A Sales Manager will need to have the following in a consultative selling culture.

* **Rain Maker** – Maybe the most important skill. This skill has been proven to be a quality of the majority of Sales Managers. This skill pays for itself in new business revenue plus gives great credibility to the sales team.
* **Strategic Planning** – The ability to lead strategically gives a Sales Manager a great advantage in leading a sales organization. Strategic planning leaders tend to be more successful than non-strategic planners.
* **Leadership Skills** – Others must want to follow his/her leader.
* **Coaching Skills** – The ability to identify the coaching opportunities and effectively coach the individuals and the team.
* **Sales Skills** – Complete understanding of the consultative selling process, the ability to set the example, and be a continuous student of new ideas and strategies.
* **Executive Business Skills** – As a member of the executive team this individual must be able to make decisions for the good of the company over the good of himself/herself or the good of the “sales department.”
* **Buffering Skills** – Must be able to manage the difficulty of differences between management and the sales force. Must be able to sell both directions.
* **Teamwork** – The ability to work with all departments in the organization to help the team be successful.
* **Market Presence** – The Sales Manager must be visible to the market and establish brand presence for the company.
* **Provide Leads** – New business leads must come from this position in the company. It is required that the example be set from the top of the sales organization.
* **Communication Skills** – Due to the need to have complex communication issues in the company as well as training needs, public speaking, small group presentations, etc., it is critical to be able to communicate at all levels.
* **Continuous Learner** – This industry requires continuous learning to be successful. Also, to be an effective consultant you must be a continuous learner. The Sales Manager must lead in this area.
* **High Business Acumen - Work Ethic** – This is a 24 hour 7 day a week job. You can effectively manage your lifestyle to be balanced with family, friends, hobbies and work, but the hours of availability for business must be flexible.
* **Appearance** – The person must represent the “look” of the agency. Well dressed, confident, and an image that mirrors what you want the public to think of your company.
* **High Level Presentation Skills** – Our business requires high level presentations internally and externally. The ability to command the attention of an audience and communicate effectively is critical to the success of a Sales Manager.
* **Company Management** – This person must have the ability to sell what you do as a company to the insurance markets.
* **Marketing Skills** – This is not insurance marketing. This is marketing skills to obtain new business and retain existing business. The ability to think creatively and come up with new ideas on attracting the right kind of business to the organization.
* **Integrity** – This position holds a lot of responsibility in the company. My definition of integrity is as follows:
  + Always do what you say you will do.
  + Only do what you would be willing to see on the front page of tomorrow’s newspaper.

The interview questions for this type of leader need to be more collaborative than “master / slave”. A quality individual that is qualified for this position will not take well to being talked down to and lorded over. The position will most likely become a true second in command and would need to possess those qualities. It is recommended that the principles in the book “Make the Noise Go Away” be followed.

Interview questions also need to be experienced based. Experienced based questions address what they are currently doing and what they have done in the areas listed above. The traditional manner of interview is to find out what they will do. This is not going to uncover the truth of the candidate. Question leads examples:

“In your current position, what have you done to…?”

“Give me an example of a time when…”

“Give me an example of how you have…”

“In past jobs, what…”