talentbrief



BDM INTERVIEW — MARCUS HENRIKSEN

# Marcus Henriksen

Head of Business Development, DACH & Nordics at Vantara Enterprise Intelligence

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Strong Yes | POSITIVE

**Strong hire - proven enterprise builder with a clean quota track record and direct DACH/Nordics territory experience.**

**4.9** / 5.0

| INTERVIEW DATE | LOCATION | LEVEL |
|---|---|---|
| February 15, 2026 | Stockholm, Sweden | Senior |
| **DEPARTMENT** | **EXPERIENCE** | **SALARY RANGE** |
| Sales & Business Development | 8 years | 120,000 - 160,000 EUR |

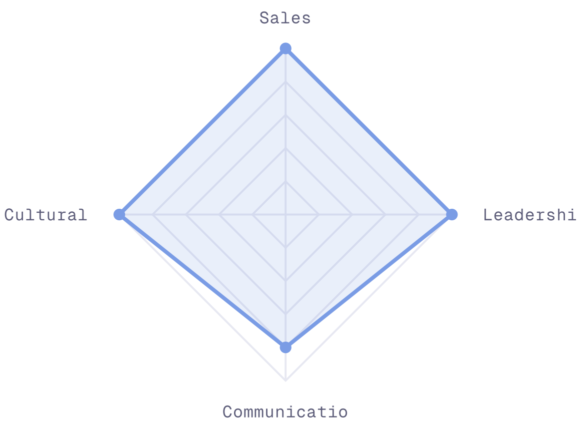
## WHY HIRE

- Scaled Kinevo's enterprise DACH and Nordics motion from two million to fifteen million ARR over three years.
- Personally carried 128 percent of quota in his first year on the desk.
- Territory-planning and MEDDPICC discipline map directly onto Vantara's DACH and Nordics mandate.

## WATCH-OUTS

- The track record was built leading a lean four-person team - the 122 percent team-attainment claim warrants reference verification at larger scale.
- The ARR ramp happened inside Kinevo's existing DACH and Nordics presence; transferability to a newer brand is unproven.

## COMPETENCY SNAPSHOT




| | |
|---|---|
| Sales & Business | 5 |
| Leadership | 5 |
| Communication | 4 |
| Cultural Fit | 5 |

## 01 Executive summary

This candidate delivered an exceptionally strong interview with repeated, quantified evidence of success across team building, enterprise selling, forecasting, and market expansion. He demonstrated mature judgment, strong self-awareness, and a highly structured approach to pipeline management, qualification, and cross-functional execution. His examples were rich in metrics and showed repeatable success rather than isolated wins, especially in quota attainment and new-market creation. Based on the overall evidence, he is a strong fit for a senior business development leadership mandate and merits a strong yes recommendation.

## 02 Scorecard

7 CRITERIA

### Sales & Business

AVG 5

**Strategic Thinking & Market Planning**

5/5

Ability to identify market opportunities, develop go-to-market strategies, and create territory plans aligned with business objectives

*Outstanding evidence of commercial impact with clear, quantified results over multiple years. The candidate demonstrates top-tier business development performance well beyond baseline expectations.*

**Revenue Growth & Pipeline Management**

5/5

Track record of meeting/exceeding quotas, building healthy pipeline, accurate forecasting, and sustainable revenue growth

*Exceptional team-building evidence supported by a detailed build-from-scratch example, hiring strategy, lessons learned, and management maturity. Multiple concrete examples show repeatable leadership capability.*

**Enterprise Deal Execution**

5/5

Skill in managing complex, multi-stakeholder enterprise deals from prospecting through close with strong negotiation outcomes

*Outstanding enterprise selling ability demonstrated through a complex, quantified deal story with stakeholder navigation, value-based selling, and long-cycle deal management. This is clear top-tier performance.*

**Market & Competitive Knowledge**

5/5

Deep understanding of the competitive landscape, industry trends, and ability to position solutions against alternatives

*Exceptional new-market build capability with clear segmentation, discovery-led entry, strategic reference acquisition, and quantified results. This is exactly the kind of repeatable zero-to-one evidence that warrants a 5.*

### Leadership

AVG 5

**Team Leadership & Development**

5/5

Ability to recruit, coach, and develop high-performing sales teams with clear accountability and performance management

*The candidate shows highly sophisticated sales process discipline, forecasting rigor, and CRM usage with metrics and clear operating principles. This is exemplary methodology for an enterprise BD leader.*

## Communication

AVG 4

### Communication & Executive Presence

4/5

Ability to present confidently to C-suite audiences, articulate value propositions clearly, and influence senior stakeholders

*Strong self-awareness and learning agility shown through an honest loss analysis and process improvement. While excellent, this area is supported more by one major example than repeated outstanding outcomes, so 4 is appropriate.*

## Cultural Fit

AVG 5

### Cultural Fit & Collaboration

5/5

Alignment with company values, cross-functional collaboration skills, and ability to thrive within the organisational culture

*Outstanding and consistent quota attainment history with multiple years of quantified overperformance. The candidate meets the rubric for excellent through repeatable, data-backed success rather than a one-off result.*

## 03 Insights

5 STRENGTHS

**Strong alignment with builder-style regional expansion role**
He repeatedly emphasized that he wants to build in new markets and cited direct DACH/Nordics experience.

**Highly specific, metrics-backed examples**
He referenced ARR growth from 2M to 15M, 7M personal contribution, 60% pipeline growth, and quota attainment by year.

**Coaching-oriented people leadership**
He improved an underperforming rep's conversion from 22% to 38% after six weeks of targeted coaching.

**Rigorous pipeline and forecast management**
He uses MEDDPICC, weekly pipeline-health reviews, 3x coverage expectations, and reported forecast accuracy within 8% in 3 of 4 quarters.

**Learns from losses and adjusts process**
After losing a deal due to lack of CFO engagement, he made economic-buyer contact mandatory before stage three.

### Key quotes

> I'm a builder. I want to take a product with strong product market, fit into new territory and build the engine from the ground up.
>
> *This is the clearest statement of his core motivation and directly aligns with Vantara's expansion-focused mandate.*

> The lesson for me was don't assume underperformance is a motivation problem. Diagnose the root cause first.
>
> *This reveals a thoughtful, coaching-oriented management philosophy grounded in diagnosis rather than punishment.*

> Every deal in my pipeline must have all seven elements documented before I'll include it in any committed forecast.
>
> *This demonstrates unusually strong sales discipline and a rigorous approach to forecast quality and pipeline hygiene.*

> The key work through skepticism by quantifying pain before pitching solutions and invest in the executive sponsor relationship before you need them in procurement.
>
> *This captures his consultative selling approach and ability to manage complex enterprise deals with executive stakeholders.*

> **The formula is always the same. Deep discovery. First find your anchor customers and acquire them strategically, even if the economics aren't perfect. Then leverage references aggressively.**
>
> *This succinctly summarizes his market-entry playbook and supports his credibility in building new regions from zero.*

STRONG YES

## Recommendation & next steps

82% role fit

1. Schedule reference calls with two former direct reports to confirm coaching style under pressure.
2. Align on compensation band and team-build headcount plan before the final round.
3. Confirm relocation or remote-work logistics given the Stockholm base and DACH-heavy travel expectations.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

**How would you structure the first 90 days if Vantara's DACH pipeline is materially thinner than Kinevo's was at the same stage?**

*Tests whether his zero-to-one playbook generalizes to a market with less existing brand presence than Kinevo had.*

**What would make you walk away from a candidate hire in your first two BDM slots, given the coachability lesson from Kinevo?**

*Probes whether the stated hiring-mistake lesson (over-indexing on experience over coachability) has become an operational filter or remains anecdotal.*

**Vantara's success metric is 1.8M ARR closed pipeline at 12 months - how does that compare to the ramp curve you saw in your own first year?**

*Surfaces whether his self-reported 128 percent quota year is a realistic proxy for Vantara's specific target, or an optimistic anchor.*

## Interview details



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CANDIDATE NAME<br>**Markus** | CRM PROFICIENCY<br>Velora CRM | DEAL SIZE RANGE<br>**150000-280000** EUR |
| CURRENT EMPLOYER<br>**Kinevo** | CURRENT LOCATION<br>**Stockholm, Sweden** | MANAGEMENT STYLE<br>**Coaching** |
| CRITICAL THINKING<br>**Exceptional** | NEGOTIATION SKILLS<br>**4** | SALES CYCLE LENGTH<br>**9** |
| DIRECT REPORT COUNT<br>**4** | PIPELINE MANAGEMENT<br>**5** | COMMUNICATION SKILLS<br>**Excellent** |
| LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL<br>**Strong Leader** | TERRITORY EXPERIENCE<br>DACH (Germany/Austria/Switzerland)<br>Nordics<br>Benelux | SALES QUOTA ATTAINMENT<br>**31** |
| CURRENT BONUS STRUCTURE<br>**Not discussed** | PRIMARY INDUSTRY SECTOR<br>**Technology/Software** | PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY<br>**Exceptional** |
| TOTAL TEAM SIZE MANAGED<br>**4-4** | OVERALL ASSESSMENT RATING<br>**Strong Yes** | STRATEGIC ACCOUNT PLANNING<br>**5** |

### KEY STRENGTHS

- Consistently strong, quantified revenue performance and quota attainment across IC and leadership roles
- Built and scaled business development teams in DAC and Nordics with thoughtful hiring, coaching, and enablement lessons
- Highly disciplined enterprise sales methodology, forecasting, and CRM usage grounded in MEDDPICC and pipeline analytics
- Strong complex-deal execution with value quantification, stakeholder mapping, and procurement negotiation
- Demonstrated zero-to-one market expansion capability, especially in Switzerland, using discovery and reference-led growth

### KEY STRENGTHS

• Strong new-market building capability – described taking Switzerland from zero to 1.1 million Euro ARR in 18 months through discovery-led market entry and anchor customers. • Structured enterprise sales methodology – consistently referenced MEDDPICC, forecast discipline, qualification rigor, and pipeline health reviews. • Effective people leadership and coaching – gave a clear example of diagnosing an underperformer's skill gap and improving conversion from 22% to 38%. • Cross-functional collaboration – partnered with marketing and product to create a manufacturing-specific campaign that increased pipeline by about 60%. • Commercial negotiation discipline – showed a value-based negotiation approach, trading discounts for longer commitments rather than conceding on price alone.

### AREAS OF CONCERN

No significant concerns identified. Minor watchpoints include the absence of explicit discussion about work authorization, compensation expectations, and notice period logistics. There is also some ambiguity around total years of experience and full people-management scope beyond four direct BDMs, though his examples suggest strong readiness for the role.

### DOMAIN EXPERTISE

Markus's domain expertise is centered on enterprise B2B SaaS sales and regional expansion across DACH and the Nordics. He has experience in HR tech and previously in sales intelligence SaaS, with clear depth in enterprise pipeline building, qualification methodology, forecasting discipline, territory design, and complex deal execution. He also demonstrated verticalized go-to-market thinking, particularly in manufacturing, where he helped tailor messaging, case studies, and ROI narratives to buyer needs. His strongest specialist knowledge appears to be building revenue from zero in new European markets and operationalizing enterprise business development teams.

### CANDIDATE SUMMARY

Markus is currently Head of Business Development at Kinevo, where he has spent three years building enterprise business across DACH and the Nordics in B2B SaaS. He demonstrates strong new-market build capability, disciplined enterprise sales methodology, and credible leadership experience, including hiring, coaching, and improving underperformer performance. His examples show consistent quota attainment, structured pipeline management using MEDDPICC, and effective cross-functional collaboration with marketing and product. He appears highly aligned to Vantara's regional expansion mandate and presents as a strong fit for a senior builder role with team-scaling responsibilities.

### CURRENT JOB TITLE

Head of Business Development

### DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Markus appears to make decisions through a structured, evidence-based approach. He repeatedly described diagnosing root causes before acting, whether in managing underperformance, qualifying deals through MEDDPICC, or prioritizing territory segments based on revenue potential, strategic fit, and propensity to buy. He weighs trade-offs explicitly, such as accepting below-market pricing in Switzerland to secure reference rights and trading discounts for longer contractual commitment. His examples suggest comfort making strategic calls under uncertainty, provided he can ground them in data, stakeholder input, and clear commercial logic.

### CAREER MOTIVATION & GOALS

Markus is motivated by building in new markets rather than optimizing mature accounts. He said Vantara's enterprise focus, European expansion mandate, and Series B stage feel like a natural fit for where he is in his career, and he repeatedly described himself as a builder who wants to create regional commercial engines from the ground up. He appears excited by the DACH and Nordics whitespace opportunity and asked thoughtful questions about team structure and 12- to 24-month success metrics. He seems to value scale-up environments, clear growth mandates, and the chance to shape both market development and team design.

### HIRING & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

At Kinevo, Markus said he hired two BDMs with strong German market experience in his first six months, then added a Nordic-focused BDM a year later. He discussed learning from early hiring decisions, noting that he now weights coachability, culture, and process alignment more heavily than pure experience alone. His development approach appears hands-on and practical, including direct coaching, shadowing live deals, and building better onboarding and playbooks. He also highlighted the need to establish enablement infrastructure early rather than relying on ad hoc coaching as teams grow.

### REVENUE GROWTH TRACK RECORD

At Kinevo, Markus said the business scaled from roughly 2 million to 15 million ARR over three years, and he personally contributed about 7 million through direct deals and pipeline built. He reported 128% of quota in year one, 112% personal quota in year two with the team at 107%, and the team running at 122% year to date in year three. He also cited 131% in his final year at a previous sales intelligence SaaS company and noted that his first enterprise-sales year out of university was a miss at 78%. He appears numerically rigorous and described forecast discipline, stating his team hit within 8% of committed forecast in three of the last four quarters.

### ◆ ADAPTABILITY & LEARNING AGILITY

Markus showed strong adaptability through multiple examples of adjusting strategy based on market evidence. In Switzerland, he changed his go-to-market approach after learning buyers were highly risk averse and prioritized anchor customers with reference rights to unlock broader growth. He also reflected candidly on what he would do differently in hiring and enablement, showing learning from earlier mistakes rather than defending them. His responses suggest he is comfortable operating in ambiguity, testing hypotheses, and refining process as new information emerges.

### ◆ PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Markus approaches performance management diagnostically rather than punitively. In his example of an underperforming rep, he reviewed pipeline conversion data, shadowed four deals, identified a specific executive-communication gap, and then spent six weeks coaching on ROI storytelling and business case development before considering a performance plan. He also described weekly one-on-ones focused on pipeline health, blockers, next actions, and timeline risk rather than superficial status updates. His style suggests clear expectations, regular inspection, and targeted coaching for improvement.

### ◆ CROSS-FUNCTIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Markus described meaningful cross-functional work with both marketing and product to enter the German manufacturing vertical. He initiated a specific proposal to the CMO, co-created industry-specific messaging and case studies, and partnered with product to identify features with the clearest ROI story for manufacturing buyers. The effort resulted in about a 60% pipeline increase in that vertical within two quarters and the closing of a €210,000 ARR manufacturing enterprise deal. His example shows stakeholder alignment, clear outcome orientation, and the ability to mobilize shared resources around a commercial objective.

05 
## Audio intelligence

| DURATION | TALK TIME | SENTIMENT |
|---|---|---|
| 34:37 | 38% Int. / 62% Cand. | Positive · Neutral · Negative |

### Interview chapters

**Vantara is interviewing for the head of Business Development, DAC and Nordics**

Vantara is interviewing for the head of Business Development, DAC and Nordics. The role is a senior individual contributor position with a mandate to build a regional team. Vantara is a B2B SaaS company focused on enterprise revenue intelligence.

**The format is conversational; we want to hear the real story**

We'll spend about 35 to 40 minutes together. The format is conversational. Feel free to take a moment to think before answering. We want to hear the real story, not the polished elevator pitch.

**You're currently the Head of Business Development at Kinevo**

Currently the Head of Business Development at Kinevo, a mid stage B2B SaaS company. Kinevo is now entering a consolidation phase. They're shifting focus from new market expansion to efficiency in existing accounts. I want to take a product with strong product market, fit into new territory and build the engine from the ground up.

**You mentioned you built a team from the ground up at Kinevo**

When I joined Kinevo, there was no structured BDM function for enterprise. Focus exclusively ON Enterprise above 150Arr and build emotion around that. I'd hire for coachability over pure experience earlier. Now I weight cultural and process alignment much more heavily in hiring.

**Tell me about a time you had to manage an underperforming rep**

Don't assume underperformance is a motivation problem. Diagnose the root cause first. After that intervention, his conversion rate went from about 22 to 38% over the following quarter. He's now one of my stronger performers.

**A campaign we ran with marketing to break into the manufacturing vertical in Germany**

The most impactful example was a campaign we ran with our marketing team to break into the manufacturing vertical in Germany. The key was going to marketing and product with a specific outcome hypothesis and a concrete ask, not a vague request.

**Walk me through your approach to pipeline management and forecast accuracy**

Every deal in my pipeline must have all seven elements documented before I'll include it in any committed forecast. Poor forecasting destroys credibility with leadership and creates firefighting at quarter end. Over the past four quarters at Kinevo, my team has hit within 8% of committed forecast in three of them.

**How do you use CRM data beyond just tracking deal status**

How do you use CRM data beyond just tracking deal status? We use Velora CRM and I'm quite deliberate about how we use it beyond the standard pipeline tracking. I use it for three things that I think most teams underutilize first Win Loss analysis.

**With Vantara, the mandate is Dock and Nordics, which is a broad territory**

With nexum, the mandate is Dock and Nordics, which is a broad territory. How would you approach structuring and prioritizing it? I'd prioritize Germany first because of the market size. Norway and Finland I'd treat as growth opportunities in year two.

**Tell me about your biggest enterprise deal you've closed**

The deal I'm most proud of was with Brandt Logistics, a mid sized German freight company with about 1200 employees. They had a massive forecasting problem. The key work through skepticism by quantifying pain before pitching solutions. The deal closed at 280,000 Euro ARR with a three year commitment.

**You lost a competitive bid for a Swiss financial services deal two years ago**

A deal that stings a bit even now because I think it was avoidable. I had all the right deal elements except executive engagement at the economic buyer level. I now make it a mandatory qualification criterion that I have at least one direct touch point with the buyer before we progress past stage three.

**How do you handle procurement and Legal when they push back hard in contract negotiations**

My approach now is to front load the commercial discussion before legal gets involved. I try to reach agreement on price, term length and key commercial terms with the economic buyer before the contract goes to procurement. The principle I never discount on price alone. Trade discounts for something of value.

**At Kinevo, my personal quota and team quota have both been strong**

At Kinevo, my personal quota and team quota have both been strong. Since I made the switch fully to enterprise and built my methodology, I've been consistently above 110%. That's a strong track record.

**Kinevo had zero revenue in Switzerland at the time**

When I took on the Swiss market at Kinevo, Kinevo had zero revenue in Switzerland. In the first 18 months in Switzerland we went from 0 to 1.1 million Euro ARR. The formula is always the same. First find your anchor customers and acquire them strategically. Then leverage references aggressively.

**The job description mentions a mandate to build a regional team over 18 months**

Job description mentions a mandate to build a regional team over 18 months. Do you have a view on what the ideal team structure looks like at the 18 month mark? Current thinking is that we'd likely start with a pooled SDR model. But we're genuinely open to input on that from the right candidate.

**My second question is about Vantara's growth plans in the Nordics region**

My second question is about Vantara's growth plans in the region over the next 24 months. The DOC in Nordics represents roughly 30% of our total addressable market in Europe. What does success look like for this hire at the 12 month and 24 month marks?

**Markus, thank you for your time today. I appreciate the clarity on both the team structure and the success metrics**

Markus, thank you. This has been one of the best conversations I've had in this search. I appreciate the clarity on both the team structure and the success metrics. I'm very excited about this opportunity and look forward to hearing from you.

## Discussion topics

| | |
|---|---|
| Business · Sales | 100% |
| Business · Business Operations | 80% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Business · Executive Leadership & Management | | 57% |
| Industries · Management Consulting Industry | | 41% |
| Business · Government Business | | 35% |

## Entities mentioned

| | |
|---|---|
| ORGANIZATIONS | Vantara, VANTARA, Kinevo, DAC, SaaS Connect Europe, BDM, marketing team, content teams, product team, procurement team |
| LOCATIONS | Stockholm, Scandinavia, DAC, the Nordics, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Benelux, Dusseldorf, Dock |
| ROLES | senior talent acquisition lead, head of Business Development, DAC and Nordics, senior individual contributor, Head of Business Development, HR, sales hi, BDMs, builder, AE, BDM |

## Sensitive Topics Mentioned

- No sensitive topics detected in this conversation.

ASSESSMENT SIGN-OFF

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | July 22, 2026 | Strong Yes |
| ASSESSED BY · TALENTBRIEF | REVIEWED BY | DATE | RECOMMENDATION |