



In-House Sales Force or Contract Rep?

Issue	In-house sales force	Contract sales rep
Control	On your ship, the crew rows your way.	The cat's always away for these mice — reps have no boss and their time is their own. And who's <i>really</i> repping you? The smooth talker who sold you, or Junior Newkid?
Cost	More expensive, generally. In addition to salary, benefits and commission, you pay for overhead and travel.	Less expensive, generally. Reps spread their overhead among several clients. They work on commission alone, and you write one check. For smaller companies, reps offer the only viable way to cover wide areas.
Focus	Your product rules. Your people are dedicated to it, and can develop true knowledge about it.	You're not the only star in the sky. A rep sells several lines, and may not give yours enough attention. Don't expect deep expertise in your product.

Market knowledge	Some of your people may have it, while others haven't a clue. It doesn't come easily, or quickly, to anyone.	Best case: The rep, from long experience, understands profoundly the terrain that interests you.
Market relationships	Like knowledge, these don't form overnight. If your in-house sellers have some important ones, show your appreciation — lest they be tempted to quit and become independent sales reps.	The rep has been around a while. Plus, a prospect may view the rep's multi-line visits as more useful than your limited offering. Relationships grow better in such soil.
Speed and agility	Yours are unlikely to succeed quickly in a new market (unless you've stolen a veteran from your competition).	Reps hit the ground running.