiring process can significantly improve if hiring managers carefully assess the right qualities. From customer focus assessment to corporate communication abilities, top sales professionals must possess the right combination of talent, personality and skillset.



## Must-have role-specific competencies in B2B auto sales

These competencies are relevant for OEMs selling through dealers and franchises as well as institutional sales involving corporations, taxi operators, government departments, etc.

### Proficiency level 1: Individual contributors

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B2B sales executives/associates seek and build relationships with decision-makers to initiate and close auto sales. They generate new business and manage sales within a defined territory. They need to be aware of the customers' vision and supply chain objectives to provide solutions proactively.

### Key responsibilities:

- Implement strategy in assigned sales territory based on accurate forecasts.
- Stay updated with the latest auto launches and updates to answer customer queries and pitch new products effectively.
- Identify new sales opportunities within existing territory and share insights within the organization for quick response actions.
- Collect, analyze and interpret sales records to ensure balanced accounts.
- Communicate with customers and stakeholders virtually as well as in person to demonstrate and present the products.
- Negotiate contracts and packages to secure the best deals for the customers as well as the company.
- Grow and maintain new and existing customer accounts.
- Be aware of the customer's objectives and actively provide solutions.
- Demonstrate strong process discipline.

### Therefore, the must-have competencies for this role are:

- Business acumen
- Stakeholder management
- Result orientation
- Process adherence
- Effective communication
- Customer focus
- Adaptability
- Taking initiatives
- Learning agility

## Higher proficiency level: Managers/leaders (Territory/zone/area)

B2B sales managers and leaders act as an interface between product development teams and end customers. They are responsible for actively managing the sales process by developing strategic action plans for ensuring the organization's profitability. In addition, they ensure a viable distribution network by appointing dealers and sub-dealers for appropriate market coverage.

### Key responsibilities:

- Identify and engage with strategic customers/ fleet owners.
- Map sub-territories segment-wise, application-wise, and work on conversion plans.
- Make sales forecasts for existing models/product ranges and guide channel partners to develop a secondary sales network.
- Train, motivate and develop channel partners and their team (sales reps and executives) to broaden the market share via relevant BTL activities.
- Track metrics and vehicle spend, monitor customer complaints, develop cost-effective processes, offer after-sales services to enhance the brand experience, reduce operational friction, etc.
- Build and maintain positive working relationships with other teams, change the status quo and work effectively in high-pressure situations.
- Be aware of competitor activities and new product plans, and prepare strategies to counter the same.
- Leverage existing customer relationships to further explore business opportunities.
- Continuously improve processes and procedures to reduce operational friction.
- Analyze critical information to determine optimal business strategies for increasing market share and profitability.
- Effectively solve problems for the product they represent.



### Therefore, the must-have competencies for this role are:

- Business acumen
- Numerical reasoning
- Effective communication
- Adaptability
- People development
- Result orientation
- Creativity and innovation
- Strategic thinking
- Stakeholder management
- Process excellence
- Sales planning
- Customer focus
- Analytical ability and problem solving

## Must-have role-specific competencies in B2C auto sales

These competencies are relevant for inside sales executives, retail stores and dealers selling directly to customers, digital platforms and automotive startups selling to customers.



### Proficiency level 1: Individual contributors

B2C sales executives/representatives drive sales through customer engagement, suggestive selling and sharing of product knowledge. They are also responsible for scheduling and facilitating customer visits to retail vehicle hubs and making suitable recommendations. They actively contribute to the achievement of monthly sales and need to focus on providing the highest level of customer service.

#### Key responsibilities:

- Building strong customer relationships by understanding their requirements and demands.
- Communicating with customers via email, phone and in-person to initiate and close deals.
- Liaising with the service team to ensure vehicles sold are prepped to a high standard and are ready for delivery within the agreed timescale.
- Ensuring complete paperwork and records for all sales.
- Demonstrating persistence and responding to customers' queries promptly.
- Be willing to learn about automobiles and stay updated on the latest industry developments.
- Managing customer interactions throughout their purchase experience and ensuring complete awareness of their needs by performing need analysis and sharing relevant insights with key stakeholders.
- Fulfilling additional responsibilities to meet business needs.

#### Therefore, the must-have competencies for this role are:

- Result orientation
- Taking initiatives
- Effective communication
- Customer focus
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Planning and organizing
- Learning agility
- Process adherence
- Adaptability

## Higher proficiency level: Managers/leaders (Showroom manager/digital sales manager)

B2C auto sales managers create and execute strategies to develop business in new and existing markets. Aside from regular monitoring of operations, they are also in charge of staff reviews, customer satisfaction, training and evaluation of the workforce and act as the primary point of contact for all customer interactions.

### Key responsibilities:

- Actively contribute to the achievement of monthly sales and delivery targets by meeting and exceeding individual KPIs.
- Develop and execute strategies to drive business in new and existing markets.
- Monitor and improvise day-to-day operations of the showroom.
- Ensure the highest customer satisfaction, transparency between showroom and customer, and volume of business.
- Ensure sales forecast accuracy and share the same with relevant teams.
- Coach and mentor staff, introduce best practices, enable inclusion and enhance the team culture.
- Ensure that the facility maintenance and showroom presentation adhere to brand standards.
- Analyze data and collaborate with teams and senior leadership to track and manage progress.
- Focus on innovation and client service to provide customized solutions and unlock higher revenue.



### Therefore, the must-have competencies for this role are:

- Business acumen
- Numerical reasoning
- Result orientation
- Strategic thinking
- Effective communication
- Customer focus
- People development
- Sales planning
- Creativity and innovation
- Process excellence
- Analytical ability and problem solving
- Adaptability

# Mercer | Mettl's automotive sales hiring framework

Armed with insights using Mercer | Mettl's assessments, leaders can develop and initiate appropriate sales hiring strategies to drive revenue, sales and business performance – creating a genuine competitive advantage in the industry.

Below is a recommended framework for automotive sales hiring by the Mercer | Mettl team. It also enlists online tools for use in conjunction with assessor-led tools.

Competency	Definition	Tools
<b>Business acumen</b>	The ability to understand the workings and structure of the organization and the marketplace to make vital business decisions and advance the organization's goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Functional knowledge test</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>
<b>Learning agility</b>	Demonstrating a commitment to learning by proactively seeking out new information and opportunities to develop one's skills and knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Cognitive ability test</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> </ul>
<b>Taking initiatives</b>	Displaying a willingness to do more than is required or expected in the job without being requested. Demonstrating an eagerness to work on tasks without being told.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> </ul>
<b>Numerical reasoning</b>	The ability to work with information in a number-based format to make essential business decisions and analyze its impact on how good a decision is commercially.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive ability test</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability</b>	Being open to change and being able to adjust and adapt one's behavior or approach to the evolving circumstances and situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>
<b>Creativity and innovation</b>	Identifying innovative solutions and trying new approaches to deal with challenges to ensure the organization stays relevant with changing times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Cognitive ability</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic thinking</b>	Understanding and driving the organization's vision and strategy while taking a long-term view of organizational priorities and assessing potential risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Cognitive ability test</li> </ul>
<b>Customer focus</b>	Being able to meet customer expectations and requirements in a manner that provides customer satisfaction and leads to further opportunities to grow and develop relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder management</b>	Building and maintaining strong working relationships both within and outside the organization to further the organization's goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>

Competencies	Definition	Tools
<b>Planning and organizing / sales planning</b>	Establishing a systematic course of action by defining tasks and milestones to achieve one's objectives, while ensuring optimal utilization of time and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Functional knowledge test</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration &amp; teamwork / people development</b>	Working cooperatively and collaboratively with others to successfully achieve common goals and objectives. / Being able to inspire and empower teams by providing a supportive environment that facilitates professional growth and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>
<b>Result orientation</b>	Demonstrating a strong will to achieve what one sets out to do. Focusing one's efforts on achieving set objectives and results efficiently in a persistent manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Behavioral tools</li> </ul>
<b>Effective communication</b>	Being able to put across one's thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly by listening attentively and using appropriate language to engage the audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Writing simulator</li> <li>• Speaking simulator</li> </ul>
<b>Process adherence / process excellence</b>	Following standard procedures and adhering to rules and regulations to ensure safety, compliance and efficiency in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality tool</li> <li>• Assessor led tools</li> </ul>
<b>Analytical ability and problem solving</b>	The ability to analyze the given information from different perspectives by breaking it down into simple components and logically structuring the data to arrive at a solution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive ability test</li> </ul>



### Please note:

1. Behavioral tools comprise case study simulators, caselets, situational judgement tests, inbox simulators etc. Some factors to consider while adding these tools include proficiency level and relevance to competencies.
2. Assessor-led tools comprise role play, behavioral event interviews, case study presentations, group discussions etc. Each of these activities has a unique focus area. Hence, the recommendations are based on proficiency level and relevance to competencies.

## Recommended Auto sales framework for specific job roles

Competency	B2B channel sales		B2C channel sales	
	Sales associate	Sales manager	Sales representative	Showroom manager
Business acumen	✓	✓		✓
Learning agility	✓		✓	
Taking initiatives	✓		✓	
Numerical reasoning		✓		✓
Adaptability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creativity and innovation		✓		✓
Strategic thinking		✓		✓
Customer focus	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stakeholder management	✓	✓		
Planning and organizing / sales planning (at manager level)		✓	✓	✓
Collaboration and teamwork/ people development (at manager level)		✓	✓	✓
Result orientation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Effective communication	✓	✓	✓	✓
Process adherence / process excellence (at manager level)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Analytical ability and problem solving		✓		✓



## Key observations

Mercer | Mettl's experts have closely monitored industry trends and sales hiring patterns to recommend the most effective competency frameworks.

**The following observations elaborate on the rationale behind the recurring, high-priority competencies.**



The continuous technological changes and the introduction of novel techniques to boost sales make **creativity and innovation** a significant competency to be assessed in sales leaders (higher proficiency levels) to ensure organizations stay relevant and ahead of competitors.



Internal coordination with teams remains a crucial factor in B2C sales at the Entry level (**individual contributors**). Therefore, **collaboration and teamwork** is highly in demand. People development is a vital element for higher **proficiency levels** as the sales leaders are expected to provide constant training to internal teams and dealers.



Apparent similarities across sales profiles continue to demand **customer focus** and **result orientation** among professionals. While **numerical reasoning** is more crucial for higher proficiency levels, **effective communication** with elements of negotiation and influence, remains the top priority for all roles.



**Process adherence** is a must-have sales competency for junior levels, focusing on **process excellence** at higher levels. The latter ensures that teams and dealers follow the desired SOPs (standard operating procedures) and constantly work toward improving processes and minimizing bottlenecks.



The complexity of the sales process at higher Proficiency Levels makes **strategic thinking** a necessary competency. In B2B models, **stakeholder management** is a vital skill for managing critical business stakeholders.



The need to continuously learn new skills, update one's knowledge about the latest technological advancements and show eagerness to discover more contemporary ways of selling make **learning agility** an **essential competency when hiring individual contributors** in automotive sales.



In B2C models, **planning and organizing** takes center stage for Entry Level (individual contributors) who manage store operations. For higher proficiency levels, **sales planning** is more critical as junior roles often take up heavier administrative activities.



The need to constantly keep up with changes and disruptions in the industry makes **adaptability** the top priority for all roles.

# Conclusion

Rudimentary structures and attitudes have transformed to cope with the developments in the auto industry. Therefore, apart from adopting the novel approach in full throttle, it is equally suggestive of assessing the sales hiring frameworks and adopting scientific methods to make an appropriate and sophisticated hiring decision. The experts at Mercer | Mettl have matched pace with these rising competencies in the auto industry. But only companies who foresee the upcoming transformation and decide to sail the tide will continue to thrive.

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**\*Mercer | Mettl assessments are normed on a sample of 10,000+ respondents across different geographies - India, US, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, South Africa and South-East Asia (representative sample with different age, gender, job level, occupation).**

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# About us

At Mercer | Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions across two key areas: acquisition and development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with more than 4,000 corporates, 31 sector skills councils/government departments and 15+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

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